

is nice food & interesting political 2  
debate on TV as the election Hots up.  
I wonder if Clinton will make it & if he  
does will it make a difference? people  
are incredibly depressed here: they  
need a Rusty to talk to! My son, Pierre,  
is no longer engaged but has been  
promoted & moved to Jobaru, of all  
places. I think he works very hard but  
I'd like to introduce him to a nice group,  
or family he'd connect with. He says I  
should come to see him early next year.  
He turned 28 recently & I did miss  
being with him that day. Anyway, his  
managerial pos<sup>n</sup>. is important to his  
learning curve in the corporate world &  
Hopefully when the world economy improves  
maybe he'd think about returning to  
the States where I intend to live. That is,  
New York City. At this point in Hispique  
I feel reasonably certain that "all things  
being equal!" I should remain here in  
this oasis for mesthuggaahs, rather than pit  
myself into the cess pool of rage in S.A. I  
don't think I have the temperament for such  
dedication, & tolerance as a white woman  
to endure what will be in the near future.  
South Africa - or its evolution.

3.  
Do you have any plans about the US  
as yet? I'd love to see you again. It  
was too short.

anyhow, I do hope things worked  
out for you house-wise. Meanwhile, here  
the Gorkan is still falling out of the market &  
one can acquire a 1 Bedroom apt in  
a good part of the city from \$100,000  
to \$150,000, which is pretty reasonable by  
80's standards of excess.

The I to Jettie mark scenario has  
been quite a show, as for the Nazis in  
Germany + the compliance of Bonn re  
gypsies etc, the Yugoslavian armed  
population, the Somalian Famine + unrest  
in Russia, all does not anger well. But as  
Rusky says, we should not take it so  
personally. I am beginning to identify with  
pollyanna in Hell!

So be well, write your news. I am  
somehow thinking hard about you,  
there must be a good reason,  
let me know,

lots of love from

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ unjit XX  
B B

**ST. JAMES'S CHURCH  
197 PICCADILLY  
LONDON W1V 9LF**

**01-734 4511**

**personal : 01-439 8498**

Mrs. Hilda Bernstein,  
Old House Farm,  
Dorstone,  
Herefordshire HR3 6BL.

October 27, 1992

My dear Hilda,

Many thanks for the change of address and the excellent pen portrait of you and Rusty. I enclose one of myself in revenge!

I am so glad you will be nearer London and particularly Oxford. I am going there to-day to give a talk at one of the colleges and this seems to happen at least once or twice a year, so I shall make sure I come to see you both when the winter is over.

Love,

+ Trevor CR.

---

AFRAS ulg plh  
Sussex University  
Falmer  
Brighton BN1 9QW

21st September, 1992

Dear Hilda,

Thank you for sending my interview. It was refreshing and interesting to read it after such a long time. It almost felt like reading a back page of one's old diary. Like I had mentioned in my last letter, I hardly remembered what I had said (or not said).

¶ The whole interview reads well. The only thing I think needs correcting is <sup>(p122)</sup> the spelling mistake of the name ~~Nomegabi~~, which in my copy reads as a totally different name of "Mamaqlabe". You mentioned that the whole book was already with the publishers & it would be difficult to alter anything else. Hopefully they will be willing to correct this mistake, which, unfortunately, is a huge one.

Otherwise I would not like to add or delete anything else. Maybe I would have stated one or two things differently if interviewed today but this is quite representative of my, <sup>then</sup> 18 year old mind.

Good luck with the book.

Matsobane Sexwale.

November 19 1992

57 Lock Crescent  
Kidlington  
Oxon OX5 1HF  
UK

Dear Radi and JN

(Rhadi? Rady? Rhadie? or Radhi?) You may think hard thoughts about us for not having communicated with you once we returned to Britain. Then usual excuses - how one gets caught up in routines and pressures. But actually I had not made a note of your address, and living far away from London, I kept asking people but no one seemed to know. It was only when I wrote to Rica recently and asked her to send it, that I knew I could write to you.

First, we have moved. Just two weeks ago. We had been wanting for a long time to move from our place in the country, where it was very beautiful and very isolated from everything, but it was almost impossible to sell houses in our period of slump. And we did not have enough money to move back to London. However, we were fortunate, we managed to sell our house, and we have bought a house in Oxford, which is only an hour's journey from London, and being a University city it has all the things which we have missed for so long - lectures, music, ~~exhibitions~~ exhibitions - culture! The house we have moved into is not very attractive, a typical British semi-detached, with small rooms, a minute kitchen. But we bought it because at the back the garden opens out into a pleasant area with trees, and there is a canal at the bottom of our garden. Coming from the country we would have found it very difficult to live in the usual crowded streets. And Rusty has plans to knock down a few walls and build on a conservatory so that we will have more space and light. I don't know what your plans are regarding travel (hey - how about India next year? Are you going? Can we come too?) But if you are planning to visit Britain, then you must surely come to us, for we have arranged space for visitors.

When we returned from SA I found I had more work to do on my book. The publishers decided it was too long, and this involved cutting out many interviews, and that in turn meant re-arranging the sections. So instead of publication in January 93, it will not be out until about May. At last, however, I am completely free of it, and hope soon to return to drawing and painting.

Although many ANC people urged us to return, Rusty is not prepared to go back unless he has something definite to work on, and despite many promises of letting him know, etc, all we had was a letter just last month saying Walter wanted R to return to work on Jopusing, but at present, they are short of funds. So R just puts it out of his mind, feels he is getting too old to mess about. Of course we still are obsessed with SA and the news from there, read every bit, talk about it, and it will always be so, however many years we spend away.

We were both happy to see you well and at least living decently even though in a middle-class Indian ghetto. You were so hospitable to us, the flavour of our visit to Durban remains with me to this day. There is something wonderful to me about a friendship that has spanned so many years, so much separation, such divergence of lives, but remains strong. I hope it will not be too long before we have the chance to meet again.

I am posting you a copy of my book The World That Was Ours because I could not remember if you had read it or not. Our daughter Toni has been in Mozambique for the past two months making a film there, but her reports are rather depressing. We followed the American elections with great interest and delight in Bush's defeat. I really believe that Clinton can change the whole atmosphere - has done so already, even if he gets caught up in power structures and doesn't carry out all he hoped. The situation here is dire, this government is consistently corrupt, dishonest, sleazy, disgraceful, and everyone knows it, and it doesn't make the slightest bit of difference - they just carry on. Economically things are a great mess - aren't they everywhere? Sometimes the world gets too terrible

Mrs and Mr Singh

23 Elwack Road

Reservoir Hills

4091 Durban

South Africa

H. Bernstein

57 Lock Crescent

Kidlington

Oxon OX5 1HF

to bear looking at, and one wants to turn away. The only thing to do is to work at cultivating one's own particular patch, whatever it happens to be.

Our love to you both, and we hope you are well

me Sparks ?

Box 701

Rivonia 2128

7th Nov., 1993.

Dear Hilda,

I found your letter to Allister in a huge pile this week. I'm sure he wanted to respond, especially as you're probably still "fuming in silence" - but he has so little time. He's now left the Observer - the Institute takes up too much time now & he had to choose between them. He finished at the end of Sept. Phillip van Niekerk has replaced him - Allister's recommend. We don't get the LRB - so he doesn't often see what RWJ. writes for them. But he really wouldn't have had an opportunity to write an art. for them. I'm enclosing his latest column in the Star - it's a controversial but popular column.

Warm regards,

Lue Sparks.

PS I loved your book. It filled in many gaps.

PS. Spoke to Mandela about it one day when we met. He was most interested to read it.   
 PS. Spoke to Mandela about it one day when we met. He was most interested to read it.

Steyn

15 February 1994

Dear Sarah

I am really sick of having my own pictures hanging all over the house (but what do you do with stuff that's been framed but you haven't sold?).

I can only afford to buy one of your prints because you under-value your work. But perhaps when you are better established, I will refuse to part with it to some eager collector for ten times what I paid.

Rusty left for South Africa last night to work with the ANC in the run-up to the elections. I am staying on for a month, as my book, *The Rift* (Jonathan Cape) has just come out, and I'm doing some interviews and such like. I will go next month. I hope you and Sylvester will buy and read - it's my baby, and it was the longest labour I ever endured.

Good wishes



To Slovo family

Friday 6 January 1995

0576.27.2.47

Dear Shawn, Gillian and Robyn

So in the end 'they' did not get him as we had all feared for so many years. And I suppose many of those who would have planned his assassination will now be paying tribute to him.

For myself, the grief I feel is in two parts that are inextricably woven together. The first was the personal friendship that goes back so far, from the time before Ruth and Joe were married. That arose from the second part, our shared beliefs, and together they formed our shared lives. We were a limited circle of radical whites who were constantly together; but within that circle, while all were our associates, only some were our friends. I always warmed to Joe, who never allowed the conformities of the Communist Party to narrow his enjoyment of living, of material pleasures. It took me longer to become close to Ruth, but in her I eventually found a deeper and stronger bond, both personally and politically.

This did not, does not, shadow my immense admiration and respect for what Joe has achieved in the three extraordinary phases of the 'struggle.' He became central to the most militant thrust against apartheid during all those endless years of exile and isolation from South Africa, his practical role always buoyed by an optimistic conviction of the certainty of ultimate success. I have a sharp memory of 1968 when the invasion of Czechoslovakia was, for me, the last straw and I resigned from the Party. Joe took me to lunch to persuade me why I could not resign: 'You are opting out of our struggle.' That to him was the essential point.

Others will now pay lavish tribute to his role during the second phase, the period of negotiations. I have already heard on the radio the usual back-handed compliment of how this hard-line communist became such a flexible negotiator. Well, it could not surprise anyone who knew him; he was only hard-line in his belief of the ultimate need to change the structure of society; he was always an idealist who never lost his sense of realism. To his belief in the necessity and possibility of bringing about that change he brought a very deep intelligence and flexible mind, sharpened by his legal training and by so many years of planning - all those meetings! - and then of putting into practice; knowing success and failure. How could he not be flexible?

And finally the third phase, when he was racing against time, determined to lay the basis for a housing programme (houses, jobs and education being the ultimate test of failure or success) on which others could build. We were not the only ones to watch from afar this incredible effort to lay a foundation for the people of the new South Africa.

It was all at great cost, as you yourselves know. Today I cannot dwell on all my own personal disagreements and criticisms. I see him, with people like Mac and Oliver, a select few, one of the kingpins in an epic story. And I am happy that at least he survived to see the beginnings take shape of that for which he worked so ardently.

With my love

*H. Cole*

The Garden Flat  
65 Church Road  
Richmond, Surrey  
TW10 6LX

8 December 1995

Dearest Hilda,

Thank you for the affidavit and your letter. I am only now getting all the documents together for my substitute birth certificate. I very much hope that I'll succeed. Otherwise I might really ask myself: how do I know that I am who I am.

I do not have much to tell you at the moment. Just a remark about writing methods: I feel that your way of going about it is closer to me. I fear that if I tried to work things out beforehand I would never get started. Also, I do not know which are the important things and what is the "dross". Seemingly random events can lead to essential results like when picking mushrooms you might by mistake include the poisonous one that looks so much like the real thing. Or if I had stepped on to the road just one second earlier when that enormous lorry came crashing by. But this leads us into the realm of philosophy...

Larina's memoirs will be the next book on my reading list, if I can get it from our library. I do have a whole collection of Russian books on the Stalin era. My own experience in the Soviet Union and the GDR and all the books I have read and the latest developments in the world have led me to understand that the experiment that started with the October putsch of 1917 (the Russian revolution took place in February 1917) have brought about the opposite of the ideals that originally inspired the Communist movement. This is one of the paradoxes of history. It is tragic for those people who were caught up in it (in a small way my parents belong to that 'lost generation'). And the experience of "socialism" did paralyse me, stop me from getting involved in "good causes". A lot of people here in the West were not ready for the truth about "real existing socialism". I remember the impatience of my Dad when I tried to talk things over with him, or the condescension of Joe S. The selfrighteousness of the comrades, who thought they were the guardians of the 'Truth' and who viewed everyone who questioned their beliefs as an enemy made it impossible for me to belong to them. But I also could not find a home with other people. The influence of my parents on me, the love they gave me together with their illfated ideals, made it impossible for me to turn to other sets of ideas and values. So I closed up and shut up and my life was frittered away.

Sorry, Hilda, to be boring you with my sad tales. I feel in a mood for confessions.

So long, hope to see you soon.

Love from  
Gillian

\* it = the experiment

P.S. Find enclosed a cheque  
for £5

The Garden Flat  
65 Church Road  
Richmond, Surrey  
TW10 6LX

Tel: 081 - 948 0871

1 December 1995

Dear Hilda,

It was nice talking to you on the phone. I am sorry that I have not been in touch earlier, but I hope that you did receive the postcard I sent you after I visited you way back in March. In the meantime I went to Germany twice. In May I visited Wuppertal where my mother was born. Strangely my mother never spoke of that place to me, nor of her father and brothers. I got to know of their existence only after my mother's death when Gotti gave me her personal papers. Wuppertal was heavily bombed during World War II, but some lovely houses, whole streets, remain. The place where Ilse was born does not exist anymore, but the house of her last address in her native city still stands. Wuppertal was one of the first German towns to experience the Industrial Revolution in the late 19th century. There were lots of textile mills and the living conditions of the working population were horrendous. The family of Friedrich Engels owned factories there, the house where Engels was born still stands and now houses a very good exhibition about the beginnings of the working class movement there. All of this made it easier for me to understand my mother's obsession with the "working class" and their struggle for justice. She herself came from a poor working class background. Her father and older brothers were active in the trade union movement and belonged to the Social Democrats. But my mother joined the Young Communist League. That was in 1930 when she was 18. It must have led to estrangement from her family, for the harmful split between social democrats and communists, (fuelled by Moscow's policies) led to enmity within families and within the working class movement... I found no traces of Ilse's family. I went to the big old city cemeteries, looked through the old registers, but to no avail. Did they all get killed in the war? My mother's mother had left the family when my mother was still a little girl. Most likely she ran off with another man. But what happened to Ilse's father and her brothers? I do not think I shall ever know.

In November, as I mentioned to you on the phone, I went back to Berlin to see old friends, to go to the places where I lived as a child. Can you believe that we moved house 5 times in Berlin during the twenty two years my mother lived in East Germany ! She was unhappy and restless. When I was fourteen I went to boarding school in the mountains of Thuringia. I had lost touch with all my schoolmates, but I managed to find a couple of them and I visited them now. They are all happy about the changes that have taken place although they complain about the way in which the West incorporated them. But they have got work, they can express their views openly, they can read what they want, they can travel.

But Hilda, I am chatting too much. Let me give you the details you need to know to fill in the form for the Affidavit.

Relationship: close friend of the applicant's deceased mother

Applicant: born on 25 January 1944 in Johannesburg (I do not know where there)

Father: Dr. Yussuf Mohammed Dadoo (born 5.9.1909 in Krugersdorp)

Mother: Ilse Ida Clara Dadoo (born 25.1.1912 in Wuppertal, Germany)

You might invent a convincing reason why you remember the event well. (What did you do on the 25th of January 1944? Now that would be interesting to know!)

You might be interested to know what happened to my idea about writing a book. Well, it is not easy. I realised that I would have to write in German. I can not express thoughts and feelings adequately in English. My subconscious functions in the language of my childhood. I have not started in any serious way because I am not clear yet about the structure. Some of my friends say I should start anywhere and let the flow of (sub)consciousness take me where ever it goes. Others maintain that one needs a general outline, even provisional chapter headings, to discipline the mind. One needs to be clear about the main ideas one wants to put across. What do you think?

So long Hilda, keep well! Many thanks for your help with the affidavit.

Lots of love

from Shiraz

P.S. . Could you please give me the precise name, title and publisher of the book by Buckle's, widow?

Lesley Scharrin bowker

1 February 1999

Dear Lesley

When your letter arrived for Rusty I felt a pang of guilt, because I too did promise to write to you about Ivan. It was not that I had forgotten, but rather that I could not really think of anything other than generalisations of his character; so kept putting it off.

One problem is that I have - have always had - a non-functioning memory. I hasten to say this is not a product of old age; yes, the short-term memory gets rather bad. But my long-term memory has always been non-existent. I can remember incidents that resonate because of some special emotional reason; and things that have been repeated in conversation, so that I am remembering what has been remembered. But the continuity of my life has never existed in my mind. For this reason, when we came to England, I began keeping a diary, simply as a record of what I did; because I sat back and thought - we were so busy all those years, but what were we doing? Lots of meetings, yes, but what about? Now I have several boxes of a diary that records visits, holidays, friends, weather ( never stop moaning or alternatively delighting in the weather, and every Spring my diary has the same eulogies to English Springtime.) But useless now, for I never intend to use them to write anything at all.

So what can I find in these disappearing neurons in my head about my relationship with Ivan? In 'The World That Was Ours' I do record the conversation with him when I said 'You are going to be arrested' and he insisted that he could not leave - and then I felt our relationship had changed, as we were thinking of going and he must have realised that ~~xxxxxx that stage; Rusty being xxtalk in jail~~ And in my book about exiles 'The Rift', there is an interview with Joyce Moodley - 'little Joyce', where she says the happiest time of her life was when she worked with Ivan, who called her 'Cocky.' She really loved him.

I suppose we all did, for he was someone who genuinely, without sentimentality (but with sentiment) cared about people. We were an incestuous lot, us 'Party' people, constantly meeting together, dining together and going on holiday together. But among our limited crowd there were people one tolerated, because you had to work with them (Harmel); and people for whom you developed a true friendship. And in the last year, Ivan and I worked so closely, deluding ourselves into thinking that we could put together something from the scattered remnants of our organisation, knowing it was impossible for us to do nothing, even if we were not really doing something. I trusted him so implicitly because he had unsullied integrity (Rusty has too - much more than I). And because there was nothing pious about him; he did not conceal his anger or control his language. Yvonne Lewitton once told me that Ivan would never harm anyone because he could express, not bottle up, his rage against the world. It's always the quiet ones who never hurt a fly who stab their neighbour to death.

I suppose for generalisations about his goodness, his care and understanding for others, you have had reports from his jail comrades, who all said that Ivan was the outstanding one among them. He was not a political theorist like Harmel. He was like me in his political theory - he saw gross injustice and he wanted to change the world. And in his own unique way, he at least made a positive contribution to that change.

9. 5. 2001

My Dear Hilda,

We so enjoyed being with you both on Saturday and were delighted to share so many anecdotes, and so much that is history and "living" history - Your enthusiasm and energy is remarkable and we loved every minute of being with you. Added to that, the pleasure of looking out at your garden - as if we were actually out here - was marvellous. Last night I heard a wonderful bird singing its heart out on one of our neighbour's trees and managed to get some binoculars trained on it and found that it was a Song ~~Thrush~~ Thrush. It must be that time of year as it returned today.

If you plan to come into Oxford during Aut weeks, do  
let me know so that we can see you and maybe  
you can use it as <sup>as</sup> a dropping off place. That's a  
serious offer!

Thank you both for a really good lunch and for  
making us feel so welcome. I hope that if you  
have allergies Hilda that you find the Root Cause \*  
either the Diver or the food or just dust mites. There  
are several people who will test allergies in and  
around Oxford. I'm sorry that it started - maybe the  
Poller in South Africa.. A shame after you had so much  
good hospitality - which you richly deserve after  
all you both fought for.

Justin - my son-in-law is delighted with the Book.  
So do Fell Rusty.. He started reading it immediately.

Our love to you both and thank you again

Love Stephanie. \* let me know about your  
\*allergies\*



# Shuter & Shooter

PUBLISHERS (PTY) LTD

Co. Reg. No. 2002/002830/07 VAT Reg. No. 4800198743

21C Cascades Crescent, Cascades 3202  
P O BOX 13016 CASCADES 3202  
SOUTH AFRICA  
TELEPHONE (033) 347 6100  
FAX (033) 347 6120/30  
WEBSITE: <http://www.shuter.co.za>

Our Ref./Ons verw.  
Your Ref./U verw.

4 October 2004

Mrs. Hilda Bernstein  
Apartment 503, Horizons  
Three Anchor Bay Road  
THREE ANCHOR BAY  
8005  
Cape Town

Dear Mrs. Bernstein

Thank you for your recent telephone call and for your letter thanking me for sending you a copy of our Yellow Reader: 'Women in South African History'.

It is my pleasure to send you a further six complimentary copies for distribution to your family and friends.

Wishing you peace and good health in the years ahead.

Yours sincerely

DAVE RYDER  
**PUBLISHING DIRECTOR**





# Shuter & Shooter

PUBLISHERS (PTY) LTD

Co. Reg. No. 2002/0029230/07 VAT Reg. No. 4800198743

21C Cascades Crescent, Cascades 3202  
P O BOX 13016 CASCADES 3202  
SOUTH AFRICA  
TELEPHONE (033) 347 6100  
FAX (033) 347 6120/30  
WEBSITE: <http://www.shuter.co.za>

Our Ref./Oms verw.  
Your Ref./U verw.

*Replied  
21/9/04  
Please Thursday 23  
for copies*

10 September 2004

Mrs. Hilda Bernstein  
Apartment 503, Horizons  
Three Anchor Bay Road  
THREE ANCHOR BAY  
8005  
Cape Town

Dear Mrs. Bernstein

Thank you for permitting us to use material about yourself in one of our Yellow Readers which forms part of our Jumbo Reader Series.

We have prepared these Readers for use by learners in our schools who speak and read English as a second language. We feel sure that our young students will have greater understanding about and empathy for the endurance and strength of our women once they have read "Women in South African History"; and that their respect for all women will grow in the years ahead.

A copy of our Reader is sent to you together with our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

DAVE RYDER  
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR

Dear Hilda, *Replied 8/Sept 04*

4/8/04

I'm not sure what moves me to assume that it's ok to call you by your first name? (maybe it has something to do with my assumptions about feminists/revolutionaries/communists (former) - or maybe just the nature of the time we have spent together!) In any event, please let me know if this is not comfortable for you (one should never make such assumptions!) - in any case please know that I mean no offense.

I just returned from catching up with a girlfriend who has been overseas for six months - I went to the house of the boy I am seeing in anticipation of having dinner but, finding him already eating (meat, and I am a vegetarian), I have taken myself out for dinner and am taking great pleasure in eating Thai food and writing to you.

I have been back in Sydney a week and a half and the pace of life has returned to pre-holiday freneticism. I have just started my new job at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. What an honour to have got work there! The legal section does a lot of important work: intervening in court cases which raise Human Rights issues, reviewing laws passed by parliament that may conflict with their international human rights obligations, writing submissions to government on issues of concern... wonderful stuff. My role is that of researcher for the section, so I hope to get exposure to a cross-section of the work that everyone is doing. I will be there three days a week. My preferred work, however, is the one I am doing the other two days of the week as part of my law degree - at a community legal centre. What amazing exposure to

different sections of the community! It has been so eye opening to see the extent to which the world presents as too complex or obstacle-ridden to so many people. The number of times I have seen someone say - in the short time I have been there - that they came up against a bit of a problem or resistance and thought 'well then, I'd better give up' or just hoped it would go away if they ignored it well enough! A community legal centre addresses so much more than legal issues - indeed more often than not it is other kinds of advice or support that people need. I am seeing one client at the moment who has a sexual assault issue - she is a middle-aged woman who finds it difficult to deflect the persuasions of a male friend, and then hates him and herself afterwards and suffers physical injury: while she may have some legal remedy, the law is clearly the wrong ultimate avenue - she desperately needs someone who will not judge or condemn her but who will support her + help her build strength. I am determined to help her towards finding the appropriate sense for that end as much as addressing any legal issues.

Because of this new context of full-time work that I find myself in, I have taken a keen interest in the idea of work and of the way that people conceive of themselves vis a vis their work or thought. Happily, in the one university course I am doing - law + social theory - we are studying Marx, and just last class we were looking at his ideas about 'alienation', → how work can contribute to it or redeem us from that state. His statements about 'alienation from the product of one's labour' or from the process which produces it, move me at the moment even the small challenges of unnatural light, air conditioning and confined spaces are trying to filter them to understand where very interesting and trying to filter them to understand where I am best placed. I am enjoying the process a lot. I am learning that sometimes the things that we wanted are not in fact the paths we are best suited for. It is indeed a process of unlearning, and I am grateful that at this time I am proceeding with interest rather than trepidation.

I so enjoyed my time in South Africa. It is a place ~~that~~ where I feel at home on the one hand, but from which I feel massively challenged by people's attitudes and unweave about the best way to respond without being needlessly antagonistic, and also without being complicit. How do you cope? Do you have a strategy that you use every time someone says or does something get disheartened at the sheer magnitude of and unrelenting manifestations of prejudice and ignorance? I don't know how I would have responded had I grown up there -

Whether I would have grown fatigued.

It's time I should go - I have a review of an article for our university law journal, of which I am an editor, due tomorrow morning. I am glad to have made contact with you finally - I have been looking forward to doing so since I have got home. I apologise that it has taken so long -

I apologise too for my clumsy expression: for all but the first part of the letter I have been sitting in the room with a friend who is trying to draw a chair, and who keeps interrupting my train of thought with updates on his progress! I will have to seek more conducive environments in future.

I hope this finds you well and in excellent spirits. I hope your writing is progressing well and that you are enjoying all the wonderful things you fill your life with. I am so pleased to have had the chance to meet you and talk with you a short while - and equally pleased that you invited me to write to you. I have already taken much from having known you.

With love,  
Melanie

Melanie Schwartz  
24 Bangalla Rd  
Rosebay NSW 2029  
AUSTRALIA.

27.11.04

Dear Trilda,

Now it is I who must apologise for beginning a letter and not sending it. I have thought of you often and wanted to finish writing to you for this time around for some time. The day that has chosen itself for this is a very warm Saturday. In some senses it is my first unqualified rest day in some time. I finished my law degree (once and for all!) at the end of last week. Yesterday I had some other work due - there is a wonderful professor in the other large law school in Sydney writing a law reform commission report <sup>submission</sup> about the incorporation of Indigenous customary law into state law. I have been researching a very interesting aspect of ~~his~~ his viewpoint on this - he wonders whether the entire notion of 'customary' law + the idea of its recognition by the state is in fact an extension + continuation of colonialist practice rather than a departure from it. True self-determination, he argues, hands the power to choose what method of dispute resolution will be used to the community itself. They may well choose state law and in a sense, the outcome is irrelevant. Rather, it is the opportunity to meaningfully exercise choice that is crucial, rather than deciding whether, how much + in what circumstances 'real' law will make room for 'customary' law. I think it is an important point. When I finished the research he suggested I try a draft of the submission. This is what was due to him yesterday. It is such a pleasure to be able to find work that is, to my mind, important, stimulating + rewarding. This professor discussed with me yesterday

another couple of projects he is interested in having me work on - one on 20th ~~19th~~ massacre of Indigenous people in Australia, and the other on abuse of Aboriginal children in State institutions, Both with a view to compensation for survivors or family members. It is good work, I am fortunate.

Phew - a long paragraph!

I am in such an interesting + exciting moment at present. I feel very strongly a sense of endings + beginnings. Finishing law school, and a long university career; the end of a year-long relationship (after telling Ben about you, he ordered me a copy of 'The World that was ours', which I will shortly begin to read!); next year I will begin my first full time job, with the judge at the Supreme Court.

But the most exciting transition for me is that I have just last weekend secured a lease on an apartment. A room of my own! I have been looking for a place for some time - I had a whole range of requirements: close to a park that I love, light, quiet, floor boards... I finally found the most beautiful little place which also has a little garden (Bliss!). I was 'outbid' by some other party and was so disappointed. I continued to look and found nothing that came close - until the apartment next door went up for lease! It is identical in all respects except that it has a bigger kitchen and better security!

It is difficult to convey how important having my

own place is to me right now. When you read the letter I began earlier, though, (which I am appending) you will get some sense of the fact that I am looking again to create a world that I can call mine. I don't even want a flatmate - I want to be able to choose my influencers and construct a home and a life of my picking. I have been longing for this kind of independence for some time, and am so excited about creating my space and my home.

My pen seems to have found pause here. I hope that you are well and that your writing and other creative work go well. My grandfather has been ill with shingles and then with a prostate condition. He has been living these last few months with my aunt, so you will not have seen him in the apartment block. He had a prostate operation earlier this week which will greatly help his comfort + quality of life. Hopefully it will be a good recovery - at the moment it looks positive. My parents are going to Cape Town next month to see him - around Christmas + New Year. If you don't mind, I'd like to ask my mom to pay you a visit - she has heard much about you from me and I would love her to meet you.

Finally, my apologies for the disjointed half-letter that follows, and its abrupt (un)ending. But I would rather you have it than not.

It has been lovely writing to you!  
Sending love,  
Melanie.

Dear Hilda,

What a joy to receive your letter - a sealed gift of your reflections and thoughts from over the sea. I rarely read an email twice - but there is so much more of a person in their written hand that makes rereading letters like a new encounter each time.

It's a Saturday afternoon, sunny and warm. I am generally at home on a Saturday as it is my day without driving (and computer/telephone etc): I read in the garden in the morning and move to the front of the house with the afternoon sun. I have spent the morning with girlfriends, who came over for a walk and tea, and had lunch with my mother + sister. We were discussing my grandparents here, as my sister had taken them to look at an apartment. My grandmother Tauba has a very bad knee and their current apartment has her walking up 2 flights of stairs every time she comes home. It's ridiculous. But they are very old-school people, born into poor Lithuanian families and having retained a shtetl work-ethic and hoarding-mentality (my grandmother at 78 still works as a chemist and my grandfather has rooms full of 'stuff' acquired over the years). It will be very difficult if not impossible to convince them to move - the financial leap, the conceptual leap, the practical leap. It is more likely that they will stay and struggle there, until the death of one of them forces a new reality. This is so frustrating to me! I cannot accept that fear and inflexibility must attend old-age. I will not be like that! I want to be like you - find a new calling (or 2)



at a time where most people are settled into what their life has become. How is it that you have stopped your world from narrowing? How is it that your world was so expansive in the first place? What was it about you (and your husband) that so set you apart from other young white people of your society? Did it come from your own families, or from elsewhere?

I am pre-occupied with these questions of 'becoming.'

I come from a wonderful, close family - both immediate and extended. There is a degree of support and involvement in each others lives that is, I think, unusual even in close families. The downside of this incredible situation is that it is often quite a normative environment to live in → there is a very strong sense of what people 'should' be doing, not doing, etc. I remember once, a year or so into my undergraduate degree, being unsettled in Sydney having lived overseas (mainly in Israel) for a year after high school. I'd spoken to my mom about taking a semester off to go and work 'on the land', on a farm or in the country somewhere. I overheard a discussion she had about this with my dad, who called the idea 'a ~~big~~ slap in the face' to them since, in his view, it was in opposition to their views on what I should be doing and therefore a personal rejection of them and their support of me. Needless to say, I went nowhere.

Even now there is a tension between my family's / community's values and my own - in some respects. It is a fine balance, trying to maintain the closeness that is there, when not slotting ~~in~~ comfortably into the normative structure - the joys of family life!

I wanted to tell you more about Australia to give you some sense of the place I live and of a place you have never been.

We call ourselves 'the lucky country' and in many ways this is spot on. We have a fantastic lifestyle - the weather is beautiful (which, as you noted in your letter, is so significant!), we live close to the sea, people here are in the main laid-back + friendly. We have no significant HIV problem, no significant crime problem, we live an out-doors-y life. We enjoy economic prosperity as a nation and until we joined the 'coalition of the willing' ~~had~~ were politically insignificant enough to have no real enemies on the world stage. We pride ourselves, as a nation, in being genuine, unpretentious and fair. Until the war-on-terror, our greatest political issues were whether to become a republic and, if we did, whether to change our flag.

Melanie from Australia  
(unanswered)

Dear Hilda,

It has been a couple of weeks now since I finished 'The World that was Ours.' I feel like I have access now to a whole section + timbre of what is essentially my- or at least my family's - personal history. Although I have read Mandela's 'Long Walk', the details + feeling of that time have stayed with me in a different way through your book - maybe because it is written in the female voice or because it is quite a focussed account where Mandela's story is so sweeping. That said, the book did make me so curious about the time that led up to that period in your life and the time following. When I was in South Africa you told me you were working on some writing about your own political journey, and how your position has changed over the years. That is something that interests me a great deal - I am always so keen to understand what the influences and defining moments are in people's lives. I think this is because I am myself infuriatingly moderate + slow to be moved - I make decisions only after long consideration and then rarely move from them. In some senses I think that this limits my experiences (the middle road is well trod and relatively featureless!) I am trying to be less concerned about whether things are going to last or be 'true' forever, and let myself be carried by that which resonates with me.

I have now been on holiday about 3 weeks from work. I start with the Judge at the end of the month. After a very frenetic year I have been having really good 'down-time' - settling into my beautiful home, having friends over, gardening, taking walks, swimming, reading, and doing the odd bit of research.

News of the Asian tsunami has hit Australia hard. There has been an extraordinary public response and our government has committed a \$1 billion aid package. I have to say that I think that this (though a decent + important contribution in its own right) serves to take the heat off <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ government's recent (and not so recent) shortcomings, especially in its treatment of asylum seekers. ~~That~~ As if <sup>their</sup> compassionate gesture obviates their relentlessly uncompassionate immigration policy -> and indeed in terms of their international standing, it may well be seen as doing so. I just don't understand the need for the government's current policy. They predicate it on a threat (flooding influx of refugees, some not bona fides) that simply doesn't exist. We lock up children along with their parents in detention for months, years. Some attempt suicide, almost all emerge psychologically scarred. Who are ~~we~~ we??

I find the average Australian's generosity, as evidenced by the millions collected for the tsunami relief effort, so at odds with their support of the current government. I think it must come down to the perceived (and sometimes real, but always perceived) terrorism threat. Anything (foreign) is threatening, in as much as it presents an unknown factor.

But how do we have compassion for orphan tsunami victims and not for orphaned asylum seekers? Like in South Africa (now, and then) the capacity to avert one's eyes is paramount to maintaining an inconsistent ethic.

While reading your book I often thought of how frustrating it must be for you now, living where you are amongst the people in your block. Of course they are lovely but they are (all?) of the type that you describe in your book as having nothing in common with you politically. Do you feel differently about this now that the 'struggle' has, on paper, been successful? Has the need for political alignment become less important in the New South Africa?

One of the things that has stuck with me from your last letter is your saying how important it is to see as much of the world as possible. I feel some regret at not travelling in this month I have had off. At this stage I plan to take a trip at the end of working for the judge, before starting what comes next. I have lived in Israel for a year and in the UK for 2; I have visited a lot of Europe but have never been to South America and much of Asia - the countries whose cultural origins are different from mine. That said, I have only been to S. Africa + Zimbabwe on the African continent. There is so much to see - and also in my own country.

I hope this finds you well. My mom really enjoyed the time she spent with you, and I am also glad that she got to meet you. I will write again when I have started work in the court, and tell you a bit about that.

3

With love - and with thanks for the recommendation of your book.

X Melanie

12 Greenholme Farm, Leather Bank, Burley in Wharfedale, West Yorkshire  
LS29 7HP, UK. Tel/Fax: 01943 865 675. e-mail: [agshaper@wentworth.u-net.com](mailto:agshaper@wentworth.u-net.com)

Dear *Hilda,*

*12/12/04*

How does one write one's first circular letter and avoid all the terrible pitfalls that are so easily parodied in the pre-Xmas columns of the newspapers? I am not sure, but the justification for this one is that after 32 years in Mill Hill, we moved to a small village in West Yorkshire. Our son Nick has been based in the Bradford Royal Infirmary since 2000 and his wife Sarah is a GP in a nearby rural village. Their enthusiastic encouragement and the presence of the three grandchildren (8, 2<sup>1/2</sup> and 6 months) did the trick, and as a clincher, they promised that when we could no longer remember our names, they would tell us! The house is part of an old farm complex, a remodelled barn, with stone walls and a modern interior with less overall space than in Mill Hill, but surrounded by grazing fields (cattle and sheep) and with the River Wharfe, a weir and stepping stones about 100 yards away. Ilkley is 3 miles away, Harrogate and Leeds about 20-30 minutes on the local train and York and Kendal about 1 hour. There are about a dozen families in this part of Burley near the river which is separated from the 'real' village (it still has a Co-op) by the A65/A660 road and the 'natives' are very friendly. Yorkshire is a huge county with more places to visit than we shall ever get around to, more walks than we will ever attempt, myriads of pubs and restaurants, a very good library in Ilkley, excellent theatre in Leeds and Bradford and all the other facilities that one needs and wants as one grows a shade older.

Do we miss London? We miss the easy access to friends of long-standing, but the hassle of getting into London for exhibitions and theatre was beginning to pall and 4-hour long journeys to Yorkshire were becoming tiring. We had to get rid of 2-3000 books as we could not house them and we deeply miss the home-library that gave us immediate access to anything and everything, if only one remembered where to look! We are still sorting out pictures and carpets but a double garage does wonders for giving a false sense of order.

We would love to hear from you and for those with the ability and enthusiasm for travel, we hope to see you in this part of the world.

With seasonal greetings,

Gerry and Lorna Shaper

*We may have told you all this but this is our Xmas/New Year greeting to far distant friends — so our fond greetings to you. Strongly enough — it is only the presence of friends like you in South Africa that still makes it attractive for us — & hopefully we will see you in the not too distant future.*

*Love from*  
*Gerry & Lorna*



BY AIR MAIL  
*par avion*  
Royal Mail

Airletter

Royal Mail Leeds  
11 12 04  
07:32 PM  
R33331016



Great Britain  
Postage  
Paid



Mr Hilda Bernstein  
503 Horizons,  
6 Three Anchors Bay  
Cape Town 8005  
SOUTH AFRICA

Sender's name and address  
Please show postcode

SHARPER  
LS29 7HP  
UK

Postcode

An airletter should not contain any enclosure