

17 July 1996

Dear Adam Hochschild

Barbara Harmel gave me your name and address, and suggested to me that you might be able to assist me with a book that I am attempting to write.

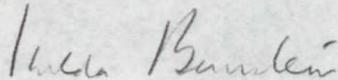
I need to obtain material on what life was like for the citizens of Moscow during the period 1937 to 1946. I am attempting to put together some short pieces of writing by my sister - now dead - who lived in Moscow during that period. (And for a short time in July 1942 to March 43 in the Urals.) What I need are memoirs - or other types of writing - that will help to fill in the background of the Muscovites' life - the day to day human interest angle. My sister was married to an American engineer who had gone to Moscow to work on the Metro. They did not live amongst the ex-patriate communities, but among the ordinary people, except that they obviously had contacts with what seems to be a political/intellectual circle: in the 1930s, before the war, with German and other Communists who had sought refuge in the Soviet Union; and with a young set of Muscovites - theatrical or intellectuals - and other foreigners who were working for the Soviet authorities.

I have read Alexander Werth and also Robert Conquest and Eugenia Ginsberg, who deal with the gulag, which for my purpose is only touched peripherally. I need to get a feel of what Moscow was like first during the pre-war years of mounting tensions and trials, and then the war years: rationing, black-outs, restrictions, the personal and more intimate details of every day life.

If you can make any suggestions of books of other sources I would be most grateful. If you can't, then I apologise for bothering you.

I am a South African living in Britain; my eldest daughter is the same age, and a close friend, of Barbara's. So you will be able to work out that I am a very old woman. I have previously only written books and material about South Africa.

With good wishes



Hilda Bernstein

Adam Hochschild

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84 Seward St., San Francisco CA 94114

Electronic mail: ahochschild@mcimail.com

July 27, 1996

Dear Hilda,

Thanks for your letter. I have heard your name over the years, and I'm sure I read some of your work when I was working on my book on South Africa in the late 1980s. And am I not correct in thinking that you are related to Jeremy Bernstein? He briefly helped me with some research when I was working on that book.

Here are some suggestions on books for you to look at. The one probably comes the closest to describing the life and circles that your sister lived in in Moscow is An Opposing Man by Ernst Fischer. He was a Communist refugee from Austria, I believe, who lived in Moscow in the late 1930s and some of this memoir is a very vivid evocation of that time and place. Another book you might want to look at -- and I suggest this because you say that sister also lived in the Urals -- is Behind the Urals: An American Worker In Russia's City of Steel, by John Scott.

But most important, the books that have certainly moved me the most in reading about this period are the two volumes of memoirs by Nadezhda Mandelstam. They are Hope Against Hope and Hope Abandoned (at least in their American editions -- sometimes books have slightly different titles in their British editions). She was the widow of the poet Osip Mandelstam, who was arrested in 1938 and who died in the gulag. She herself, however, was never arrested. She writes about their lives before his arrest, her own life afterwards, and the many varieties of compromise, intimidation, and bravery she came across during the 1930s and 40s. There is quite a bit of stuff about other Russian writers which may not be of so much interest to you, but there is an enormous amount of nitty gritty everyday detail about life in Moscow and the other Russian cities where she lived during that time. I think they are quite extraordinary books, in my view the greatest non-fiction prose written in Russia while Stalin was alive.

A book called They Came to Stay by Paula Garb (Progress Publishers, Moscow) I've seen but it's not very good: it does, however, consist of interviews with Americans and other foreigners who lived in Russia in the 1930s and 40s. Homer Smith was a black American reporter who lived in Russia around this time and wrote an autobiographical book which I've looked at, but forgotten the title. The well-known American journalist Harrison Salisbury was a correspondent in Russia during World War II and afterwards, and wrote several books about the

experience of living there, and also a volume of memoirs. In one and possibly two of them he describes a lot about daily life in Moscow during World War II but I can't remember which of his books this is in. Try the memoirs (I'm not sure of the title) or American in Russia for starters. He's a good writer. Finally, I see in my files a note about two books which I have not read or seen but which sound like they might be on this subject: Moscow Yankee by Myra Page, and An American Engineer in Stalin's Russia: The Memoirs of Zara Witkin 1932-1934.

I hope this is useful to you. Good luck!

All the best,

Adam



При сем представляю следующие документы /подробно перечислить представляемые документы/, если командироваться, то указать, кем и в качестве кого

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 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

О П Р О С Н Ы Е Л И С Т.

..... Шварц, Семен Михайлович ..... Т.  
 /такого то имя, отчество, фамилия/.

Выезжающего . в Англию .  
 /поименовать государство/.

Через пограничный пункт . . . . .

1. Имя /если таковых несколько, то следует поименовать все/ . . . Семен . . . . .

2. Фамилия /сложные фамилии выписываются полностью, замужние, разведенные и вдовы указывают свои девичьи фамилии/ . . . . . Ш В А Р Ц . . . . .

3. Точное время и место рождения . 17 июля 1881 года в Кол. Богачево Кам.Подольской губ.

4. Основная профессия . строитель . . . . .

5. Настоящее место жительства и с какого времени . . . . . Лондон, с 1901 года . . . . .

6. Местожительство за последние 10 лет /перечислить все места/ . . . Лондон . . . . .

7. Точное указание рода и места занятий, занимаемой должности и получаемого оклада . . . . . Заведующий Консульской Частью Полпредства в Великобритании, мес. оклад 48 ф.ст. 15 шилл . . . . .

8. Род занятий за последние 10 лет /указать подробно места службы, занимаемые должности и оклады/ . . . До 1918 г. по профессии, как строитель, с 1918 г. секретарь профсоюза портных в Лондоне, с 1920 г. по настоящее время в Полпредстве Зав. Консульской Частью.

9. Семейное положение, дети или раба, есть ли дети и их возраст/ . . . . .

10. Отношения с семьей/ . . . . .

11. Год призыва в армию/ . . . . .

12. Гражданство/ . . . . .

13. Подданство/ указать и в каком государстве и в какой местности и в какой срок за последние 10 лет/ . . . . .

14. Если проходил службу в иностранном государстве, указать в каком и в какой должности/ . . . . .

15. Национальность/ . . . . .

16. Партийная принадлежность/ указать партию, № партии/ . . . . .

17. Принадлежность к какому-либо обществу, клубу, кружку, указать, в каком и в какой должности/ . . . . .

18. Куда и в какой срок выезжали за границу/ . . . . .

19. Точное указание командировок, куда и в какой срок/ . . . . .

20. Поездки за границу за последние 10 лет, указать подробно, где и в какой срок/ . . . . .

21. Если имели заграничные паспорта, указать, в каком и в какой срок выезжали и куда/ . . . . .

22. Кто из родственников находится в Советской России/ . . . . .

а/ Фамилия  
 б/ Чем занимается  
 в/ Адрес

23. Кто из родственников находится в Советской России, указать подробно, где и в какой срок/ . . . . .

/собственноручно/ . . . . .

9 August 1996

Bear Adam

This is just a 'thank you' letter, so does not need a reply.

I am really grateful to you for replying so swiftly, and so usefully. This mornigg I obtained the two Mandelstam books from the Oxford library - heavy weight for me, a slow reader. I think I can get hold of Ernst Fischer's book (I have his book on art, of course) but the others will need some detective work.

When you mentioned in your letter that you were in SA working on a book, I remembered The Mirror at Midnight - I have it in hardback (I covet hardback books), given to me by my editor at Cape who published my book on the exile experience of South Africans. You may have heard my name because I have written books on South Africa; or it may have been because we were part of that smallish group of white South Africans who battled against apartheid. My husband, 'Misty' (Lionel, actually) was in the Rivonia trial with Nelson, and the only one of the eight who was acquitted - the others all went to jail. We escaped. I wrote about that, and the trial in The World That Was Ours. If you would like to read it, I will send you a copy, as I don't think you will find it in the US.

I have just taken down your book, and found a letter from JoAnne Robertson at HarperCollins who gave me the book so that I could suggest some contacts for publicising it - so the bit above was wrong. Glancing at your book again, I see that your Epilogue really sums up what has actually happened since you wrote it. Of course we have been back there - the first time in 1992 when we got indemnity - then for the elections, the greatest, most monumental times of our lives - and this year in March. There is still a feeling of unreality among us, that this has actually happened, and the ease with which the whites have slipped into the new social attitudes is amazing. But they have not yet had to sacrifice anything of their life-style (except for the discomfort of living with so much crime). And, as you wrote, they still have economic power. We are happy, delighted, with all the changes, yet see awful problems that are not being solved, and doubt whether SA will get the investments it needs. Perhaps you will want to go back and write about it again?

Anyway, again, many thanks for being so helpful.

And good wishes

Hilda Bernstein

# PLUTO PRESS

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EMail: pluto@plutobks.demon.co.uk

To Hilda Bernstein  
57 Lock Crescent  
Kidlington  
Oxon  
OX5 1HF

30.6.2000

Dear Hilda,

A Life of Ones Own.

Thanks for the new chapters.

I have had a careful look at the new materials, and shown them to a colleague and we are agreed that we don't think that the material would provide the kind of book that Pluto can successfully sell, as the work is still more a family history, a loving daughter telling the story of her lost father, than a social history of the USSR.

This may seem a very unkind judgment, but from where we stand, as you know we have to make judgements that we think will sell a book. You have clearly made major alterations, the material is written from you, and there are significant chunks of Soviet history in there., so I appreciate that you have made major alterations. And of course you write wonderfully, so the material is intrinsically interesting..

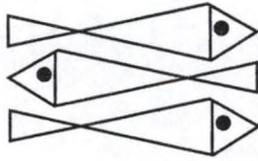
But for us, that is Pluto to make it work, the book has to be foremost a social history, in a context of Stalinism and the turbulent history of the middle years of the 20th century. The sub context, your family history, is at present still the key text of the narrative.

I fully appreciate, that is the way you may want it. If you do, I would advise taking it to other, more trade publishers for their appraisal. If you wanted to make another effort to move even more in our direction, I would certainly be open to you. But if you wouldn't I would understand.

My good wishes



Roger van Zwanenberg



**FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX, INC. *Book Publishers***  
**HILL & WANG      NORTH POINT PRESS**

JOHN A. GLUSMAN  
Vice President  
Executive Editor

April 13, 1999

Mr. Glenn Frankel  
The Washington Post  
1150 15th Street  
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Glenn:

I want to thank you for sending me Hilda Bernstein's *A LIFE OF ONE'S OWN*, which I found fascinating. Alas, I'm afraid the project strikes me as better suited to a university press than to a trade house such as FSG.

I appreciate the chance to see this in any case, and thank you both for thinking of me.

All good wishes.

Yours,

enc.

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***PUBLISHER:***

*Publisher:* **Historical Papers Research Archive**

*Collection Funder:* **Bernstein family**

*Location:* **Johannesburg**

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