

Int Eds
INTERNATIONAL EDITORS' CO.

AGENCIA LITERARIA

Rambla Cataluña, 39 • BARCELONA-7 (España)

Cables: Lifeplay Barcelona

Teléfono 231 91 15

Barcelona, 28th May, 1973.

Ms. Vanessa Holt,
JOHN FARQUHARSON LTD.
15 Red Lion Square,
LONDON WC1R 4QW

Dear Vanessa,

We finally have been able to get an explanation from NOVA TERRA in connection with the matter: TELL FREEDOM by Peter Abrahams, which we are quoting below:

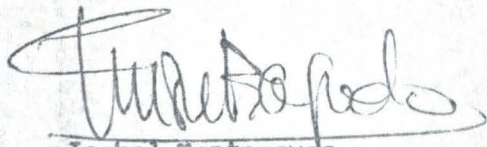
no such contract
"As we had informed the owners, we thought in 1961 or 1962 a contract was signed by virtue of which it was arranged that a £30 payment settled all rights for the first edition. As a result of a personnel rearrangement in this Firm (I have been here since 1963) and a certain lack of organization at that time, we have been quite unable to find whether no contract nor payment, but have always believed that this payment was effected in due course. However, it now seems that this payment was never made and that the contract was not even confirmed so that we must obviously proceed to put every thing right immediately, above all bearing in mind that, as we expressed recently, we would like to make an edition in the Castellane language (our three former editions were made in Catalan)."
no such contract not paid for

Consequently, if you agree to the above suggestions, please forward contract for signature and filing purposes and in order to request transfer permit.

In addition, please state if you are prepared to grant the rights for the Castellane edition."

Your comments on the above will be very appreciated.

Yours sincerely,


Isabel Montsegué

ARGENTINA:

Avda. Cabildo, 1156 - BUENOS AIRES

Miembro del Instituto Nacional del Libro Español

BRASIL:

Alameda Itú, 402 - SAO PAULO

E. Ismail,

P.O. Box 133,

Bellville. C.P. South Af.

Dear Mr. Peter Abrahams,

The reason for writing to you is that, I am compiling a list of South African born "coloured" writers and their work, for my personal information.

I know you as ~~all~~ the other writers will probably hate me for using the word "coloured", As Richard Rive said we are writers and poets we know no colour.

Please forgive me if you may find me speaking like a racist~~ist~~ or what you may call it, but do remember that i've never been out of this country and that I may still speak as a typical South African coloured. I do know that you who left do not speak like us or think like us, so please do forgive me.

~~xixxxxxxxrepresenting~~

I am a representative for a book firm, Perskor publications, selling books to schools.

I discovered in my going around to schools that very few principals, teachers and students know very little about our own writers and poets. The reason may be that because most of our South African born writers left the country and most of their work have been published in other countries.

Most of our best writers books, has been banned and was never and will never been seen in South Africa.

Alex la Guma's ~~work~~ books has never been seen in South Africa. I am afraid that our children here will never know ~~an~~ about people like him, ~~xxxxxx~~ Peterse Cosmo Peterse and yourself. There is a number of your books here but I found very few know that you are a South African.

That is the reason why I'm compiling this list just for my personal record

I do hope you understand, so I will be too glad if you could let me have a list of all your books published. The name of the publisher and the country and date where it was published. I am writing to every known writer for their list of books I do hope you will not disappoint me. I know you are very busy, ~~and~~ but I do hope and trust that you will find time to write to me.

I am ~~xxxxxxx~~ Afrikaans speaking and I'm not a typist so please overlook my mistakes.

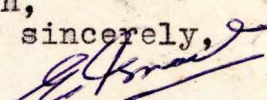
I will be too glad if you could, If possible, give me the ~~name~~ or names of other South African born writers who is not staying in South Africa and who had books publish.

I am looking forward to a very interesting letter from you, so please do not disappoint me.

Give my regards to your family.

I remain,

your sincerely,


Ebrahim Ismail.

11 Tregothnan Road
London SW9 9JU
United Kingdom

Peter Abrahams
C/o Faber and Faber

5 February 1991

Dear Mr Abrahams

I am writing a biography of Una Marson (1905-65), the Jamaican poet, journalist, broadcaster and activist who was resident in England during the 1930s and 1940s. Last year, during my stay in Jamaica, Vivien Carrington suggested you might have known Una Marson and, from other sources, such an acquaintanceship seemed likely.

If you knew her during the 1940s when she was broadcasting for the BBC and busy supporting many of our West Indian servicemen and women, your testimony would be most valuable to me.

I have thoroughly enjoyed re-reading 'A wreath for Udomo' recently and would love to be able to capture some of the atmosphere of political organising in my own work.

If you are able to help with my request, or indeed can suggest other sources of personal testimony, I should be most grateful.

Best wishes

Sincerely


Delia Jarrett-Macauley

May 26, 2003

Coyaba
P.O. Box 20
Red Hills
St. Andrew
Jamaica. W.I

Professor Anthonia C. Kalu
Africana Studies
University of Northern Colorado
USA

Dear Professor Kalu

Here is a reproduction of an email I attempted to get through to you several times today. There seems to be something wrong with the setup of your email address and you may wish to look into it as others may have encountered the same problem trying to get through to you by email. Anyway, this is what I tried to send:

“ ackalu@bentley.unco.edu
Subject MINE BOY Chapter Three

Professor Antonia Kalu

I have just received your letter of April 23 to Faber re Mine Boy Chapter 3.
I now control those rights and will agree to your use of the section for a fee of US\$300.
If this is acceptable the credit line should be: By permission of the Author.
Let me know by return email and I will sign your permissions request form.

Sincerely

Peter Abrahams. “

I tried to get this going at least three times without success. My email address is:

coyaba@cwjamaica.com

Peter Abrahams

June 21, 2003

Coyaba
P.O. Box 20
Red Hills
St. Andrew
Jamaica. W.I

Professor Anthonia C. Kalu
Africana Studies
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
U.S.A.

I am sorry to tell you your email address is still not working properly. I have tried, for the best part of the last two hours, to get a simple message through to you; but my email server rejects your address as not acceptable. Perhaps your email is restricted only to the USA.

Please find attached the message I spent so much time trying to get to you. Even when I tried the simple lowercase: anthonia.kalu@unco.edu the message would not pass.

As it is, I have already spent, on this communication with you, a goodly portion of what I will not earn. But that is how it goes in my business.

Sincerely

Peter Abrahams



UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO



Africana Studies

April 23, 2003

Faber and Faber
3 Queen Square
London
WC1N 3AU
United Kingdom

Peter Abrahams



Dear Permissions Manager:

I would like to use the following material from one of your publications in my forthcoming book, the *Anthology of African Literature*:

Peter Abrahams, *Mine Boy* (1946). Chapter 3

The approximately 800-page anthology will be published in 2003 by the scholarly press Lynne Rienner Publishers. Both hardcover and paperback editions are planned, with a combined print run of 3,000-5,000 copies. I am requesting nonexclusive world rights in the English language only.

The book is intended as an educational text in Africa as well as elsewhere and it is therefore important to keep costs down. I hope that you will bear this in mind when setting a fee.

If you do not hold the rights to this material, I would appreciate your letting me know to whom I should apply.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

rights reverted.

Anthonia C. Kalu

Anthonia Kalu, PhD
Professor of Black Studies

We hereby grant permission for the use of the material listed above. Please use the following credit line:

☐ Gratis ☐ Fee _____

Date

Signature & Title

UWI Libraries

URGENT

RELEASE OF JOMO KENYATTA

To, Mr. Peter Abrahams.

.....

.....



JOMO KENYATTA
FATHER OF OUR NATION.

We are very much pleased to state that in the near future we wish to publish a book namely, "Release of Mr. Jomo Kenyatta". In this book we hope to publish opinions of all leading personalities of to-day about Mr. Jomo Kenyatta's release.

As you are aware, Sir, Mr. Jomo Kenyatta and five others were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in April, 1953. Mr. Jomo Kenyatta and four others have served the said sentence but as the Government of Kenya had made restriction orders against them, they are now kept in the remote area at Lodwar, Kenya.

Many petitions have since been made in vain to the Kenya Government for the release of Mr. Kenyatta. This book will just provide one more attempt in this direction. We shall, therefore, feel deeply grateful if you would be kind enough to spare some time and let us have your views and your photograph about Mr. Kenyatta's release for publication in the above book.

If you have any literature concerning Mr. Jomo Kenyatta or his release or any other useful matter for this purpose e.g. photographs etc. please do send it to us. Kindly treat the matter as urgent.

Yours faithfully,

1. *Mr. Oginga Odinga* M.L.C.
Vice - President of The Kenya African National Union.
2. *Mr. T. J. Mboya*, M.L.C.
The General Secretary of The Kenya African National Union.
3. *Mr. Musindo Muliro*, M.L.C.
Deputy Leader of KADU.
4. *Mr. Ambu H. Patel*.
Organising Secretary.
P. O. Box 10460.
NAIROBI. (Kenya)

All Correspondence should be made under the Secretary's Name.

II. June, 1956.

Dear Mr. Abrahams,

It affords me very much to obtain this delightful prerogative of writing you these numerable lines.

The inducement in writing you this letter is the result of what I have read about you and your work, ever since I was at home in South West Africa.

To introduce myself, may I say that I have the pleasure to inform you that I am a HERERO student from South West Africa studying here in America at the University of Lincoln, the Alma Mater of Kwame Nkrumah and Zik, the government leaders in West Africa, whose achievements have inspired me very much. I am very sure that being acquainted with the situation at home in Africa you would be very, very surprised to receive a letter from a person or some one of the Herero tribe rather in the U.S.A. seeing that none of us can be able to get out of South West Africa at this time due to the South African government's actions. In this case Mr. Abrahams I beg you not to press me hard. I know the question on your mind is.... How did he ever get out of the country? My reply to this will be.....your second Udomo.

As you would learn from the enclosed material my coming out of South West Africa was a drama of a very unique nature, probably worth to be put into a novel form, according to the suggestions of many writers here. After relating my story to the UNO many American writers here became interested in my story of escape to freedom, if I may put it in the accepted terminology of the day, as the result a great number of them requested me as to whether I would permit them to put my short and fascinating history into a novel form, not necessarily a biography but just a kind of one that will enable the people here to be aware of the Africans in general. However my objection has been that I am an African, and all these people here do not look at Africa through the eyes of the Africans, consequently, they do not comprehend the problem that confronts the Africans.

I then decided to put down into writing my story, with the sole purpose of requesting you to develop a novel in a way fit to you, you can add your own writing gist to it to suit your purpose, in other words apply your own creative ability. Mr. Abrahams, this is just a frame work I have given you, these material should belong to you, I do not want any profit from the novel which you may produce out of it. What I want is for my people as well as the people abroad to know the pressure that we have to go through before we can become what God has intended us to be. I know that the only man in this world who can do justice to a story of this nature is Mr. P. Abrahams, not because you are my countryman, but because my problem is your problem. I therefore placing the enclosed material at your disposal.

I wish you the best, and hope that one day your children will see the sun rise in a future free Africa, and that you and me shall be able to talk to each other face to face about our past history, the history of King Chaka the Great, of Ndingaan, and Maharero. And probably shall be able to witness an Opera Act portraying Chaka in action.

Pass my best regards to all in your family.

Yours sincerely,

and for Africa freedom.

Mburumba ua 'Kerina (Getzen).

P.O. Box 206,

Lincoln University,

Lincoln University,

U.S.A.

ON FREEDOM HIGHWAY

WHO IS MBURUMBA KERINA

Let the life-blood of human intercourse circulate freely for the benefit and happiness of all.

I was born oppressed among the oppressed HERERO people of South West Africa in a little country town of Tsumeb on June 6, 1932.

My father was of Ovambo descent, Udo Kambandi, a man of brilliant intellect. He took human chances in the course of life, he was fearless of consequences, as most men do.

I remember, he once had a fortune; he died a poor leader on April 7, 1948. My dear mother was sober and conscientious, an ardent Catholic, who from time to time taught me how to recite Hail Mary thrice a day, which I did of course. By birth she was of Herero origin, and her name was Magdalene Kasondoro Kerina Getzen. She was soft and good, she was the direct opposite of my father. He was severe, strong and militant, adamant, determined, and bold, refusing to yield even to superior forces if he believed he was right. My dear and angelic mother, on the other hand, was always willing to return a smile for a blow, and ever ready to bestow charity upon her enemies.

Of this peculiar combination I was born, and ushered into a world of turbulence, a world of miseries and frustration, a world of human suffering, a sectional paradise of colour consciousness and hatred, a world sick of every malady. This is the human fabric in which I was born, which awaits my contribution for its betterment. My grandmother named me Mburumba Kerina. But politically I became known as Getzen for numerous reasons.

I grew up with other boys, boys of different colours and backgrounds, but I was never whipped by any, on the contrary I made them all to respect me through the strength of my personality.

I received my education from many sources; being dissatisfied with the Catholic education, I went to a Lutheran Mission School, and finally ended up at the St. Barnabas Anglican Mission School which I liked very much. After my elementary school, I became a newspaper boy for the Hawcroft News Agency, and a watch repairer, a profession which I eventually discovered that was not meant for me. *garage boy for Sam Cohen.*

I was strong and determined; to me at home there was no difference between whites and black, except the fact that I wondered why the whites should ill-treat my people in our own country, whilst they were strangers. I therefore made up my mind to prove to everybody that we Africans are just as good as anyone, colour is just an incidental thing, and so no man should be barred from any position merely by virtue of his colour or creed. Education was the only means I could use to justify the equality of Africans with whites.

At the age of 19 years I was appointed to be Assistant-General Secretary of the South African Railways and Harbours, Non-Europeans Staff Association under the management of Mr. B. Karuaera, who was then the General-Secretary. This was my gateway to my people's leadership. I owe my gratitude to Mr. B. Karuaera and Mr. S. S. Tjirimuje who helped my parents in preparing me for my future task.

After serving for a period in the capacity mentioned above, life became a problem, it became a problem of dissatisfaction, everything lost its value in my eyes, and a little voice kept on reminding me of what my father had said to my mother before he died. "My wife, you have done what no other woman has done,-- let my son rise up to greatness, let him be the light of his people, let his voice shake the foundations of our oppressor and free his fellowmen. He is our people's son." So saying, he died peacefully.

The time had come when I realized that I had to begin a fight for a place in the sun, that it was not so easy to pass on to office and position. I then began to develop a burning love for my poor and oppressed people. I took great interest in their problems and finally witnessed with my young eyes the injustice inflicted on my people by the white people because of their colour and misfortune.

Becoming restless for the opportunity of doing something for the uplifting of my people, I resolved that I would not permit my people to be kicked around in their country of their birth. My young and ambitious mind led me into flights of great imagination. I saw before me, even as I do now, a horizon of a new world of African men and women, not slaves, nor dogs, nor Lazaruses, but a nation of sturdy, proud people making their impress upon civilization and causing a new light to dawn upon the universe.

My brain was afire, there was a world of thought to conquer, a new order and a new world to establish; a new epoch was opened for me. I had to start ere it became too late. I decided to make myself available for the great service of my people's redemption; this I can only fulfill with the necessary educational qualification.

I was 16 years of age when I was awakened and brought to see myself poor, not of money or material wealth, but destitute, and deprived of my natural right "Freedom", wretched and undone, and without the mercy of providence. I must be lost, shortly after obtaining mercy through the three Hail Mary's which my mother taught me at an early age, and which I recited thrice a day in the little chapel of St. Barnabas Anglican Mission in Windhoek. I decided to traverse the road of life, after the death of my daddy. I left my mother and went up to Windhoek, the capitol city of South West Africa, to take up a position in the South African Railways and Harbours, Non-European Staff Association.

There was a great silence in the heart of my dear angelic mother when I informed her of my aim to sacrifice my blood and all that I am for the liberty of the people so dear to me, the people I love and to whom I owe my duty and allegiance, the people whose salvation song would soon be heard by others across the oceans, and beyond the celestial bodies. These are my people of Africa whose music is the music of music. The words were strong and heavy for my mother to bear, but as is always the case with most mothers, the only thing she had to say was, "Take good care of yourself, Mburumba, and don't forget the words of your father".

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers;
But error, wounded, writhes in pain and dies among his worshippers."

LIFE IN WINDHOEK

We grow to hate things we love, and love things we hate in course of time.

Life in Windhoek was not that much enjoyable, especially to a lonely person like Mburumba. On the contrary, I engaged myself in reading various newspapers and books, especially the biographies of great men, among which I was inspired by the works of Mahatma Ghandi, Marcus Garvey, Booker T. Washington, and Thomas Jefferson, as well as Rosseau and the French Revolution. My favourite newspaper was the West African Pilot which I used to get from Mr. B. Karuaera, the General-Secretary under whom I was working.

It was Mr. B. Karuaera and Mr. E. S. Tjirimuje who encouraged me to give up my work and to go to school, which I finally did of course. I should also state that during my elementary school career, I used to work as a garden boy for Mr. and Mrs. N. C. Frazer, but before I was employed by the Railway Office, I was an automechanic at the famous garage of Sam Cohen in Windhoek. But my ambition never allowed me to be satisfied with what I had at that moment, apart from my work and reading. My hobby was soccer, and children whom I used to gather, and listen to their stories. These are the people whose future I thought of greater than the rest of the people, and whom I want to raise from the abyss of poverty, hunger, misery, and oppression to free men and women of my tomorrow's Africa.

AT WILBERFORCE INSTITUTE

"Let humanity be our eternal goal". Goethe.

Here at Wilberforce Institute, I was once more introduced to life in a different form. I took great interest in my work, and I loved the school, for the mere fact that at that time it was still under the direction of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

At this institute of learning I came in contact with many American-educated scholars, Bishops of the A.M.E. Church, as well as reverends and teachers. Here I saw what men of my colour could do for the uplifting of our people, and again my ambition was strengthened. I therefore fixed my goal, and that is to climb the ladder until I reach the top, despite the obstacles in my way. I worked my way through this high school with a little help from my family. My mother was just alone, and I did not want to trouble her very much due to the fact that she had other children at home to take care of.

When I was steadily approaching my senior year, I looked for new avenues to embark upon. I thought of my next goal after my high school; by then my people at home were involved in the case of the return of their land, a case that had been now for ten years before the World Assembly's Agenda of the United Nations. With the help of the Rev. Michael Scott, the case of my people attracted the attention of many nations; at home the South African Government was inflicting the most inhuman treatment on my people, and adamantly refused them passports to travel to the UNO for their case. The Hereros and the Namas became the most hated by the South African Government. While thinking of my position, developments in West Africa were rapidly taking new shape under the able leadership of the "wonder boy", Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Suddenly one day, through the mail, my mother sent me a copy of the Drum magazine, in which appeared Nkrumah's article and his activities in West Africa, as well as his background, which I considered most. In fact, my love for America was strengthened after reading "The Primer of American Freedom", which appeared in the Post Magazine in the middle of the forties. In this magazine I saw the name of Lincoln University, and I wrote my mot'

for permission to send an application to Lincoln University. My thoughtful mother posed the following questions which were of great significance, and which determine my legal escape from South West Africa:

"1. Are you aware of the fact that you are a Herero, my son?

"2. How can it be possible for you to get permission from the South African Government while it has been impossible for our leaders?

"3. It is simple for the Government to find out your nationality, due to your name which is purely Herero,--Mburumba Kerina.

"4. Despite all the handicaps in our way, I as your mother prefer an intelligent move which may result in your legal escape, rather than an illegal escape.

"Your brother and I are awaiting your immediate reply in regard to this matter."

Being very anxious to get my family's support, I wasted no time. I took my pen and paper, and informed my parents that I had no idea about legal procedures, and how passports are obtained. I would like them therefore to keep me under regular instructions through the mail.

After a short time of anticipation, my mother received a letter from the President of Lincoln University, Dr. H. M. Bond, informing them that I had been offered a full scholarship at Lincoln University, in the United States of America. This was the first scholarship offered by an American University to a person in South West Africa. Never had any student from South West Africa travelled outside the country's borders for overseas for a higher education.

Though I had received the bursary, there was something troubling me, and these were the three main questions posed by my mother. She immediately informed me that they had drawn a systematic program which they wanted me to memorize, if I was really anxious to get out of the country. I promised my family that I would do everything they required of me. I then began to memorize the contents of the program in order not to make any blunder while being cross-examined by the South African Government detectives in the absence of my family. The recitation was as follows:

I am not a Herero; I am a Mulatto.
My name is Erich Williams Getzen.
I don't know the Rev. M. Scott.
I am interested in medicine.

The first part was based on the idea that it was possible only for mulattoes to wander around without ado from the government, so the Boers might ignore me and grant me permission, without many cross-examinations. It did turn out that way, but delicately. The second part was to convince the government that honestly I was a mulatto by the appearance of a European name. Erich is my long-forgotten Christian name which I revived for that particular drama,--Williams, only the devil knows where I got it, and Getzen is my mother's surname before she was married to my father. The denouncement of the Rev. M. Scott was for political reasons. He was the champion of our cause in the UNO, and if I identified myself with him, that would be my downfall. The seeking of refuge under medicine was the only way left.

My mother's poem gave me the prerogative to study the South African Government in a way unusual to a person of my calibre. This poem made me conceal my burning political ambitions,--instead I was forced to adopt the sweet smile of Christ.

I BECAME MALAN'S CRIMINAL

Life at Wilberforce Institute became a hard one, just like a criminal's. I had to be picked up and taken away from my classes almost every blessed week for cross-examination by the South African Detectives' Agent.

My principal's wife, Mrs. V. Habedi, never stopped crying for this little boy Getzen. The pressure was such that people finally began to suspect that I might be poisoned some way or another. The fear of the people at home and in South Africa was based on the fact that as long as the issue of South West Africa was a crucial one before the UNO, the South African Government could do anything in order to prevent having someone around the UNO.

My new program became a controversial topic especially among my people, who did not really understand why I had to act indifferently in my last moments with them. They could not comprehend why I denounced my ^{tribal} nationality. But my family kept everything under their own manipulation. They knew that even among our own people there were envious people as well as enemies who could discourage them and prevent my successful movement.

Despite the indefatigable determination of my family, there were some of my own people who did embark on a counter-movement to prevent my going. But one fortunate thing was, they did not know my poem in order to make their counter-movement an effective one. What made the whole drama an interesting one was the fact that, while being under careful observation by the South African Detectives, at the same time I made use of the same agents, both white and black, to provide me with full information about the South African Government's next measures against me. This worked pretty well, especially with those detectives who were assigned to travel with me everywhere in the country,--in my train compartments, by foot as a pedestrian, and the like.

The following questions posed to me became almost my daily song in the South African Government Headquarters:

"Who are you? Getzen.

What is your nationality? Mulatto.

Where do you live? South West Africa,--Windhoek.

What is your field of study? Medicine.

Why do you want to study in America? Because of technological advancement.

Would you accept the same scholarship if offered to you by the South African Government to study in a South African University? No.

Why? Because of my adventurous ambition.

Are you interested in politics? I have never heard of that term.

Have you heard of the UNO? Where is that animal found?

Do you know Rev. M. Scott? No.

Are you a Communist? We don't have such animals around here.

Do you belong to any organization? At present we are trying to organize a Student Body for South West Africa.

Are you going to tell the people abroad how we treat your people? I don't know. I am going for educational mission.

Would you come back? Certainly.

We will give you your passport only under two conditions. One, that you won't tell or inform the people abroad about how we treat your people, and secondly, that if you tell the people abroad about the ill-treatment of your people by our government, it will be better for you not to come back to your people, because we will shoot you the same day of your arrival."

6

Like all political defectors I was forced by the official pressure to accept the condition in order to get my passport. In the meantime, I was interested only in getting my passport to get out. What would happen in the future was not my concern. It would happen anyway, so why should I worry? For seven good months I fought with my family for my passport without rest, with the additional help of American friends in South Africa, whom I will always remember.

ON MY WAY TO CAPE TOWN

After being offered my passport by the government, my family made arrangements for me to meet the American Consulate-General. The nearest American diplomatic headquarters was in Cape Town, a journey of not less than five days from South West Africa.

I then started my journey from Windhoek just at the right time when all the students of South West Africa were returning to the Union to resume their studies. I shared a double compartment with Mr. K. Kauraisa and his colleagues who were both studying in the Cape Province.

The first night passed almost unnoticed, due to the fact that everybody was so excited and did not feel anything. We were still in our country, and could not feel as strangers. The evening of the second night was so hot and dusty, the only noise to be heard was the locomotive. This time we were crossing the great Namib desert and the plateau of Namaland. Mr. K. Kauraisa relaxed on his bed with the book entitled "Aggrey of Africa". The rest of us stretched ourselves over our beds thinking about the journey and the vacation which was so pleasantly spent at home with our families. But on the contrary, I was thinking about my future and myself.

In the meantime, something happened, just at the time when Mr. K. Kauraisa was busy reading the chapter in Aggrey's book of the bird that visited this great man of Africa when he was ill. A little bird flew through the window into our compartment. It flew around for a moment, and then settled on my chest, chirping. I took the little bird in my hand, looking carefully at it. Mr. K. Kauraisa immediately stood up, saying, "Another Aggrey again, Strange". I then stretched my hand through the window and let the little bird free. The incident created such a strange atmosphere, that it became the topic of the following day's journey. As a result, the day passed so swiftly as to be unnoticed.

My time in Cape Town with the American Consulate-General was so wonderfully spent. Within two and a half days I received my American visa, while on the other hand it took me seven months to get my passport. I am very grateful to Mr. Owen for his generosity, who made it possible for me to leave my country for America, at the same time creating a hopeful picture of freedom in the minds of millions of my people.

After the completion of everything, I telegraphed my family, telling them that everything was in good order, and that I was on my way back home to get my boat for the U.S.A. My family hardly believed me, because it took such a long struggle to get my passport. When my mother saw me on Sunday getting off the train, she simply said, "These strange Americans, always ready to rescue one who is fighting for freedom."

After succeeding with the booking of my passage, just the last week before my departure, someone broke into my brother's home, and went off with my \$200,--70¢,-- which was meant for my pocket money. I tried to get help from many sources, but

no. Of these sources was ready to offer me funds. I then told my family that the best way for me was to leave the country before the South African Government changed its mind; otherwise they might confiscate my passport. My mother then informed my brother that everything was legally obtained,--I could still travel on my visa if the passport were taken back, and the matter could be referred to the UNO and the State Department. However, I decided to travel with limited funds.

The journey was wonderful. I can still remember when our boat was about to enter the Bay of Biscay, the stormy part of the Atlantic Ocean; everybody's face on the boat was so sad and sorrowful. While sitting at the breakfast table it was announced that within forty-eight hours we would enter the Bay of Biscay. Before the forty-eighth hour I went out on deck for fresh air as usual. I found my fellow-passengers walking up and down the deck, and then the bell rang, and again the announcement, "We are now entering the Bay of Biscay". To my surprise, and probably everybody's, the so-called stormy bay was as calm as it could be. There was no air from heaven, and suddenly a lady came to me and said, in an English accent, "You know, it is my first time to see the Bay so calm and quiet". I turned around, realizing that I was the only black man passenger on the boat among my fellow-travellers, and with a smile I said, "It is because I am the only black passenger on the boat". This statement was in itself a surprising one. The whole boat talked about me the rest of the journey. It is wonderful to be a passenger on a boat, but one has to have money in order to enjoy the pleasures, and I did not have any money. I arrived in London with only \$1.00,--seven shillings,--in my pocket, but I managed to reach the U.S.A. with fifty cents!

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

"Every man in the street, white, black, red and yellow, knows that this is 'the land of the free', 'the land of opportunity', 'the cradle of liberty', 'the home of democracy', that the American flag symbolizes the 'equality of all men', and guarantees to us all 'the protection of life, liberty and property, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and racial tolerance'. Ralph Bunche.

Dear Professor Larson

Thank you for your cordial note. I did indeed see, and receive copies of my three books which appeared in the Collier Books African/American Library series you edited. I remember liking what I saw then.

Now to your questions:

(1) Garvey and Frederick Douglass struck me as having so much in common that their one major divergence of view would have been the thing I would have wanted to question Garvey on. Garvey, the Jamaican, the West Indian, the black American immigrant, saw Africa as the home and hope for all black folk. Africa for the Africans... So the dream was 'back to Africa'. I would have wanted to ask him whether he saw this in literal terms of great mass movements of black people 'back to Africa' from all the corners of the earth. Did he really want the millions of blacks in the Americas, Europe and the islands of the seas to be transported back to Africa? And if so, how would he accomplish it? And, more important, how justify and explain it in juxtaposition to Frederick Douglass' very simple and profound proposition that a ~~man~~, any man, is native to the place of his birth? If the impossible could have been conjured up I would have wanted Marcus Garvey and Frederick Douglass to face-off on this one, with W.E.B. DuBois - with his massive ambivalence - as the privileged spectator!

(2) I remained in Jamaica because my wife and I had over the years become part of the Jamaican struggle and process, involved with the people and the land, not just its politics. The land is glorious, the people, at their best (and we were fortunate to have known some of the best) without peer: open, warm-hearted, imaginative and with a great generosity of spirit. Regrets for having found our ideal 'House in the world?' No way.

(3) South Africa is a vast country, the regional superpower of Southern Africa. She is bound to play a dominant role in what happens on the African continent. She will therefore most likely have a key direct role in world affairs as Africa stops wasting herself on internecine struggles and begins to make a worthwhile contribution to peace, love and justice in the world.

Jamaica, on the other hand is a tiny spot in a great big sea. She will always depend on the quality of her contribution to be noticed. Without the likes of Garvey and the Manleys, father and son, and the artists and poets and dancers and singers and just plain larger-than-life ordinary Jamaicans found in every corner of the globe - and you literally do find Jamaicans everywhere on earth - without this she would be just another little tourist island. So who has the greatest potential? It depends on what you mean; on how you see potential and influence. I always was a sucker for the daring cocky little Charlie Chaplin type who had trouble knowing his place. Jamaicans are like that!

(4) The African (and the Jamaican) in me placed and places a high premium on family. Family needs regular and sustained and stable social and economic support. Journalism was the most flexible of all second occupations; so apart from time, there was no conflict, no real frustration. And I was fortunate to go into a socially useful branch of journalism. I enjoyed doing both and saw my family fed, housed, schooled.

(5) I know from hard experience that no young person, in Africa, the West Indies or anywhere else in the world who wants to be a writer, is likely to be influenced by any advice from any old writer unless that advice is what he/she wants to read or hear. So go for it! You may not get rich or famous but if you are lucky you will live a fulfilling and happy life. And, of course, to be a writer he/she must be a lover of books and a great reader of books even in this age of the computer.

I will be grateful if you will send me a copy of your review.

Best regards.

Peter Abrahams

Subject:

Date: Sat, 20 Oct 2001 17:50:10 -0400

From: "Charles R Larson" <clarson@erols.com>

To: <coyaba@cwjamaica.com>

----- Original Message -----

From: Charles R Larson

To: coyabe@cwjamaica.com

Cc: Ian Randle Publishers Ltd.

Sent: Friday, October 19, 2001 9:56 PM

Dear Peter Abrahams,

Araya Crosskill, at Ian Randle Publishers, has graciously provided me with your email address.

I am in the process of writing a lengthy review your wonderful book, THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN THE 20TH CENTURY, for THE WORLD & I. I asked Araya Crosskill for your email address in order to ask you a few questions to run as a Q & A sidebar along with my review.

These are my questions, which you can respond to in as few or as many words as you like:

(1) Your admiration for Marcus Garvey is genuine as well as thought-provoking. If you had been able to meet with Garvey and talk to him, what questions would you have asked him?

(2) With all your continued frustrations with politics in Jamaica, you stuck it out and remained in the country. Why? Any regrets?

(3) South Africa and Jamaica are woven into your life. Which country do you feel has the greatest potential today? Why?

(4) Were there any frustrations in shifting your writing from fiction to journalism? If so, what were they?

(5) What advice can you give the young person in the West Indies or in Africa who says he/she wants to become a writer?

A note on myself. In the early 1970s, I edited a series for Collier Books, in New York, called the African/American Library. That series included MINE BOY, TELL FREEDOM, and THIS ISLAND NOW. The series is out-of-print, but presumably you saw those editions when they appeared.

All best wishes,

Charles R. Larson

Professor of Literature

American University

Washington, D.C.

LA SEVE

JOURNAL ESTUDIANTIN BELGE

ANVERS, LE 1st December 1956.
13, RUE DU PRINCE

Mr. Peter ABRAHAMS
c/o Editions Casterman,
T O U R N A I .

Dear Sir,

I am reading now, with an involuntary delay - how much I regret it - the french translation of your book: TELL FREEDOM. It has indeed moved me very much.

On the other hand, I am in charge of a newspaper, LA SEVE, a newspaper of Catholic Students. This is the task we have taken up: we want to "wake up" the students of Belgium, and the catholic student in particular, ~~from~~ its unconcern. That is our Ideal: we are thouroughly convinced that the task is worth it, and we can say LA SEVE is the only Catholic newspaper having taken up this aim among the belgian students.

Your book is the testimony of a problem which cannot leave the catholic student indifferent to it. That is the reason of this letter. Here is, quite frakly, our question: could you or would you have the time to write an article for us? Most probably you are much occupied by other things, but there is no doubt your article or a letter you would write to us for publishing would do a great deal towards changing this "bourgeois" mentality, very egotistic, which towers gloomily above students in Belgium.

I have in mind to write about your book in one of our future editions, but a letter or an article signed by you would do so much more!

It may sound unusual for a students' newspaper to ask important people for such things, but you can understand it is not publicity when we say: our paper must not be like the others!

May I add just another word: I was born in Ethiopia, my father has been living there for thirty years, and I plan to live there later. You can now understand all my sympathy - it is more than sympathy - towards you and all your brothers, who are our brothers too, we Europeans. We should really ask you and your people: "May we call you our brothers?". After all, you have suffered so much by our own fault, that we must ask whether you want to accept us as brothers...

I hope you will kindly reply to us and we hope you will kindly accept our demand. We would be very thankful indeed.

Would you please give us your reply quite promptly, as I shall be leaving for Ethiopia, where I shall spend a month, on the 11th of December. Your article would be published in January - for that you have time.

With our most sincere thanks,

Yours sincerely,



Jacques F. WEERTS
Director of LA SEVE.

I am sending you the two latest copies of LA SEVE,
so that you can see what it is all about.

SCEAUX (Seine . France)
16 Av^e Présid^t Roosevelt.

8 mars 1961

Cher Monsieur,

Je viens de lire avec un grand intérêt et une vive émotion votre belle ligne : "Tell Freedom". A ma connaissance, ce livre n'a pas encore été traduit en français : j'aimerais le faire connaître à mes compatriotes, et je pense - entre autres collectionnaires - à aller des "Flex Crises" qui accepterait peut-être de publier la traduction ?

J'ajoute que je suis Agrégée des Lettres, professeur honoraire, et que je dispose de beaucoup de temps. Voulez-vous me dire si vous pensez que nous pourrions

nous mettre d'accord et sur
quels termes ?

Veuillez agréer, cher Monsieur,
l'assurance de toute ma considé-
ration et de ma cordiale sympathie.

C. L. Lecreux.

Madame C. L. LECREUX
Résidence Athènes
16 Av^e Présid^e Roosevelt
Sceaux (Seine)
FRANCE.

xxx 4358

7th January, 1962.

Mr. Robert Lightbourne Jr.,
Honey Hill,
Constant Spring,
Kingston 8.

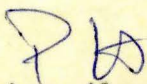
Dear Mr. Lightbourne,

Thank you for your letter of December 29th,
I am very pleased to learn that you are planning
another issue of the "Critic", I thought your first
issue very good.

I am afraid that pressure of work is so
great that it is not going to be possible for me to
write anything especially for you but if it would
help I will make available to you the files of my News
Commentaries from which you can select whatever you
want to reproduce.

Should you be interested in this, kindly
phone this office so that I can arrange to have all
the files of the News Commentaries here.

Yours sincerely,


Peter Abrahams

PA/mpb

Mr. Peter Abrahams,
c/o "The West Indian Economist",
Harbour St.,
Kingston.

Honey Hill,
Constant Spring,
Kingston.
December 29th 1961.

Dear Mr. Abrahams,

My friend Klaus Osswald, and I, plan to put out another issue of "The Critic", which you may or may not have seen. We are both in the 'entre les guerres' stage, between school and university. Rather than take a job for the somewhat dubious experience therein, we are trying to put out another magazine.

We plan to expand "Critic" considerably. Our only issue to date had thirty six pages and a press run of 1,000 copies. This time we hope to print between 1,500 and 2,000 copies containing sixty pages, and to release it in mid-February.

We are sending a copy of the magazine to you under separate cover. Our aim is to produce a magazine in which the comic, the serious, the highbrow and lowbrow, the satiric and the critical, the sublime and the ridiculous mingle to produce in unison a pleasant blend.

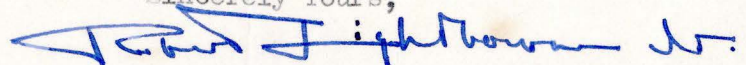
I have seen your excellent magazine, The West Indian Economist, and as a student of economics, read it with much interest. I have also heard your broadcasts on controversial topics and been stimulated into thought. We are asking you, among other prominent journalists and writers in Jamaica to contribute an article.

Unfortunately, our production costs remain in high ratio to anticipated income, and we can offer no payment other than our thanks, as "Critic" is an experiment rather than a business venture. This is the last issue we plan to produce, as Klaus leaves for Germany in March, while my own future is undecided, dependent upon the results of the Higher Schools exam for this year.

Personally, I find your range of subject matter far too versatile to ask for any specific type of article, and if in your doubtless crowded schedule you can find the time to write an article, please write it on or about whatever you please. We have had to make the end of January our deadline. Could you possibly let us know whether you can let us have an article or not as soon as you can?

I am,

Sincerely Yours,



Robert Lightbourne Jr., Editor, "The Critic"