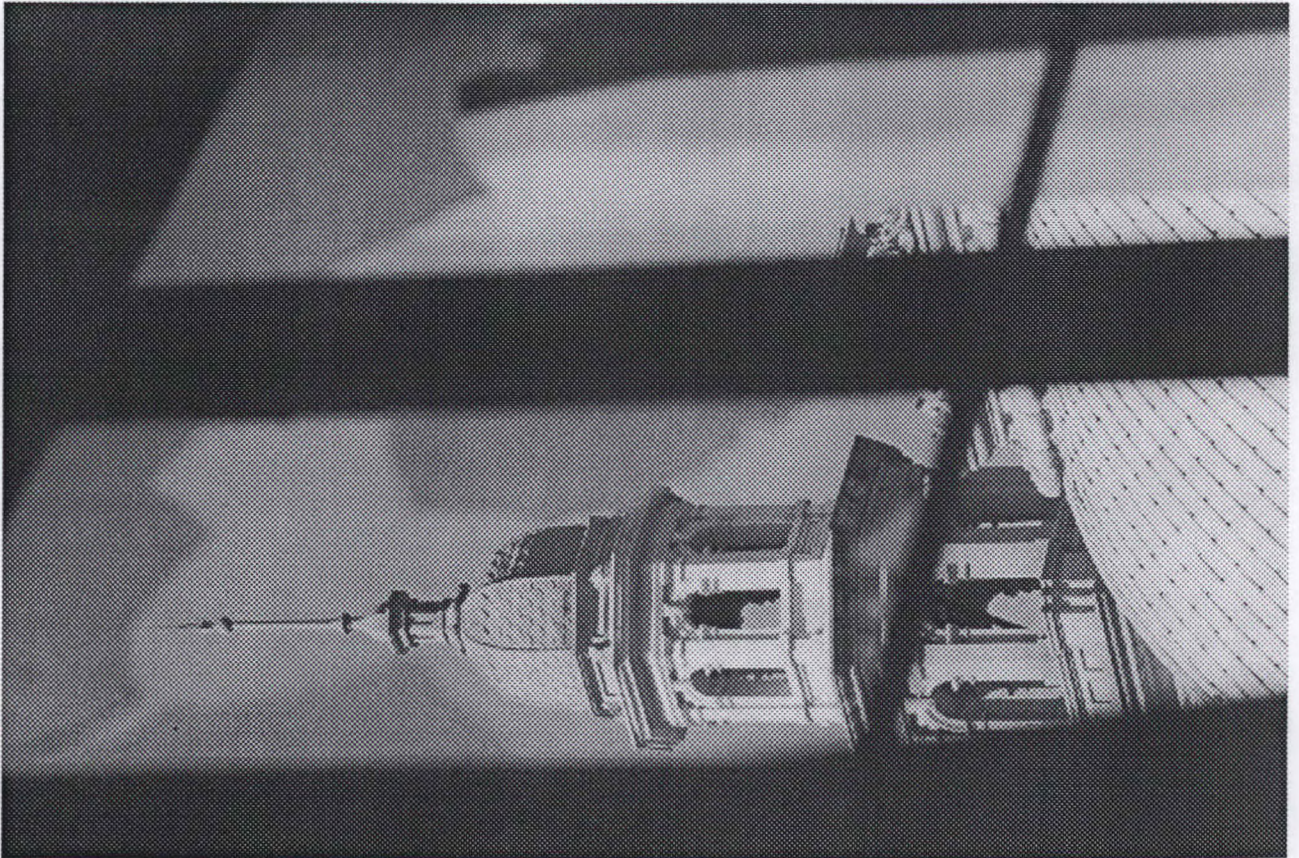


NOT USING ↴



Palace of Justice - possibly for cover.
No caption needed.



Bizos & Goran Mbeki at launch of Goran's book - 11 April 1991

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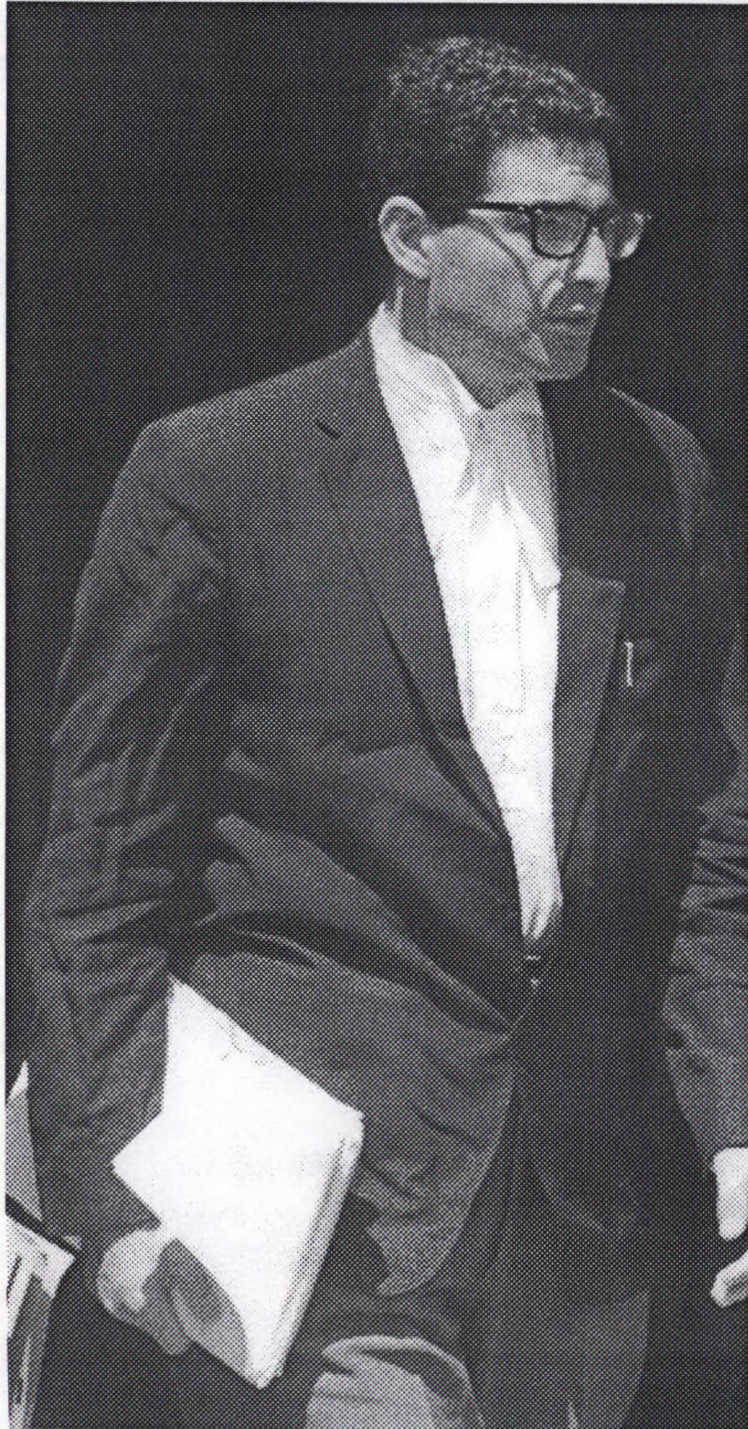


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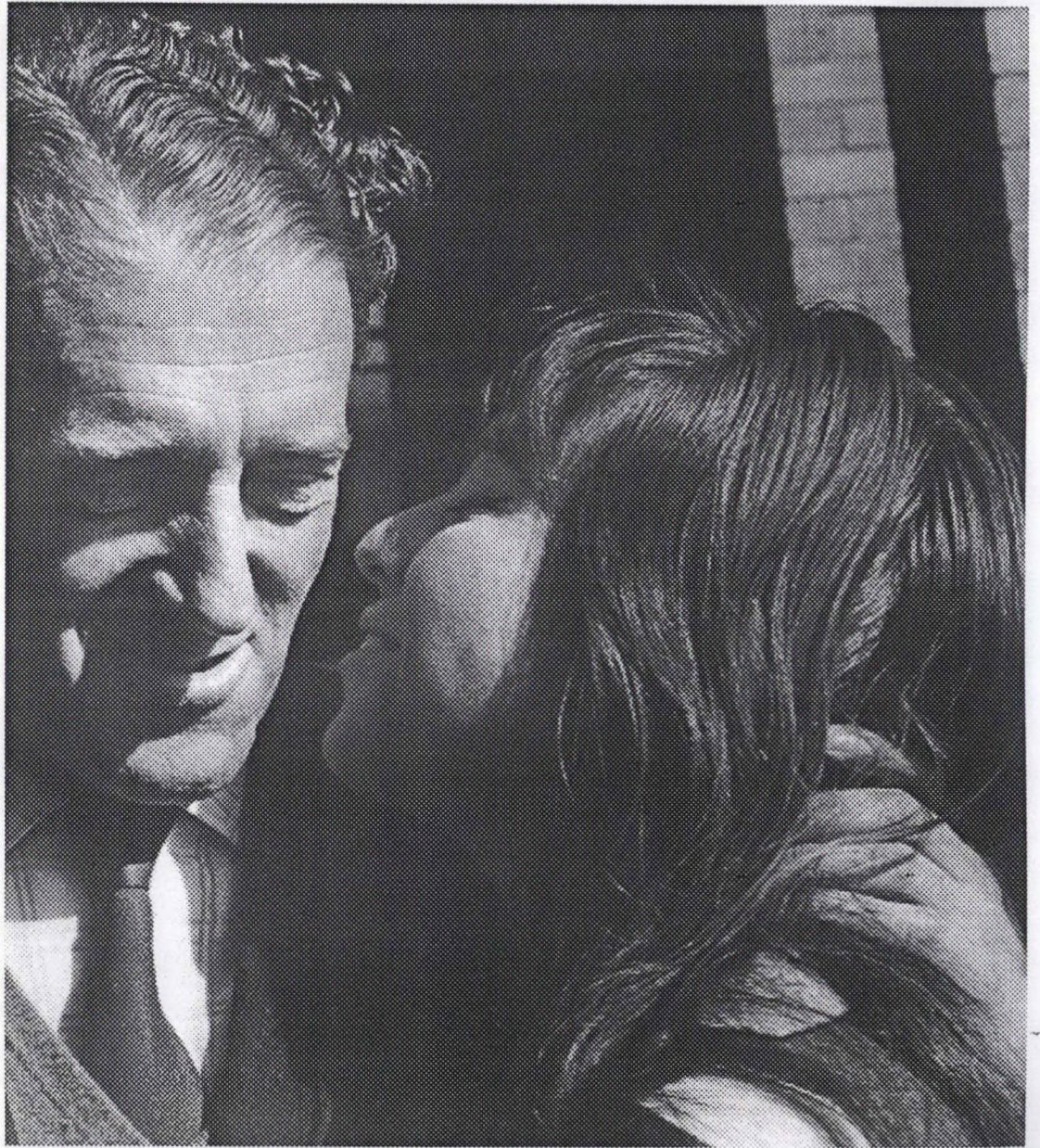
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14 June 1964

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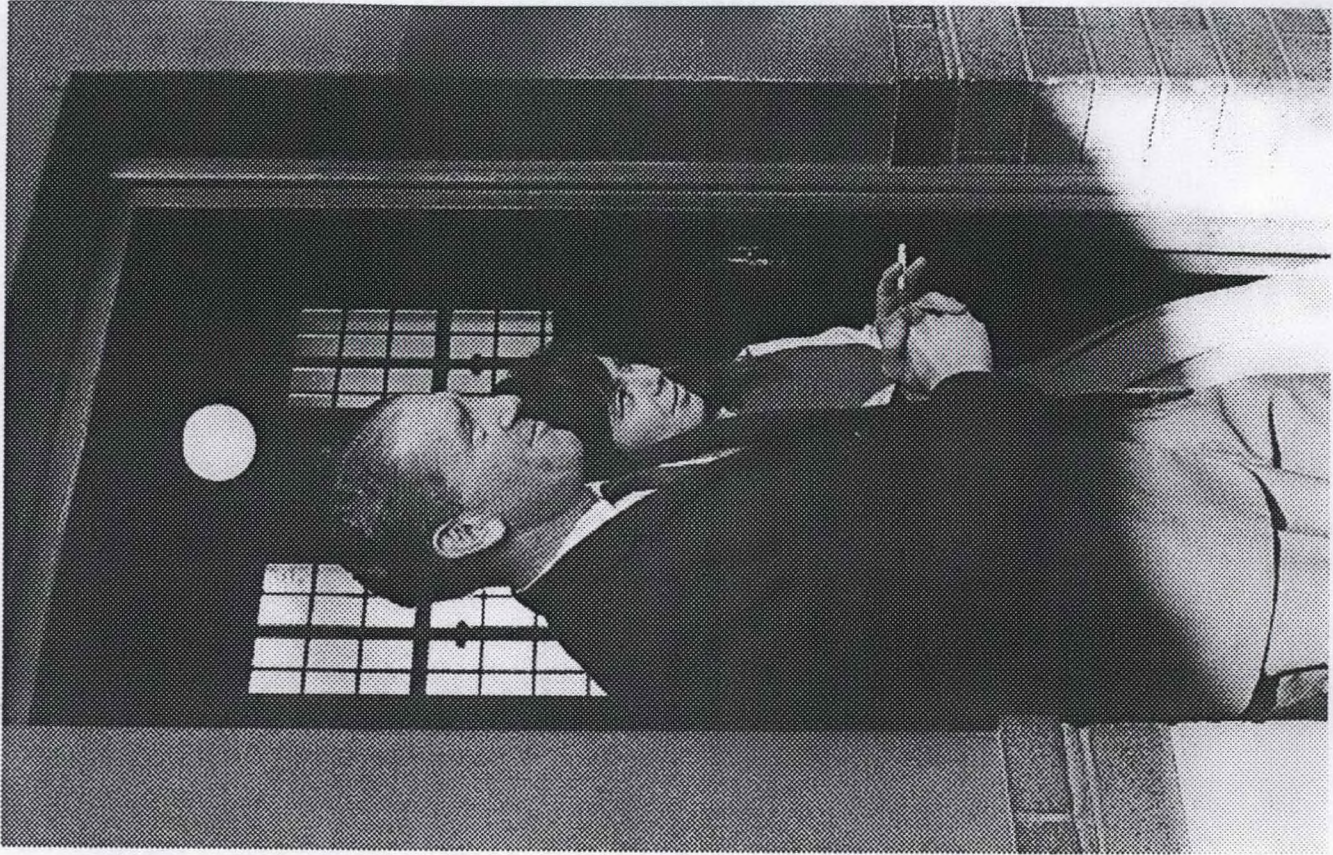


Cecil Williams 3 July 1961



⑦ Joel Soffe (No date)

May be used on cover — no caption needed



8



Bram Fischer on park bench — "Would pass unnoticed in a crowd" 8 May 1965

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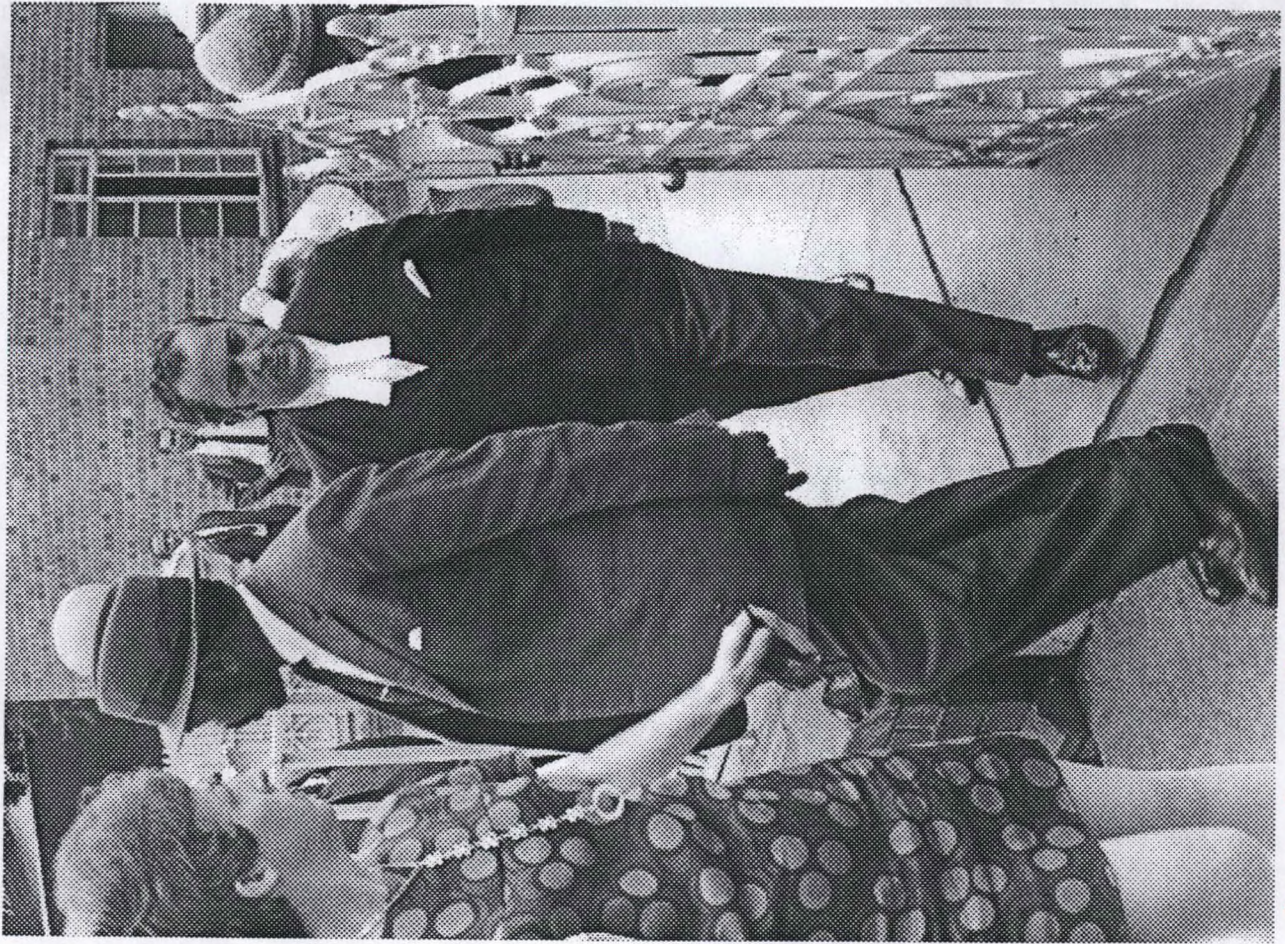
"Mr & Mrs Bernstein, Ivan & Tony Strasburg" 14 June 1964

10



Opening of Constitutional Court - 14 February 1995

(11)



George Bizos - Red Act Trial Defence Leader 16 December 1969

(12)



PTo for Press caption

"Mr Lionel Bernstein, one of the accused in the Rivonia Sabotage Trial, flies into London airport tonight, September 2, with his wife Hilda and two sons, Patrick, 15, and Keith, 7. Mr Bernstein, a former Johannesburg architect, was acquitted at the Trial and immediately re-arrested and released on bail. Later, he fled from South Africa. The family arrived from Nairobi, Kenya."



21

Joe Slovo & Duma Nokwe

Drill Hall, Treason Trial

Hilda Bernstein

From: <PMillner@aol.com>
To: <hilda@bernstein57.freeseve.co.uk>
Sent: 14 August 2000 11:17 PM
Subject: Rift

My dear Hilda

Sorry to be so slow to thank you for the copy of Rift, which has been my bedside reading since it arrived. Not surprising I knew nothing of the great majority of the exiles referred to - you do explain how you selected them and that there were even more - 330 you mention in the Appendix - what a massive interviewing job! - I can't begin to imagine how you did it. I really liked, found illuminating, your introduction analysing the nature of the exile experience, how varied, and many aspects of which had never occurred to me.

You make the point that for white exiles, merging into the cultures of Western Europe was relatively easy. I think that for white English speaking South Africans response to exile in England was particularly cushioned. As I was saying when you visited us, I accept that birth in a country creates a permanent bond, more specifically with the town in which you were born and spent your early years. But nevertheless the English language, your mother tongue, and the overwhelming dominance of English culture in your education, the ambience of Englishness, set up a sort of dualism in your sense of South Africanism not shared by the Afrikaners and the African population, whose feeling of belonging is unambiguous, unadulterated. You were not black, you were not the Voortrekkers children. you were alien to the bulk of the population. So, however qualified, there was a powerful sense of familiarity, on setting foot in England, to mitigate the exile. I wonder how you felt, Hilda, being English born. Did you ever feel wholly South African? Was returning to England any kind of home-coming for you? As you say, what knitted us together was the apartheid experience in our lives, and our common response to it. Thanks again for The Rift. It complements Memory Against Forgetting so aptly.

We greatly enjoyed your visit to Kings Warren. There is so much to talk about. Ofcourse you and Rusty are welcome here at any time.
All the best. Maurice

A Life of One's Own

by Hilda Bernstein (Jacana)

Review: Alan Lipman

My wife and I know Hilda Bernstein and knew her late husband Rusty from before we married, some fifty-two years ago. They were among the members of the then underground Communist Party who attended our wedding. That was in 1950, since when they and we have lived through many shared, often troubled experiences; including special branch hounding in South Africa, decades of political exile in Britain and, for many, the shattered commitment to Soviet communism that finally came with the rapacious invasion of Hungary in 1956. Our lives have been inter-twined for almost sixty years.

My memories of those early days are set in lingering images: Hilda as a caring young mother, a selfless friend, a dedicated political colleague. And, in the public arena, Hilda as a compelling orator, a person of devoted allegiance to the South African liberation struggle. Hilda, a messenger of hope for the future.

These depictions, and others of like force, remain. They are refreshed whenever we meet or when I encounter her now considerable body of writings. So, for me, this book is not solely an exciting text. It is a probing reminder of the comrade I knew and, happily, still know, of the person who taught me and, expressly in this her most recent volume, continues to guide those who open themselves to her. Be warned, I am not a distant, neutral commentator.

As ever, her writing is fluent, always accessible, pretty-well impossible to put aside once begun. Her control of rhythm, modulation, pace and vocabulary is as marked as her subject-matter is gripping - an authentic conjunction of form and content. No problems here of patronising, over-simplified writing, of playing to the so-called "great unwashed." And, simultaneously, there should be none for members of the often self-anointed intelligentsia. All will, doubtless, find themselves rapt in its convincing reportage. This will, surely, be evident from even the following, necessarily brief references to the contents.

The book is derived from two sets of documents and Bernstein's well-honed ability to interview her selected respondents. The first batch of written material comprises "letters written by my father when he lived apart from his family, and was unable to return." The second consists of "short descriptive pieces about a period a decade later, when my sister was away from her home in England, trapped in the same foreign country as my father had been." These private, familial papers are, of course, affected by momentous public events, the most salient being the Russian uprisings that culminated in the revolution of 1917 and, in later years, the accelerated Stalinist terror. They are portrayed with an intimate sentiment that is far removed from sentimentality.

Born in Odessa, her father, Simeon had settled in Britain in 1900, when he was a nineteen year old. There he married another emigrant and fathered three daughters - our author being the youngest. Inspired by the socialist dreams of the revolution, he became an active communist and, consequent on a series of political/personal developments, was called to the USSR in 1925. Bernstein writes poignantly, "I was ten years old and would never see him again."

That personal distress pervades her reconstruction of his absent life, and its effects on those at home: "My father had left his homeland before the years of war and revolution ... If he had known of the real situation or had any understanding of the chaos and destruction, the poverty and horrific living conditions that war and revolution had created, he would not have contemplated emigrating with his family."

It is a painfully familiar 19th and 20th century story: a breadwinner torn from the close concerns, and joys, of everyday life; a family waiting in near penury. Bernstein tells it in the empathetic manner that is her wont and with the added force, the searing immediacy of those vivid letters. The pages burn with her parents' disappointments, frustrations, fears; their mutual recriminations, their long-distance anxieties, misunderstandings and recurring guilt. *Inter alia*, until Simeon's death in 1933, we learn

much from his anguished first-hand experiences of those terrible, "obsessively distrustful" and harshly dictatorial years.

In 1932, Hilda's sister Olga had joyfully visited their father in Leningrad, just prior to his lonely death in the Georgian capital Tbilisi. Once that tragic news was confirmed, the mourning family split. The widow and younger daughter, Hilda, "set sail for South Africa on the Union-Castle Line." The two elder sisters remained in England until Olga, aged twenty-one, decided to visit the USSR in order to "find out more about the circumstances of our father's death." There "she soon became aware, in ways that touched her own life, of the underlying terror of living in the USSR." There she endured the remaining Stalin era and the traumas of a devastating war.

The vicissitudes of those decades - economic, political, social and personal - occupy a substantial portion of the book. Their engrossing reading is, quite simply, impossible to summarise in a short review. The text is jam-packed with detailed information and complex evaluations of Soviet life: of its art, architecture, music and theatre; of the cultural life made available to previously neglected strata of society; of the appalling shortages of living accommodation in cities like Moscow; of bureaucratic paranoia and ambivalent hostility to invited foreigners; of ... a myriad aspects of everyday living.

That, then, is Hilda Bernstein's deft new publication: a history in the making, a tale that seizes one from its outset, a written style that holds to the end and, to cap it all, an intellectual stimulus that commands continued attention - even beyond the concluding passages. Get it, read it, lose yourself in it, test my admittedly partisan engagement.

Approx.940 words of text
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DIARY
MATTHEW
D'ANCONA

Independence as deftly as Churchill's deception staff wielded it a century and half later against the Germans in the war against Hitler.

Napoleon, like Montgomery, used to claim that his own strategic insight provided him with the victories that in fact were secured for him by his intelligence staff. Once, Napoleon's intelligence failed, before Marengo, and he was lucky to escape with his reputation intact. Once, Wellington's excellent intelligence system failed him, when a dunderhead delayed a vital report just before Waterloo, and Napoleon almost surprised him. In the Peninsular War, Wellington had had so far-ranging and so efficient a scouting system that Hughes-Wilson even compares it to the service Churchill's commanders got from Enigma decrypts.

Among several good anecdotes about successful spies, the case of Julius Silber deserves note. Bilingual in English and German, he served at the postal censorship in London for most of the 1914-18 war, and passed data steadily to Germany, under cover of his own 'Passed by Censor' stamps, without ever being detected. Even the Bettany case had a precedent: in Queen Anne's reign Harley had a confidential clerk called Gregg, who tried to change sides and was unmasked by a security check inserted by the cautious Dutch in the route between Harley and a double-agent in France. Gregg, like Queen Mary, went to the scaffold; Bettany only went to jail.

The principles remain the same; techniques continue to vary. This book has several useful summaries of the Cold War's hot spots, such as the U-2 crisis and the unremitting submarine struggle. As a good historian should, Hughes-Wilson moves effortlessly forwards from the past into the present, and shows how the current campaign the Western world is fighting against various kinds of terror has developed.

He takes an admirably practical, round-head, down-to-earth approach; unhappily, he is cavalier with dates. If he would set right such familiar facts as when the Duke of Wellington was prime minister, or in what month the Battle of Mons was fought, there should be a well-thumbed copy of this book on every general's and every intelligence officer's bedside table.



'You've sold the TV rights? Surely it's not that bad!'

South Africa: rejection and rapprochement

Anthony Sampson

THE WORLD THAT WAS OURS

by Hilda Bernstein

Persephone, £10, pp. 394,

ISBN 1903155401

This book, republished after almost 40 years, has survived as a South African classic while most other memoirs about life under apartheid have been forgotten. It's not just because it's beautifully written, in a plain, unpretentious style, but also because it conveys, with acute observation, the combination of ordinariness and danger which is implicit in any totalitarian state.

The author quotes W.H. Auden: 'Suffering . . . takes place while someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along.' And she quietly conveys her own suffering as a political activist who was also a dedicated mother of young children, facing growing persecution, fear and eventual exile.

Hilda Bernstein was a young Englishwoman who had lived in South Africa as a girl and returned there before the second world war as a communist, married to another comrade, 'Rusty' Bernstein, a promising architect. The Communist party not only provided her faith, but opened up a multiracial world and friendships with extraordinary people including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Ahmed Kathrada. For a time she could combine a happy, comfortable life with her husband and four children and a wide circle of friends. But after the Communist party was banned in 1950 her world began to fall apart. This book is a record of how it felt.

The real ordeals began after 1960, the year of the Sharpeville massacre and of the last mass protests, after which the apartheid government was determined to stamp out resistance more ruthlessly. Hilda vividly conveys the impact of those methods at the receiving end: the sudden overnight raids, when her colleagues would disappear without trace; the imposition of 'house arrest'; the detention in solitary confinement for 90 days. 'I am averaging 18 spoken words a day,' wrote her husband from jail.

She records the gradual closing-in of the police on the ANC leaders, who were all her friends, culminating in the raid on the farm at Rivonia, outside Johannesburg, where they — including her husband — were hiding. And she provides the most

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Wilson

£20, pp. 478,
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Hilda

From: "Keith Bernstein" <keith@keithbernstein.co.uk>
To: "HILDA BERNSTEIN" <hildabe@mweb.co.za>
Sent: 25 November 2004 07:01 PM
Subject: Review
Mom

I found this review, from **The African Review of Books**

Love

Keith

Before the dream

The World That Was Ours
 Hilda Bernstein
 2004
 Published by Persephone Books, London
 416 pages

Reviewed by Moira Richards

When Nelson Mandela stood trial for his life on a charge of treason against the Republic of South Africa, he stood not alone – eight other men shared the dock with him and on that June day, exactly 40 years ago, all those Rivonia Trialists were sentenced to a lifetime's imprisonment. All with the exception of one man, Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein who walked free because the state found insufficient evidence to convict him. In *The World That Was Ours*, Hilda Bernstein takes her readers behind the public face of this historic trial and tells the stories leading up to and surrounding it from the perspective of another banned political activist, also the wife of a trialist.

Her book often reads like a fictionalised story of intrigue and danger. But what spy in a storybook ever felt compelled to get that last load of family laundry into the washing machine before slipping out the back window to escape the enemy? What secret agent ever risked capture to honour a promise to her small son that she would be back at home to kiss him goodbye on his first day of school? What conspirator ever managed to swing permission to visit her accomplice by convincing his jailer that she was unable to decide domestic matters without his consent as head of the family?

In our post-apartheid years, when white South Africans now apologise for their past actions, or deny them or refuse to examine and engage with the effects of this behaviour, *The World That Was Ours* raises impossible questions about that dark time. When I read about how Hilda Bernstein's activism and commitment to social justice led to her being banned from attending even a child's birthday party; when I understand that she acknowledged unflinchingly that her activism could, would lead to her imprisonment without trial or recourse to a lawyer, perhaps even to her assassination; when she describes the burden to her school-going children of having socially unacceptable and non-conformist parents; when she tells how she risked the possibility of never sharing in her youngest son's childhood, and recounts the ways her eldest daughter had to shoulder the responsibilities of adulthood before she was even out of her teen years, it is then that I wonder whether I myself could have been any better a white person during those apartheid years? Would I have been prepared to make even one of those sacrifices or to take any such huge personal risk for the principle of human rights? I pray that no one will ever ask me to answer those questions.

"What spy in a storybook ever felt compelled to get that last load of family laundry into the washing machine before slipping out the back window?"

Hilda barely escaped South Africa and its Security Police shortly after the Rivonia Trial had ended and she and Rusty lived in exile for 30 years, returning for a short visit in 1994 to cast their votes in the country's elections, and to attend Nelson Mandela's inauguration as its first democratically elected president. Today she is an 89 year old grandmother with children scattered over three continents and with a home in the beautiful Cape Town of our new South Africa – surely the world

that was her dream all those years ago.

Moira Richards is a South African who reviews feminist writing for a number of print and online publications. She can be found lounging about the staff rooms of womenwriters.net and moondance.org

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www.keithbernstein.co.uk

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