

944-4420

Coyaba  
P.O. Box 20  
Red Hills  
St. Andrew

Dr. John A.S. Hall  
22 Russell Heights  
KINGSTON 8

Dear John,

Thank you for your note on the *Coyaba Chronicles*. I am glad it stirred you to remembrance, and I hope you will yourself one day write for the public record your own remembrances of how it was.

We need as many such records as possible to ensure that the generations to come do not learn of what happened only from the European and American view of things. The attempt to down-play or ignore the importance of George Padmore to 20<sup>th</sup> century history is a case study of what will happen if we do not write our own history.

Thank you again.

Sincerely





DR. JOHN A. S. HALL  
C.D., M.B., B.S., (LOND.), F.R.C.P., F.R.C.P. (EDIN.), F.A.C.P.

MEDICAL ASSOCIATES  
KINGSTON 10

PHONE: 876-926-1400  
876-929-6543

22 Russell Heights,  
Kingston,  
24 August 2001

Dear Peter,

Just a brief note to thank you for your beautifully written book the "Coyaba Chronicles." Over your many years of insightful radio-commentary, I never had the pleasure of meeting you. But here I was eyeballing with you, resonating with those experiences described, except perhaps those in Mother Africa, on the hi seas, in the French mountains, the English housing scheme, and a con of othras.

The black personalities and their contributions are meaningfully described. I was privileged to meet George Padmore briefly, through his nephew Malcolm Luke who was studying medicine with us in London at the time. The objectivity and candour of your assessment of the Jamaican situation is admirable, if I may be so presumptuous as to comment. I think it should be required reading for the open makers, particularly as the crisis of leadership deepens and a new level of barbarity has been recently reached.

I feel the problem of this century will still be the problem of colour. But with the "death of ideology" and the upsurge of "spiritualism" Reparations may yet emerge, despite globalisation, to improve the quality of life and the self-esteem of the diaspora.

Warm personal regards,

Sincerely,  
John



Mr. Peter ABRAHAMS  
Author, Media Commentator  
c/o Mr. L. Michael HENRY  
Kingston Publishers Limited  
KINGSTON (JAMAICA)

Washington D.C. 17-06-9

Dear Sir

This is a letter from someone obviously unknown to you. But a couple of years ago I used the good offices of Dr. Lewis RUPERT to reach out to you through a letter sent from Ithaca, New York State at the close of an international Seminar which RUPERT and myself attended on the topic of "African Studies and Research in the Diaspora".

Once again I have the opportunity to write you through Mr. Michael HENRY with whom I have just finished attending an international Conference on "Search of a New World Culture for 21st Century". Mr. HENRY and myself have familiarized and he agreed to carry this letter to you for my sake.

I am a long-standing reader of your books to the extent of defending a doctorate thesis titled:  
"Peter ABRAHAMS: AN AFRICAN NOVELIST" dating back to 1977. I have taught your books at the university for the last 25 years and I have never had the luck and honour of meeting and or interacting with you.

In September this year, if all goes well, I shall be



attending a follow-up Seminar at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York State may be along with Dr. RUPERI again. After this Seminar I plan to stop over in Kingston, as Mr HENRY offered me his hospitality when I arrive.

In that circumstance, I shall be extremely grateful if you can devote part of your very busy time to the researcher and admirer of Dr Peter ABRAHAMS that I ~~am~~ to enable me fill a few gaps in my knowledge of your work (including View from Cotonou of which I wish to obtain a copy in Kingston) and/or have the sheer pleasure of fulfilling a life-time dream: meet Dr. Peter ABRAHAMS.

Sincerely,

Noël DOSSOU-YOVO  
President, Professor  
World Peace Academy  
COTONOU (BENIN REPUBLIC  
WEST AFRICA)

P.S. Please find herewith a copy of my resume for your prior acquaintance with my background. Thanks in anticipation of our meeting in Kingston.

# SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM VITAE

Noël DOSSOU-YOVO,  
born on 25th December, 1943, in OUIDAH,  
Benin Republic (West Africa)

## 1 - QUALIFICATIONS

Two Doctorate Degrees in the *Humanities (African Literature/African Studies)* - First thesis (350 pages) was written up and defended in English (June 1972) ; title : *Peter Abrahams : a (South) African Novelist* ; venue : University of Nancy, France.

Second more recent thesis (1,100 pages) was written and defended successfully (cum laude) in French (December 1992) at the University of Nancy, France. Title of thesis : *Individu et Société dans le Roman Africain d'expression anglaise de 1939 à 1986 / The Individual and Society in the African Novel in English from 1939 to 1986.*

Prior to the first doctorate degree, the undersigned obtained three different (one BA and two MA's) degrees in Economics, Public Administration (diplomacy) and Development Studies in Strasbourg (1969/1970) and Paris/The Hague (1971), respectively.

## 2 - POSITIONS HELD SO FAR

- 2.1 - Trainee-Diplomat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cotonou, 1972.
- 2.2 - Head of Department (English/African Literature) and Lecturer in International/African Relations, National University of Benin, 1972-1974.
- 2.3 - Senior Lecturer at the University and concurrently Programme Officer, Association of African Universities (A.A.U.) General Secretariat, Accra, Ghana, 1974-1977.
- 2.4 - Senior Lecturer at the University and concurrently Programme Officer, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Regional Office, Lomé, Togo, 1978-1983.
- 2.5 - Deputy Director, Centre for African Family Studies (CAFS), Nairobi, Kenya, 1983-1986 (through leave of absence).

## 3 - CURRENT FUNCTIONS

- 3.1 - Professor of African Studies, following resumption of duty at National University of Benin, after return from Nairobi in 1986.

- 3.2 - Consultant in African population and development projects.
- 3.3 - From February 1992 till August 1994, concurrently Technical Adviser to President of National Assembly, Benin Republic, in International/African Relations and Co-operation for Development.
- 3.4 - From July 1995 till ~~now~~ <sup>Sept. 1996</sup>, concurrently with teaching at the University, Education Technical Adviser to President of Benin Republic.

#### 4 - COUNTRIES VISITED

Some thirty (30) African countries (anglophone and francophone) and some fifteen (15) countries in Europe, in addition to the United States of America and South Korea.



Signed : Noël DOSSOU-YOVO  
BP : 08-0291  
Tel. : (229) 30 08 92 - Fax (229) 31 20 02  
COTONOU (Benin Republic)

Date : 13 ~~June~~ <sup>Sept.</sup> 1997. - WASHINGTON D.C.

SIR ROBERT KIRKWOOD

TELEPHONE: 65984  
TELEGRAMS: DOOWKRIK  
CABLES: DOOWKRIK, KINGSTON, JA.  
CODES: BENTLEY'S SECOND PHRASE

P.O. Box 163,  
5, TREVENNION PARK ROAD,  
KINGSTON 5, JAMAICA, W.I.

8th January, 1968.

Peter Abrahams Esq.,  
"Coyaba",  
Red Hills P. A.

Dear Mr. Abrahams,

This is just a short line to congratulate you most sincerely on your latest book. I took it up at night and read through, with absorbed attention, to the end. Apart from the fact that, as would be expected, it is extremely well written, I found the theme to be most convincing. The whole story is brilliantly put together, and the various situations ring true to life as we live it and see it. The atmosphere is authentic. And, for good measure, I particularly enjoyed your sensitive descriptions of mood and scenery. Altogether a most exciting and enjoyable experience.

My congratulations, and thanks.

Yours very sincerely,

Robert Kirkwood

# THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Head Office: Broadcasting House, London, W. 1

200 Oxford Street, London, W. 1

TELEPHONE: EUSTON 3400

TELEGRAMS AND CABLES: BROADCASTS, TELEX, LONDON

8th JUNE

DEAR PETER ABRAHAM,

I thought I should write and tell you how good I thought Wild Conquest is, especially since our personal relations seem to be under something of a cloud. If you will excuse my frankness, I was amazed by the artistry and cleanness of your writing, especially of the first part, and impressed by your objectivity and comprehensiveness of sympathy. It is much the most finished work of art that I have read of Africa in the last seven years, and I hope to review it in the October number of African Affairs, from the technical as well as the philosophical point of view. I am sure that it will do a lot of good to the cause in England and Africa, and hope that to you it will lead to a great personal success.

I can only assume that our arrangement for a talk in the W. African programme was made as a result of another review in the same journal. I was harsh on George Padmore's details, where I thought them wrong, because I do not think that the criticism in Africa should be one-

sided. In view of his emotional approach as you know, I agreed, and still agree. I followed this review with an attack, equally irritating to the author, on C.E. Carrington's The British Overseas. No doubt, I have no real right to lay about me; but I do not think there are forks in the kingdom of the mind, and your latest work suggests, to some extent, that you agree with me.

One of the factors for a certain acidity in all this is that my wife finally succumbed, now dead, to her wasting illness at the end of March. I hope your own arrangements are happier.

Yours sincerely

Henry Swanzy

Horst Köhn  
Vienna IV  
Rechte Wienzeile 1B/6  
A u s t r i a

Vienna, July 9th 1965

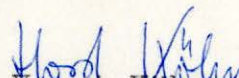
Dear Sir,

with great enthusiasm I read your famous novels  
"Mine Boy", "The Path of Thunder", "Wild Conquest" and your  
autobiography "Tell Freedom".

May I therefore address to you with a great request:  
will you please send me (if possible) a personally signed  
photograph of yourself.

For your trouble best thanks in advance.

Faithfully Yours

  
Horst Köhn

N. W. MANLEY

36 Duke Street,

Box 511,

Kingston,

Jamaica.

22nd April, 1965

Peter Abrahams, Esq.,  
"COYABA",  
Red Hills P. O.

My dear Peter Abrahams,

I heard from an American visitor last week, a friend of mine, that she was reading a copy of your novel which has just been published, and then I tried to get one from the local booksellers, and then was delighted to find a copy arriving at home from Faber and Faber.


My warm thanks and congratulations. I not only enjoyed reading the book which is exciting and quite unforgettable, but I also was profoundly impressed by the humanity and wisdom and historical understanding that you bring to bear on the discussion of the problems of race as they exist in the world today.

I think it was extremely interesting for you to develop a situation which presents the problem in so unusual and in a way startling a context. I suppose a lot of people will misunderstand, but I hope that most of those who count will learn something.

I cannot, by the way, resist a comment on the technical problem that you presented to yourself in writing that book. How does one impose a tense and exciting and fast-moving narrative on a background of wise and meditated and almost philosophical discussion of the very thing that gives the narrative its pace.

All good wishes to you. I look forward to the next one.

Yours sincerely,



N. W. Manley

NWM:fec

Friday, the 23th of December 1960. Hans Tveten.

Dear Peter Abrehams!

I'm a Norwegian boy, and I'm 14 of age. I've read all of your books, and I like them very very much.

My English teacher has read your book "Tell frithem" at school. And all the pupils like it.

I'm very fond of writtin' too, but I don't think I'm so clever as you are.

I've many hobbies. I play the piano, colect autographs, and I compose. I like to compose boogies and lullabies. I've sent one of my composition to Winifred Atwell, the famous pianist. And she liked it.

I have a very good friend here in Oslo. He comes from South West Africa. He is negro. He is my greatest friend. He study sosial uconomic. He shall stay here for three year. His name is Hans Beukes.

I know that you are also born in South West Africa.

I'm also a negro. But I'm a Norwegian negro.

It ain't diskrimination here in Norway.

But all my friends are mulatoes and negroes.

Your are my greatest author-favourite, and my record-favourite is Mahali Jackson. She always sings negro-spirituals. Do you know the name Ruth Rese?

She is stayin' in Oslo now. And I have been known with her.

In January comes a new student all the way from South West Africa. I lookin' forward to that very much.

He shall be livin' near me.

But now I must close my letter for this time. If you found time, I,d like very much to hear from you Abrehams.

Your sencearly Hans Tveten.

ps.

A very very happy new year.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

TIMES SQUARE

NEW YORK 36, N. Y.

March 14/60

Dear Mr. Abrahams:

We are sorry to bother you but could you please help this reader? It seemed simpler to forward his letter to you than to write back to him giving your address; in any case, we don't usually divulge our reviewers' addresses. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

H. Beekun

# The Shreveport Times

ARK-LA-TEX'S GREATEST NEWSPAPER.

TIMES BUILDING  
*Shreveport, Louisiana*



Office of  
DONALD M. EWING  
Associate Editor

March 11, 1960

Editor  
New York Times Book Review  
The New York Times  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

In his New York Times Book Review discussion of Guy Butler's "Book of African Verse" (October 18, 1959), Peter Abrahams said that "a few African Negro poets have written verse that would more than qualify for inclusion if merit were the sole consideration." Mrs. Ewing is a member of a study club which has been studying Africa for a year or two. Her particular part this year is African poetry, and she would like to get in touch with Mr. Abrahams to find out what Negro poets he refers to. Can you give me his address? Also, do you happen to know of any books of African poetry (written by Negroes) published in this country?

I enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply.

Yours very truly

*Donald M. Ewing*  
DONALD M. EWING  
Associate Editor

DME:dg

Brussels, November 16th 1958.

Dear Mr. Abrahams,

I expect you will be astornished to receive a letter from Belgium. I am writing to you to ask you something. I am a girl-student and attend a High School in Brussels. One of my subjects is of course English. Now I am near my leaving exam, and for that, each of us has to study one book and to write a special composition (in French) about it for the first days of December. I have chosen your "Tell Freedom" as I am very, very interested in the difference of the races.

I was deeply impressed by all you have written about your life and I am quite sure that the White are unjust in treating the Black like that. But I am sure there are good and bad ones on both sides.

Now my question is : Do you think that one day the equality of the races could be put into reality ? How do you think could this situation be altered.

I would be very, very thankful, if you would tell me anything of what you think about this problem.

*Marion*

MARION Francine,  
170, chaussée St Pierre,  
BRUXELLES IV.  
Belgique.

Brussels, ce 19 août.

Cher Monsieur,

J'achève la lecture de votre ouvrage "Zell Freedom" en traduction française. M'intéressant à ce qui concerne l'Égypte du Sud et en particulier à ce qui concerne les peuples de couleur, j'en pouvais éprouver de la sympathie envers quelqu'un qui a eu le courage de quitter son pays pour venir en Europe faire connaître le sort de ses frères de race et défendre leur cause.

Tout me sépare de votre situation, de votre conception même <sup>de vie</sup> peut-être (je suis catholique, j'en suis jamais allé en Égypte), mais pourtant je m'en voudrais de ne pas vous dire combien je voudrais vous voir.

l'avenir dans le but poursuivi.

Dieu veuille vous envoyer ceux ou celles qui seront susceptibles de vous aider à faire comprendre à tous combien il est indispensable de donner à ces populations d'Afrique du Nord, des êtres humains, nos frères comme les autres, les moyens de se développer.

On frémit à la lecture de certains épisodes de votre livre et l'on est curieux de voir si il y a, de par le monde, des hommes aussi peu respectueux de la dignité humaine.

Evidemment, votre ouvrage se clôt sur l'année '39, il y a bientôt 20 ans de cela. Et depuis? avez-vous pu entrevoir un aboutissement à vos espérances? Comme je le souhaite! Je le désire tellement. Que vous a apporté ce voyage en Europe? quels espoirs ou... quels déceptions?

Que ne faut-il parfois pour secouer l'homme  
de son apathie, ou plutôt pour lui faire entendre  
qu'à côté de lui il y en a d'autres qui luttent  
et ont besoin de son aide.

Ces vingt années vous ont fourni une expérience  
déjà grande. Tant de choses se sont passées en  
cet après-guerre.

J'ai vu pourtant, sur vos routes, tant de  
belle générosité, tant de véritable amour fraternel  
que je ne puis m'empêcher, que vous aussi sur le  
chemin de votre vie vous n'aurez pas été  
d'illusionnés. Je forme le vœu de vous voir  
rencontrer l'amour fraternel vrai, désintéressé,  
capable de se féliciter pour le bien de ses frères.

Je suis bien d'être quelqu'un d'influent  
mais croyez bien que là où je vis je n'essaie  
d'intéresser mon entourage, ne même à la  
cause des gens d'Égypte du Sud.

Par mon état de vie lui-même je puis vous  
dire que chaque jour je recommande particulièrement  
à Dieu le sort de vos frères de là-bas. Tous autres,  
humains, sommes au fond bien impuissants,  
ne trouvez-vous pas?

En formant encore des vœux pour  
la réussite du but que vous vous êtes proposé, je  
vous prie, cher Monsieur, en vous priant de  
croire à nos sentiments les plus cordiaux

Simon Van Roy

SIMONNE VAN ROY

avenue EUDORE PIRMEZ, 45,

Bourcelles 4

Charle ville 10 septembre 1958

Monsieur,

Je ne sais si cette lettre vous  
trouvera et, si elle vous trouve, je me demande  
si vous voudriez bien y répondre. Mais que  
me tente rien n'a rien = la question que  
je veux vous poser est trop importante pour  
moi.

Sachez simplement que j'aurais  
volontiers mis au début de cette lettre  
cher Monsieur parce que je viens de finir  
de lire la traduction française de votre  
livre : " Tell Freedom ".

Je vous dis merci et je suis  
content de profiter de cette lettre pour vous  
le dire --- ça fait du bien, de dire  
merci -

Merci parce que votre maman  
est devenue quelqu'un de vivant pour  
moi que j'aurais même voulu con-  
naître. rencontres, avec beaucoup de respect.

Merci aussi pour les prières  
qui parcourent votre livre.

Je me permets simplement de vous  
dire les questions que je me pose après la  
lecture. Vous y répondez si vous le voulez  
bien. Je vous promets de brûler votre réponse,  
si jamais j'en reçois une, aussi tôt après  
l'avoir lue. Ce qui m'intéresse, je vous prie  
de le croire, n'est pas un autographe, mais  
c'est vous-même, si j'ose dire.

D'abord est-ce que c'est bien  
vrai, ce qu'on met sur la couverture de  
la traduction française = "Jésus-Christ  
est peut-être le voyage unique qui, dans  
l'ombre, n'a cessé d'alimenter l'espérance  
de Peter Abrahamus" ?

Et surtout, avez-vous trouvé un  
début de réponse au moins à la fameuse  
équation, ou en avez-vous trouvé une,  
depuis ? Et laquelle ?

Pardonnez-moi de vous demander  
cela. J'ose le faire, simplement parce  
que je me suis posé aussi cette équation,

quoique d'une façon moins précise et moins urgente.

J'y ai apporté une réponse - une ébauche de réponse. Mais j'ai peur qu'en vous présentant cette réponse, vous ne l'acceptiez pas. Aussi je voudrais savoir votre réponse s'il y en a une. Parce que je sais que la vôtre sera plus sûre que la mienne.

Merci, monsieur. Merci de toutes façons. Pardonnez-moi encore -

Je vous dis mon affection et tout mon respect.

B. Panaget  
prêtre catholique  
27 ans -

Abbé Bernard PANAGET  
187 rue du Ménil,  
ASNIERES  
Seine  
France

June 19

Dear Peter Abrahams,

I have just finished  
"Breath for Lidome" & would like to tell  
you without any delay how deeply  
I was impressed by it. You write with  
a fine combination - if I may venture  
to say so - of understanding, objectivity,  
& power than anyone else who has ever  
written about Africa. I rejoice to think  
that when we first met about three  
years ago & you were wondering how you  
could give most help to Africa, I  
urged you to concentrate on writing  
about it, because you had such a  
unique power for good by doing so.  
It seems to me that books like

They do more towards helping us  
understand Africans than anything  
else at all. What about the other  
side of the coin? Could you write a  
book which would help Africans to  
understand us? They would believe you.  
When I first read "World Congress" I was  
very much impressed by your understanding  
of the Boers.

How did you find the West Indians? I  
look forward to reading the result?  
I did not bother you, in the end, about  
our "date" for a talk at Peterborough, as  
the citizens of that place did not react  
very encouragingly to the series but was  
called off before the end. I would much  
like to meet again & my wife, who sat up  
all night with "betoms", would also like  
to meet you both. Could you come & have  
a visit here one day? Give me a ring  
when you are in town.  
Love  
Dorothy

Henry MOKWA

311 Uelzen

Postf. 532

W / Germany

Good morning,  
dear Verlag

John Farquharson  
& Halsey House  
Red Lion Square  
London WC1 / England

Give my please the address  
to Mr. Peter Abrahams.

I have the book "Freedom" Lesu.

Thank you very much.

Yours  
Henry MOKWA

B. P. 325

USUMBURA  
RUANDA-URUNDI

COMPTE : SOCOBANQUE N° 10

TÉLÉPHONE : N° 2340

Monsieur Peter Abrahams  
c/o Maison Casterman  
Rue des Soeurs Noires  
TOURNAI (BELGIQUE)

Cher Monsieur Abrahams,

Venant d'achever la lecture de l'édition française de votre autobiographie, je tiens à vous dire l'impression profonde produite en moi par votre témoignage.

Comme l'en-tête de cette feuille vous l'aura laissé deviner, j'ai l'honneur de diriger un Collège où élèves blancs et noirs fraternisent dans l'amitié la plus sincère. Deux cent cinq élèves noirs, originaires du Ruanda et de l'Urundi, vivent ici, mêlés à 27 jeunes Européens. Tous suivent un cours d'humanités gréco-latines, selon le programme belge métropolitain

Au terme de leurs études, les uns et les autres obtiendront le même diplôme, donnant accès à l'enseignement supérieur dans toutes les Universités belges d'Europe ou d'Afrique.

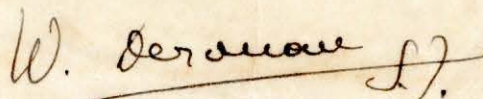
Pour former cette jeunesse, nous sommes ici treize Jésuites belges, d'expression française, plus un prêtre noir, originaire de ce pays, et quatre professeurs laïcs, également belges.

J'ai pensé qu'il vous serait agréable d'apprendre l'existence d'une institution comme la nôtre. Notre ambition serait de jouer auprès de tous nos élèves le rôle que remplirent à votre égard Canon Woodfield et le Père Adams.

Me permettez-vous de vous demander une faveur? Je voudrais beaucoup accrocher votre photo au mur de mon bureau. Elle me rappellerait ainsi qu'à tous ceux qui passeront devant elle l'idéal d'union et de compréhension mutuelles que nous poursuivons ici. Vous combleriez mes vœux en y mettant votre signature.

Espérant que vous voudrez bien donner suite à cette requête, je vous en remercie d'avance et vous prie d'agréer, Cher Monsieur Abrahams, l'expression de ma profonde sympathie.

Si peut-être vous désiriez m'adresser quelques mots, n'hésitez pas à m'écrire en anglais.

W. DEROUAU s.j.  
Recteur du Collège

37 Jessel Drive,  
Loughton,  
Essex,  
England.

June 28, 1955.

Dear Mrs Grossman,

Please do forgive the delay in writing to you, to thank you for your very cordial letter of April 9th.

It is an occupational disease of writers for they are so busy writing these books that they have very little time to answer their letters.

I hope to be in New York in November of this year for a short time, and if it is at all possible to do so, I shall do my best to thank both you and your husband personally for your cordial letter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Sam Grossman,  
743 Graft Avenue,  
Franklin Square,  
New York,  
U. S. A.

4  
743 Craft Ave.  
Franklin Square  
N.Y.  
April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1955

Dear Mr. Abrahams,

I wish to add my name to the long list of admirers who enjoyed your book "Tell Freedom" very much indeed.

It would be a great pleasure to meet you in person and if you can ever come to our residence, we would be honored indeed.

By we, I mean my husband and myself.

You have a very great talent and we wish you a most successful

career and a happy life  
also.

Let us also hope the  
day is not far off when  
conditions are greatly  
improved in your homeland.

Hoping to hear from

you, I am,

Sincerely yours,

(Mr.) Sam Grossman

706 Riverside Drive, New York City, 31.  
7th June, 1956.

Dear Mr. Peter Abrahams:

First of all I must thank you for a Xmas card from you and Daphne -- and from the biographical sketch about you I learn that there are also two children. I wish you'd all take a trip to NY, I have a lot of very young friends and could have a party for the youngsters while the oldsters chatted. But when you do come, you won't be able to get me through Knopf's, for there have been drastic changes in the juvenile dept. A new editor came in and generally upset everything. However, the adult dept. remains superb and you could not have better publishers. But the best way to get me should you come here is to 'phone in the evening -- and it never matters how late for I'm up until 2.30 a.m. anyway. I'm in the 'phone book.

And -- if you continue to write such magnificent books you must expect this correspondence to continue. Only now I'll know that if you don't answer you're in the midst of a new book. The time before I was concerned as I was afraid the books I'd sent had gone astray, and of course all that was straightened out.

I marvel at the way you can make a character so utterly human with the good qualities and bad combined -- just as human beings are. I admit, though, I could never have let Udomo treat Lois so ruthlessly with the Jo episode. And, what a problem you had when you had him betray Mhendi and yet how tragically reasonable for his objective. Mhendi's death -- and that of Maria gave me literal chills! And Tom was marvelously done, while Paul Mabis' letter at the end was a tremendous climax. Wasn't Mr. Hughes thrilled at the dedication?

Somehow, with your ability to see people and situations as you do, I wish sometime you'd make a character feel another's problems even if it's not his own. I believe this to be very possible and certain. Not only might people be ashamed at, for instance, what the white race has done while being a member of that race, but I know that some one can feel this even if not having suffered from it as an individual. And not only from shame. A projection of one's self into another isn't perhaps usual, but does occur and is important. As you showed in "Tell Freedom" a Jewish person who had known prejudice might or again might not understand another ~~###~~ prejudice. A Negro might, as you showed, be scornful of a another Negro who was beneath him. Oh dear, this is something for discussion and I'm becoming involved in trying to write it. The main thing is I believe that sometimes it's just as hard for a person who hasn't had the stupidly cruel experience personally of being differentiated against. And, whenever I use the phrase "white race" I always think of E.M. Forster's description as "pinko-grey." So much more realistic.

That terrific problem of doing harm for ultimate good is one you have handled so tellingly. I don't know. I feel no one should ever miss an opportunity, no matter at what personal loss of standing, to assert what one believes in, but Udomo had to do so much more. And particularly when Selina emerges as she does.

Here am I chatting away about your characters, but they're all so real, so important. And oh, how you can write. Thank you again.

Cordially,

Mary Bourne

Prof. Dr. K.H. Pfeffer  
Hamburgisches Welt-Wirtschafts-Archiv

Hamburg, 18th May 1956  
Poststrasse 11

Mr.  
Peter A b r a h a m s  
37, Jessel Drive  
L o u g h t o n, Essex  
=====  
England.

Dear Mr. Abrahams,

My British-born wife discovered "Mine Boy" in the library of the British Information Centre. I started to read all your available books and got so enthusiastic that I am trying to get a German publisher to accept translations. Would you agree to that, and might I possibly visit you when I come to England on a short trip this autumn, or could we meet in London, better still in Hamburg?

Your point of view helps me very much with the South African Section of the Cyclopedia of Modern Nations which I am preparing for a Government Research Institute in Hamburg. You will understand my interest when I explain that I am a sociologist and hold special Seminars on overseas problems at the University. Even if you cannot entrust the translation of your books to me I should very much like to make your personal acquaintance.

Sincerely

Yours,

*K. H. Pfeffer*

( Prof. Dr. K.H. Pfeffer )

*Being already  
Better write Rose.*

THE OBSERVER

· 1791 ·

*The Observer Limited*

22 TUDOR STREET  
LONDON, E.C.4

TELEPHONE:  
CENTRAL 9481

15-5-55

Dear Peter

This was copied from the diary of  
a friend of mine who is a third-year medical  
student, a South African, at Edinburgh. It is v.  
moving and I thought you might be glad to see it.

UWI Libraries  
Ce  
/

I read "Tell Freedom" and was moved beyond words by Peter Abrahams. I found his poetic approach to living, and sane humble attempt to adapt himself lawfully to being a citizen of South Africa very moving. He has no axe to grind and no interest in praise or fame, no hatred of any man, but a decisive discrimination against all doctrines, all intrigues -- His personal emotional life is to him as important as South Africa's destiny and the communities in Sophiatown -- he is really living with the former unlike most leading Africans and Europeans especially the Communists. I would like to meet him and congratulate him on the miracle of his balanced mind and his awareness of beauty. Love truth throughout his life. His book emphasizes love, integrity and the tremendous joyous mystery of life -- its powerful hidden spirits that moves us towards each other and makes us know what will be right and good before we have tasted it -- indeed before we can express it verbally -- the spirit that from a tiny age moves us blindly spontaneously cruelly to warmth and satisfaction and optimism. I loved this book as a philosophy -- as a proof of the divine spirit that existed in him when he was a tiny battered misunderstanding Klonkie in Vrededorp -- and it rang to the core of my same spirit and I was left up by the book and felt it was a book all theologians should read -- and all cynics. I am a convert to his approach and judgment -- to his handling and thinking -- and to his conclusion and action.

Colin this is a bit from Mary's diary -- to me written in London in the last (Easter 1955) vac. that I've been wanting you to read (I'd urged her & Margie to read "Tell Freedom") In copying it out for you I have entirely controlled my itch to edit... but it's strange that Peter Abrahams was the only non-white I felt this complete sympathy with, and wanted to meet (1952)?

P.S. You know I call my Booby (although she is now 5 ft 4 1/2 inches in the sock!) Klonkie --

Post-Constante

20/1/55

Rugby,

Warwickshire

25th April '55

Dear Mr Abraham,

just this  
 past few weeks my husband  
 I have come across some  
 of your writings. It started  
 with picking up "wineboy"  
 from library. It was the  
 best work of its kind on  
 South Africa that seemed  
 to 'see with the heart' the  
 problem at home & to  
 challenge the reader to  
 accept the need for real  
 leadership - the creative  
 act of love towards life.  
 Thank you for putting  
 new hope into the hearts  
 of two South Africans.

We wondered then whom  
 you were - whether white  
 or coloured. Since then  
 we have read 'Back to forth'  
 & know the answer - though  
 really I think we knew  
 that the vitality of you

THE VICARAGE,  
UPPER BASILDON,  
NR. READING.

TELEPHONE UPPER BASILDON 223.

5 April, 1955.

20/5/55  
Dear Mr Abrahams,

I feel I must write to tell you how deeply moved I have been in reading your book Tell Freedom. I went out to South Africa in 1939, the year you came to England, and was for a year at Ekutuleni in Sophiatown, and then after my marriage I lived for eight years in Parow, near Cape Town, where my husband was Rector. So I know well the background of which you write.

I was much interested to read what you wrote of Canon Woodfield, as he came originally from my mother's village, Stone, near Aylesbury, and she and her family knew him well in his younger days, before he left for South Africa. There are still people in the village who speak of him with affection, though of course it is many years since he left, and he has not been back often.

Can you kindly tell me the name of the publisher of the book of Negro poetry you spoke of, as I should so like to get hold of a copy. Perhaps you may be interested to see a poem I wrote a month or two ago about South Africa, and two stories drawn from my experiences there. I do a good deal of speaking to Mothers' Union Branches about South Africa, so try to keep my knowledge of developments up to date. Things were bad enough when we were there, but they have gone from bad to worse now, and one wonders what the end of it all is going to be.

Do you know if Blanket Boy's Moon is a true story? and can you tell me anything about its author? I was much interested to read of the better conditions for non-Europeans in P.E.A., and I should very much to like to know something about the educational system there. What chance is there for the African to reach the required "assimilation" level? What schooling is provided for non-Europeans, and what proportion of them have a chance of going to School? Can you tell me anything about this, or tell me of a book in which I can find the answer?

With my good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth W. Lee. (Mrs).



UWI Libraries

B. Soyja  
Mama

212 Mendi Road,  
New Brighton,  
Port Elizabeth.  
South Africa.

29<sup>th</sup> March 1955

Dear Mr Abraham,

I am writing you this letter in order to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading your novels - "The Song of the City", "Mine Boy", "The Path of Thunder", "Wild Conquest", "Return to Goli" and your Autobiography "Till Freedom". The book I like best is "Wild Conquest". I feel in it you have given us the true picture of the great Trek. In all your books you have not allowed Racial prejudice to come into your writings. You have black and white people alike and have exposed their faults without being

(2)

ceased. By your writings you have shown<sup>us</sup> that even a black writer can compete with writers of other nations of the world. Africa is proud of you!

When are you going to publish a reprint of the book "Dark Testament"? Have you succeeded in compiling an anthology of African Bantu Poetry? How about forming an Association of African Authors? Could you draft a constitution for us? ~~we~~ <sup>also</sup> write an appeal to all African writers to come together and form such an Association. Will you do that for us. We also want suggestions.

I am a Xhosa poet and author. I have written a number of poems in Xhosa. These have been published in two anthologies, "Amagunube" Black -

(3)

berries" and "Indyebo ka Xhosa" (Xhosa Treasury of Verse). Both these collections of mine are now prescribed for schools Examinations - one for the Matriculation and the other for Degree Examination.

I shall also be very much pleased if you could send me your autographed photograph. I want to keep in my album.

I am sending you a small picture of myself. Am employed as Clerk at the Native Administration Department, New Brighton Port Elizabeth. 35 year old and Married. Father of a two year old daughter Mandisa - Boringen & Joy. I hope that information is sufficient to make you know who I am.

Accept cordial greetings from All African Authors in S.A.  
L. Sora Mame

37 Jessel Drive,  
Loughton, Essex.  
England.

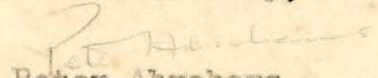
February 21, 1955.

Dear Mr. Fisk,

I have only just received your letter dated February 4, and I should like to thank you most warmly for your kind comments on Tell Freedom.

As you see, I am not living in New York but a little way outside London in England, so I cannot meet your party in New York unless I am lucky enough to be able to manage a visit there during the coming summer. I suspect though that you will have to pass through London on your way to Africa. If that is so, and if you are stopping off in London for a few days, and if I am not on a trip out of the country at the time - and please forgive all the 'ifs' -, then perhaps I can meet your party here in London. If you will write me about your possible travel dates, we might be able to arrange something.

Yours sincerely,

  
Peter Abrahams

Mr. Alfred G. Fisk,  
San Francisco State College,  
1600 Holloway Avenue,  
SAN FRANCISCO 27,  
California.  
U.S.A.

SAN FRANCISCO STATE COLLEGE

1600 Holloway Avenue  
San Francisco 27, California

February 4, 1955

Mr. Peter Abrahams  
Author, Tell Freedom  
c/o Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.  
501 Madison Avenue  
New York 22, New York

Dear Mr. Abrahams:

I have just finished reading your book, Tell Freedom and have recommended it to the members of a study tour of Africa which I am organizing for the coming summer.

I understand that you are now living in New York. Would it be possible for us to meet you there? I plan a day's program for my study tour in New York (mostly at the United Nations) before we fly to Africa. It would be a very significant thing for us if you can give us a bit of orientation. All our group would, I am sure, be most interested in meeting you after reading your book.

I consider your book one of the finest things of its kind I have ever read. It seems to me, in fact, far superior to Richard Wright's, Black Boy. I am sure I need not say to you that you write with unusual poetic beauty, sensitivity, and significant insight.

Sincerely yours,

*Alfred G. Fisk*  
Alfred G. Fisk

NADINE GORDIMER

P.O. Box 55,

Denver,

Colorado

20th September, 1954

Dear Mr Abrahamson,

I did not read your "Tell Freedom" until last month, but ever since, I have been wanting to write and pay belated tribute to your remarkable book. I was, and am, tremendously excited about it. There has now been a book like it out of Africa, and although no doubt as Africa becomes articulate, it is a matter of experience that will come to be written many times again, I

37 Jessel Drive,  
Loughton,  
Essex.  
England.

September 3rd, 1954.

Dear Miss Bonner,

When your letter of August 15th came I remembered that I had kept your earlier letter and I have now dug it out of my file and reread with your current letter. That first one was dated March 18th, 1948. I rarely keep letters as long as that but I doubted whether I would get another like it so I kept it. And now I have had another as rewarding and from the same person.

I am indeed grateful to you. And thank you so much for the review and the advertisement with the quotes. I had seen the review but not the advertisement with the quotes and that, too, is very rewarding. I do of course hope the book will do well for me but even if it does not I will feel amply rewarded by the warm response it has provoked from so many sensitive people both in this country and the United States. Langston Hughes, with whom I am in touch, wrote me one of his rare heart-warming, laughter-filled letters of appreciation. And I shall keep that with your two letters and hope to meet you both in order to say thank you in the flesh.

I have been asking for Arna Bontemps' STORY OF THE NEGRO at the London bookshops yesterday but they don't seem to know it, so I shall have it ordered ~~from~~ from the United States. I am also at a disadvantage with you as I have not managed to get any of your books. But I hope to remedy this before so long.

In all this I am trying to say thank you adequately and it is not very easy. But I think you will understand that. I saw my mother and sister (and drunken brother) two years back and their pride left me helpless.

Yours sincerely,

*P. P. [Signature]*

706 Riverside Drive, New York City, 31.  
15th August, 1954.

Dear Mr. Abrahams:

Perhaps you have not seen the NY Times review of TELL FREEDOM, or the advertisement with the quotes, so I enclose them.

A few years ago I wrote you about your PATH OF THUNDER, and had such a nice letter from you in reply. I think this is the only time I have written twice to the same author (I don't even write once very often), but TELL FREEDOM is so beautiful and so important that I am compelled to do so now. I hesitate to put down on this typewritten page all I would like to say. You use words so superbly and effectively that I rejoice that the English language can be so used, but it makes me a little shy about writing this letter. (And, I think I told you before that I write for a living -- books for young people -- and Knopf is my publisher).

Somehow my place seems enriched with your book as one of my proud possessions. And its beauty makes its tragedy only the more telling. I hope it is tremendously successful -- not only for your sake, and certainly you deserve great success for doing such a magnificent job -- but so great numbers of people may read it. In South Africa particularly anyone who reads such poetry-in-prose will be rarely rewarded, but as Arna Bontemps says it is so timely. Heartbreakingly so that such a book of experiences should be timely. And how you have managed to lift up the cruel stupidity into such a clear focus with words that win through any kind of argument is a feat of genius and of heart.

Did you ever read Arna Bontemps' STORY OF THE NEGRO? I think it has been published in England. Noticing his quote made me think of mentioning it to you, as he tells of some of the long-ago writers. Knopf did it here for the young people's list.

Your mother and sister must be very happy about your writing. And thank you deeply, as one of your readers.

Yours faithfully,

May Graham Bonner

P.O. Box 51 College Station  
New York 30, N.Y.  
August 25th 1954.

Mr. Peter Abrahams,  
73 Jessel Drive,  
Loughton, Essex, England.

Dear Mr. Abrahams,

A few years ago, when I was editing a little magazine, the "Harlem Quarterly", I corresponded with you briefly concerning an article which Mr. Swain of the Paul R. Reynolds Agency had mailed for our consideration.

Your work as a writer was known to me long before then because I began to beat the drums in your behalf when I read one of your early books that a friend of mine had mailed from England. Now that three of your books have been published in America there is a resurgence of interest in you as a writer and as a person. I read your novel "Wild Conquest" when it was running in serial form in the magazine "Drum".

If you have an issue of that magazine for August 1952 you will notice that I have a short story "The Boy Who Painted Christ Black" in the same issue.

I get regular distribution of magazines from South Africa and have spoken extensively on that troubled land.

Yesterday, Sunday August 23rd, here, I read your review of the book, "Report on Africa" in the New York Times. It is a good review and to the point. I think Africa is emerging from her

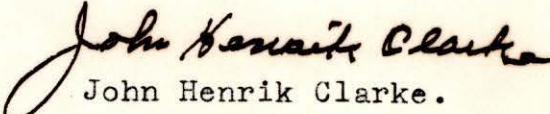
long lethargy and I think some blood will be spilled before the emergence is completed. I see no reason why a person of color should apologize for thinking or believing a thing like this. After all, the white race did not take the world by waving angels wings and the world that they have enslaved will not free themselves in like manner.

I am completing your last book "Til Freedom". I read over half of it early this year in one of the African magazines.

I would like to hear from you from time to time. I will send you copies of American publications that might interest you.

Now that you are better known in America, I wonder do you have any future plans for visiting this country?

Sincerely,

  
John Henrik Clarke.

JHC:mp

# Alfred · A · Knopf *Incorporated*

501 Madison Avenue



NEW YORK (22), N. Y.

August 17, 1954

Dear Mr Abrahams

I have read your book *Tell Freedom* and I think it the most wonderful book I have ever read about my people. I only wish that every one of us could the chance to thank you for such a real book. I would like to keep it as long as I live, so would be so kind as to autograph this book for me.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas F. Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas F. Lewis  
c/o Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.  
501 Madison Avenue  
New York 22, N. Y.

p.s. Could I Please have a Photography of you.

20 Norman Road,  
Hove, 3.

3rd August 1954.

Dear Mr. Abrahams,

I feel I must write and tell you how much I have enjoyed your book, "Tell Freedom." Not only does it seem to me moving and very well written, but every word of it rings true, and I must congratulate you on a fine piece of work.

I myself spent nearly 40 years in South Africa, and in many spheres came into close contact with the Coloured and Native inhabitants. After the Boer War I joined the Native Affairs Department. When I was at the Chief Pass Office at Fordsburg in 1908 I formulated a scheme for the abolition of passes, but the then Director of Native Labour said the Government would never agree to it. One of my most treasured possessions is a testimonial given to me when I left the Pass Office signed by all the interpreters and Native constables and testifying to my sympathy and fairness towards them.

All that was in 1908 - long before your time! I am now in my middle eighties, with failing sight, and your book has been read aloud to me. I am the father of William Plomer, to whom you allude in your book. His first book, "Turbott Wolfe" (1926) was critical of racial prejudice and brought down on his head a storm of abuse. I remember that the Bishop of Bloemfontein, described it as a most courageous book.

Wishing you every success in your career,

Yours sincerely,

*C. Plomer*

Capt. C. Plomer,  
Sunnyend,  
20, Norman Road,  
Kingsway.  
Hove, 3.

*Written to  
thank him  
10/8/54*

July 18

14. Great Peter St.  
S. L. 1.

Dear Mr. Atchams

Now that I've just finished Tell Beeson's book I write & tell you how much I enjoy it. It is the only book I know which clearly tells what the non-white in Africa feels — & asks us to put up with at the hands of the Christian(?) Whites. It is deeply tragic that the vast majority of white utterly fail to carry out

The principles of Christ in their racial  
relationships. No wonder that some  
non-whites feel that they wish to  
have nothing to do with the "white  
man's church"! In preaching  
at Montmirail in the Field when I  
got back from France, in Sept. &  
shall tell the congregation to read  
your book. I hope we shall meet  
again before we sail & I shall enjoy  
meeting your friend Mr. Ingram  
(is that his name?)

Yours sincerely

+ Winfred Parker

34, Pasadena Court  
South Beach, Durban. Natal.

14. 7. 54.

Dear Peter,

Last week I read your newest book TELL FREEDOM, may I tell you that I think it is the finest literary effort you have written. I wonder what you feel about this book, I felt a tremendous load had left your aching heart when you had written "finis" to this book. Now you are at peace, I am sure- please tell me if you would like to write to me if my feelings about this book are correct. At first when I started to read it- I felt a physical pain- it was so acute sometimes that I had to stop the book the book away- how very little ~~ever~~ we who call ourselves liberals really knew anything of the sufferings of the other South Africans. This book is so sensitively written Peter- all the rancour, hatred and bitterness has gone, ( I understand it full well and know the reason for it). I have thought back over the year when I last saw you- often when you were very very hungry- and nowhere to lay your head. I remember asking you not to stow away- but to wait until you get away legally as it were. The first word I had from you when you arrived over there a postcard " you were sitting in St. James's Park on a seat, and you wrote" it does not say for "Europeans only"- it is all a long time ago now. I have all your books- that is not strictly true- I buy them read them and send them over to Copenhagen to my daughter- if you ever go to Denmark will you visit her- I am sure Cynthia would like to see you- she knows so much about you, I often talked to her about your days in Durban and the difficulties. I would love to know something about your family, I know you are very happily married and have some children- if you have time to write do tell me- if you have a snap of the group to spare it will be very good to have it. I could write at greater length, I really felt I wanted to write to tell you how much this last book meant to me.

One thing perhaps has changed about me - at last my friends call me by my own name the one I like and my family in Britain always use- FLORENCE- I always loathed Flo- my colleagues on the newspaper call me BAY- you may choose ) I care not. I am back in my old job on the Daily News- after having spent five years in Britain and Paris and Denmark. I have been working for the Liberal Party- at the present stage- we have no Communists- we do not want them- I think they consider us too weak- or not left enough- whatever it is, they find us useless- that goes for me too- I feel they have no contribution to make to the life of the folk in South Africa- we are all South Africans and the sooner the folk who live here accept the fact- the more readily can we settle down to an amicable way of life.

Enough of this- Tot Siens.

Yours as ever

Florence (Bay)

P.S. Just realised <sup>(Bayman)</sup> might not remember my surname.

London, W.C.1.

12th July, 1954

My dear Peter Abrahams,

I am sorry I have not written before now to thank you for your very nice letter of June 21st. For one thing I wanted to make sure that the "Listener" printed my review. I am very glad they have done so, and hope enormously that it may help in a small degree to encourage the sales of your book.

It is kind of you to suggest that I shall be missed by those who are working for a more sensible colour policy. I would certainly greatly have preferred to be mixed up with some work connected with Africa, but the Singapore job should be interesting and might be useful.

This question of multi-racial cooperation has become far the most important in the world today. I might be able to help to a very small extent. You will be able to help enormously. It seems to me that those of you who can face the injustices meted out to your race without bitterness and rancour are making an immense contribution to civilisation - something which belongs to all of us, and not merely to people of one particular race, religion or colour.

Bless you, and all my best wishes for the success of your work in the future.

Peter Abrahams, Esq.,  
37 Jessel Drive,  
Loughton, Essex.

*Yours ever,*  
Vernon Barber

# NEWS CHRONICLE

Telephone:  
CENTRAL 5000 (40 Lines)

Telegrams:  
"NEWS CHRONICLE, LONDON"

Northern Offices:  
DERBY STREET, CHEETHAM,  
MANCHESTER

12-22, BOUVERIE STREET,  
LONDON, E.C.4

16th June, 1954

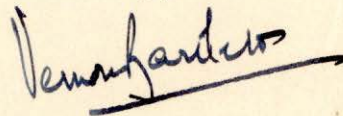
My dear Peter,

Your publishers were good enough recently to send me a copy of "Tell Freedom". I don't normally review books anywhere, but I was so moved by yours that I asked the Listener if I might review it for them. You may be interested to have a copy of the review which I hope will appear very shortly.

I hope very much indeed that the book will have a great success. In my opinion it most certainly deserves it.

I am going out at the end of August to live in Singapore, where I have been offered an extremely interesting job on the staff of the Straits Times. This job should enable me to travel more or less where I like in South East Asia, which is a part of the world only a little less fascinating than Africa. I expect to be away for three years, and I hope that by the time I come back you will be one of the best known writers in this country.

All my good wishes,  
Yours very sincerely,



Peter Abrahams, Esq.,  
c/o Messrs. Faber & Faber, Ltd.,  
24 Russell Square, W.C.1.

Craigside, Pant, Gwesty, Salop.

Dear Mr Abrahams,

June 22/1954.

I expect you have forgotten by now, that you very kindly gave me titles of publisher of some of your books. I am sorry I have been so long in sending a line of thanks for your trouble, but was waiting for "Tell Freedom", which has arrived at last!

In the interval, I got "Wild Unquest", a book of terrible beauty & deep understanding. Two weeks ago "Goli" came from the library, & I have just been over to a friend (who lives at Joy Cottage - Dorothy Abram) who has also read it, so that it can be returned on Thursday.

She thinks it a most valuable piece of work, which would be read by white people with a stake in S. Africa. She herself had a dear friend recently passed on - Kit Stanford of Stellenbosch.

They wrote to each other each week for many many years, so she knows something of the problems there: ~~was~~ able to appraise the details you give better than I.

She hasn't read "Till Freedom" yet. And what shall I say of it? It exceeds my hopes, often were high after reading the excerpts in British Weekly, months ago. Yes, I think it will be a best seller, & may God's blessing go with it, & may it be a means of guiding the us all into ways of peace.   
Joyfully.

How you have suffered, but you have taken the thorns of life, & TWISTED them into a living beauty & compassion.

I am so thankful that your Mother & Sister are alive & able to hear of your success. I love your portrayal of your Mother. Perhaps one day she will be able to see your wife & children. You know when to be reticent. Through what is unsaid, an author often reveals more than in

the written words. Is it not so?

What a wonderful choice of people you have encountered. And how wise was your assessment & understanding of Kenya.

You know Michael Scott, I see from "Goli" Broch. & I expect you know Miss Mary Benson at the African Bureau, who writes to me sometimes about St. Faith's Farm. Would that more of our missionaries had been farmers or carpenters etc!

Well, I hope we shall have the pleasure <sup>hearing</sup> ~~seeing~~ you soon on the Radio. I wish you had been in, instead of, or as well as, Ntantanda Jabaru. a little while ago. It was too much for her, & the questioners phrased their questions awkwardly.

We have the problem of "gangs" here too. My cousin brings boys here from an approved school.

very often.

I shall get some copies of Tell Freedom for Christmas presents. I have 20 nieces & nephews -  
I can give a book to the whole family. They  
or rather, some of them, had Paton's "Boy, the  
Beloved Country", a year or 2 back,

My love to Biddy & Aron, & my best  
respects to your wife. It's not an easy job  
to have a wife for a husband, you know!

Yours sincerely

Wilde Rivers.

Deep, deep thanks to you.

Did you hear Ormerod Greenwood's "Lift up  
your heart" talks about William Blake, I  
wonder. They are published by The Layman.

Tel.  
Western 6989.

78, Campden Hill Road,  
W.8.

16. VI.54

DEAR PETER,

I think I should really write  
to congratulate you on Tell Freedom, which  
I find the most absorbing of all your  
books. In fact, it is packed with  
interest, which gradually mounts as  
one works through the somewhat in-  
timidating emotional demands at  
the beginning! "And Jesus wept..." Really,  
your description of the market, and  
discovery of literature, did something  
for me that no other book has done  
for years, and that is, restored the  
positive feeling for the undertone,  
which I entered Africa so long ago.

not only this, but I find that you perfectly hit ~~over~~ off my own sentiments at an early age, in such very different circumstances, an Irish boy in England, impoverished, looking back always to a happier time than my father lived. "The familiar mood that awaits the Russian young who are poor and displaced, is a mood of sharp and painful inferiority, of violently ~~stark~~ angry passions, of desperate and overwhelming wrong."

But you look it so good because it does not only achieve catharsis, it adds (for the first time I remember in you) humour. And a very pleasant dry humour at that. I think of the second thoughts on putting in the eye of a white man solely - judging, the exchange over the "Coloured reel", the comment

Tel.  
Western 6989.

78, Campden Hill Road,  
W.8.

of Harold's sister about love, the  
reason for going to Natal. All  
these beautifully set off the darker  
shades. Again, you managed to  
rise to the heights of eloquence  
quite effortlessly when needed.  
"Only ~~ing~~ dressed in felt and  
no one recognised her." In-  
cidentally, I was interested that you  
spell Rhinoceros - Toros' name  
wrong, and do not describe him.  
He was not exactly an artist,  
was he?

If I had one criticism apart  
from the little too much rhetoric,  
& my palate, at the sequencing, it  
would be that you haven't set  
towards the end, and he de-

part 2 from Ombudsman Liza Trudgill  
Gardiner. But unlike her, you  
had so much to detract of the  
political context - even though I  
realise that some could be unknown.  
I really feel you could almost  
have instructed 2 books out of your  
first envisaging. Why you don't  
get a ~~price~~ <sup>choice</sup>, I can't imagine.

I am thinking of taking a  
job practically offered me, of writing  
programmes in the new GSW East  
Broadcast since, & the first 3-4  
years of its life. Would you advise  
this? If you can make a lunch  
date in the next few weeks, I  
should appreciate a talk.

Yours ever  
Henry

Told him about the 'Eras'  
& suggested they repudiate it  
and I would publicise it.

38 St Patrick Road  
Houghton Estate  
Johannesburg,  
15.8.53

17/9/53

Mr Peter Abrahams  
c/o Faber and Faber Ltd,  
24. Russell Square,  
London,

Dear Mr Abrahams,

I have just finished reading your book "Return to Goli", with most of which I find myself in great sympathy.

Imagine my surprise, therefore, when on page 167 I read a statement which distorts completely the point of view of the Institute of Race Relations, by the misplacement of two little words. There is all the difference in the world between "it is possible....." and "is it possible----". The whole context of the Institute's statement shows that the question was a sarcastic one carrying the meaning "of course not." How could you so misread and so misinterpret the standpoint of a body which stands for partnership of the races in this South Africa of ours?

yours in sorrow not in anger

A. G. Hoernlé  
President

HAYWARDS HEATH 76A.

21/9/53

SUNTE HOUSE.

HAYWARDS HEATH.

SUSSEX.

July 7th., 1953

Dear Mr. Abrahams,

I have just finished Return to Goli, and I should like to congratulate you very sincerely on a book which must have taken a great deal of courage to write. You have certainly widened my comprehension of South Africa, a country which I do not know at all from first hand.

In reading I was constantly struck with the parallels and contrasts with the Southern United States, which I do know somewhat; and for me it was a revelation to realize that, in the vast majority, the "negroes of the U.S.A. are "Coloured" rather than "Black" psychologically, as well as physically. The discussions among the Coloured which you recount could, with very slight alterations, have taken place in Harlem; and there is exactly the same value given to physical signs - lighter skin, "good hair", "good lips" and so on.

One of the points which I would much like to know more about is the content of African and coloured education in S. Africa. Negro schooling below the Mason Dixon line is almost as inadequate as what you describe; but the text books in the vast majority of cases are the same as used for the whites; and I think this contributes quite a lot to the unhappiness of many of the Southern Negroes. The values they are taught are those of the white Americans, which the laws and customs of segregation etc. prevent them realizing, so that they feel cheated, I think in a different way to, say the people of the Gold Coast twenty years ago (when I was there) where a real effort had been made, at Achimota for example, to adapt education to the local realities. Don't think I mean by this that "negroes shouldn't have as good an education as possible; but there is something ludicrous in the Negroes of Senegal being taught history from a primer which opens "Nos ancêtres, les Gaulois..." I think a careful and comparative study of the text books provided could be very illuminating.

I shall look forward to reading further books of yours.

With all good wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely,

*John Goss*

Joubert Park Nursing Home  
22 Koch St, Johannesburg.

RIVERSIDE FARM,  
P. O. BOX 77, MASERU,  
BASUTOLAND,  
SOUTH AFRICA.  
TELEPHONE: LADYBRAND 1431

12 May 1953.

21/5/53

Dear Abrahams,

I have just read your RETURN TO GOLLI with deep admiration; so great, that although normally I don't hold with fan letters I feel bound to write to you. If you don't hold with fan letters I hope that you will forgive me, and do not of course feel that you have to reply.

The full magnificence of human character is only revealed in resistance to, and triumph, over adversity. I shall only say how conscious I was, as I read your autobiographical pages, of your share of the giants and hobgoblins. "Who would true valour see..."

If I had to lay my finger on what I thought showed most understanding in this book I would choose the description of the corruption of life in the Reserves, for Goli is very active there. But, speaking from a knowledge of Basutoland only, I believe there to be quite a lot of the golden age left, even to-day, particularly where there is a sufficiency of wealth and enough family cohesion.

Your book has moved me greatly, and I believe will have a great influence in this country, particularly with good people who are tempted to be embittered and defeated by the hobgoblins. Your book holds the future, for we will one day experience a national reconciliation based on its ideas. That is a certainty. The doubtfulness is of course in the manner and length of our pilgrimage between to-day and that day.

Please go on writing. You can do so much to safeguard the peace of this country - and to build courage to defeat our worses selves.

I was born here too, I suspect about the same time as you - 29 June 1918. Thank you for your kind reference to myself.

Yours sincerely

Pat Duncan

See him. Not much  
paid seeing him again

"Millside",  
Church Road,  
Bagshot, Surrey,  
13th March, 1952

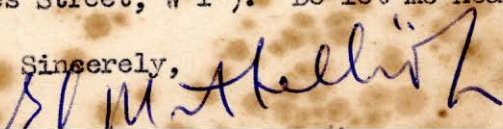
Dear Abrahams,

The very day after meeting you at Henry Swanzy's I got your book, Wild Conquest from the Times Book Club, and I can tell you quite honestly it was a relief to read a book with real vitality again. For months before I had been bored by novel after novel. When I finished your book I was sorry I was not able to see you at once to discuss it with you, as there were quite a number of points I wanted to take up with you. On the whole, I thought it excellent, but I found that it was a trifle unbalanced in construction-- that is, you started off by making it the tale of the Boer trekkers, switched off to the Matabeles and then came back ( almost as an after-thought ) to the Boers. Every section was admirably done, nevertheless, and my interest was held all through, which is rare for me with any novel these days.

Sunday last I saw The path of thunder reviewed in The Observer, and despite the review got the book next day and am now well over three-quarters through it. I read very slowly and carefully. I think I am enjoying this book even more than I did Wild Conquest. But my God! I'd never dreamt that the Coloureds were treated so badly in South Africa. In the West Indies colour prejudice is not overt-- in fact, it is, in a sense, almost academic-- and no coloured or pure-blooded negro can complain of being treated ignominiously by the whites. Look here, we must get together soon and have a long chat about everything. Incidentally, I heard you on the Third Programme in the second talk. I didn't hear the first, but this didn't matter as I read the printed version in The Listener. What fire in your pen!

Drop me a line and let's arrange a lunch date. Or some sort of evening date, if it isn't too late in the evening, for I live far out in the country as you can see. My phone number in London is GROsvenor 8011, Extension 107 (British Council, 65, Davies Street, W 1 ). Do let me hear from you soon.

Sincerely,



98 King Henry's Road,  
London N.W.3.  
England.

April 19, 1948.

Dear Miss Bonner:

I was deeply touched when I got your letter of March 18. Thank you very much indeed. It is not often that a young writer gets the kind of appreciation contained in your letter. And while I do not want to set the writer apart from the ordinary individual, I do feel that it is sometimes only those who are at the job themselves who can go into the book and read into it some of the personal problems involved for the writer in its making. The making of the PATH OF THUNDER demanded a peculiar kind of courage because I am certain the 'Coloureds', my people, are going to be quite bitter about some aspects of the book. On the other hand, I shall be very surprised if the South African whites do not ban it out of hand. Yet it had to be done. And writers as a tribe are no more courageous and no less cowardly than other folk. Perhaps they just see a little more clearly sometimes and are a little more dumb at other times.

Like you, I hope Arna Bontemps' book is brought out here. Very many years ago, in Johannesburg, I read a poem his that moved me most profoundly by its quiet strength. Perhaps you know it:

Go through the gates with closed eyes,  
Stand erect and let your black face front the West,  
Drop the axe and leave the timber where it lies -  
A woodman on the hill must have his rest.  
Go where leaves are lying brown and wet,  
Forget her brown arms and her breast who mothered you,  
And every face you ever loved forget,  
Close your eyes: walk bravely through.

Since then I have always looked out for the works of Arna Bontemps, but so far without any success. I have been much more fortunate in getting the works of Cullen and I am trying to persuade somebody here to bring out his ON THESE I STAND. I love Cullen because more than most modern poets of our time he has the singing touch that found its highest expression in the incomparable Keats. It has been one of my great hopes to meet Cullen, it is one of my great regrets that I shall not.

To make amends in some small measure for the unavoidable delay in replying to your letter, I am sending this by air. As soon as I can afford it I hope to visit New York. When I do I most sincerely trust I shall have the pleasure of meeting you.

Thank you again for your very kind letter.

Yours sincerely

MARY GRAHAM BONNER

706 RIVERSIDE DRIVE

NEW YORK 31, N. Y.

18th March, 1948.

Dear Mr. Abrahams:-

Last night I finished (though I shall want to reread) THE PATH OF THUNDER, and today I have talked about it and thought about it a great, great deal. This, of course, I shall continue to do. But it doesn't seem right to admire a book so deeply as I do yours without telling you so.

I was arrested and impressed at first by your original and significant method of stating that your characters were fictional but the problems and prejudices factual. The story is beautifully written, the characters so alive that it seemed tragic they couldn't live. Yet your ending was the only one -- and the epilogue I thought very effective. In it was embodied all's careless -- and cruel -- comment which was shown up so strikingly after what had gone before. There were so many integral parts of the story that were so right. For example it was so fitting to Sairie and her love for Lanny that she should have been the one to hope to be able to lie in the sun. It was painting such a true picture when you drew the preacher. I shan't go on like this -- for after all you do know the story you have written -- but I think it one of the finest books I have read in a long, long time. As a writer I took delight in your magnificent craftsmanship. (Mostly I write books for young people). As a reader I was happy that you told your story exactly as you did -- or should I say as a reader and an individual? I hope there will be many people reading it and that it will do well for you and for its story.

You quoted Cullen's poem, and I hope Arna Bontemps' next book will be brought out in England. Knopf, who publish my books, are doing his "Story of the Negro," and I did the index for it so I know it well. It is a history for teen -- or any -- age, and is replete with information and very well written. The only recent book of mine brought out in England is "Canada and Her Story" which doesn't fit into this paragraph at all, except as a means of introducing myself.

I noticed you had written other books, and I hope they'll bring them out here, too. You've had a fine press in New York, as no doubt your publishers have told you.

Please let me say once more how greatly I admire your book. It seems to me you have done the very thing for which an author always wishes -- you have really accomplished what you set out to do, and you have done this superbly.

Yours faithfully,

Mary Graham Bonner

Answered 19/4/48