

Budapest, 22nd, Febr.,
1969

Budapest, VII. Lenin krt.
40-42. II.em. 12/a.

Hope Leresche & Steele
Literary and Dramatic Agents
11 Jubilee Place
London
SW3

Attn.: Mrs Hilda Bernstein!

Dear Mrs Bernstein,

Let me allow to introduce myself as the Hungarian translator of your book "The world that was ours." I am sure that your book will greatly enlighten the Hungarian reading public concerning the South-African situation.

As for me, I am a 24 year-old university student, specializing in Spanish. I have published some poems in different literary magazines and anthologies, translated poems and prose from English and Spanish. My husband is a poet, translator and teaches Spanish in a secondary school.

It was a great experience for me to translate your book, to obtain knowledge of the Rivonia trial and of the behaviour of these men, among them your husband, whom I greatly admire. I am interested in a lot of questions, and I should be pleased if you would answer me, whether Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and the others are still doing hard labour on Robben Island? What is the present situation

in South-Africa, is there any perspective of a further liberation movement? It also interests me, how you could help your children to get out to London?

One of the most difficult things is to write about one's personal feelings, but I should like you to know that while reading and translating your book, you have become a very good friend of mine, I have enjoyed very much your thoughts and your human behaviour.

I would also like to make a request of you. My husband is compiling an anthology, which contains literary prison documents from Greece and Spain. We should like to use South-African documents as well, but we have no poetry of this type available.

We would appreciate your sending us some South-African poetry containing prison themes. We would be grateful for some appropriate illustrations as well, or at least suggestions, from where it would be possible to obtain them.

Thank you beforehand for your kindness, and your time, and my best regards to your family,

Very truly yours,

!
Dobos Eva

Mrs Hilda Bernstein

Éva Dobos
Budapest, VII.
Lenin krt. 40-42. II. em. 12/a.
HUNGARY

5, Rothwell Street,
London, N.W.1.
England.

25th March 1969

Dear Eva,

Thank you for your letter; it was nice for me to hear from you, and to know that you translated my book. I hope it did not present too many difficulties.

To answer your questions:

Nelson Mandela and the other ~~prisoners~~ prisoners who were given 'life' sentences, including Bram Fischer who was sentenced after I left South Africa, are all in prison and while the present system lasts, they will remain there. In South Africa political ~~prisoners~~ prisoners get no remission at all, and a life sentence is in fact for life - as long as they live under apartheid, they will remain in jail. All the political prisoners except for whites are on Robben Island. The white men are in Pretoria Central Prison, and the white women serving sentences for political offences have now all completed their sentences and been released. There are also some African women in other jails. (I am referring to the political prisoners only, of course.)

The conditions for the men in Pretoria have improved enormously during the past three years, in the main due to a great deal of publicity about jail conditions. Their cells, type of work, recreation facilities, and number of letters they are allowed to write - these have all improved, so that today on the whole the conditions are not too bad. There are two white men serving life sentences (Bram Fischer and Denis Goldberg) and a number serving long sentences - 15 to 20 years.

The conditions on Robben Island have also improved, again due to publicity and pressures from outside, but they are not as good as those in Pretoria. Long-term prisoners are still doing hard labour, breaking rocks, and work of this kind. Visiting of relatives is difficult because of the high cost of travelling to Robben Island from all over South Africa. It is, for instance, a thousand miles from Johannesburg.

The men serving long sentences are all studying, and for them study is the means to retaining some sanity. Although they are nominally permitted to take study courses through the University of South Africa (which is a correspondence University - all courses are done through correspondence) yet in fact the government continually puts difficulties in the way of the

men - their books must all be censored by ignorant prison officials who sometimes hold them up for weeks and months; some books are never permitted to reach them; and so on.

For all these reasons we who have left South Africa feel that it is our primary duty to see these men are not forgotten. When you are in prison the worst thing of all is to feel that the outside world has forgotten you. That is why I am very glad to have a Hungarian edition of the book, so that people will read and know and remember. All action taken is important. No protest is ever lost.

As for the future, we believe the only solution will come through guerilla warfare, which on a small scale has started on the borders of Rhodesia and South West Africa - the first clash there occurred in August of 1968. We see it as a long struggle, but do not doubt the outcome. The liberation movements in the Portuguese colonial territories in Angola and Mozambique have made great strides in the past few years, and have actually liberated and taken control of large areas in these two countries. If not for NATO, Portugal would be unable to continue the war. We now see the whole of Southern Africa, South Africa, South-West Africa, ~~LESOTHO~~ Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Angola, Mozambique, as essentially one area in respect of the struggle against white supremacy.

Regarding the request for poetry. Dennis Brutus, who now lives in London, has written some excellent prison poetry, and a book of his poems is shortly to be published here. He works for the Christian Action Committee, 2 Amen Court, London, E.C.4. I have not been able to speak to him, as he has been abroad and is only returning next week. Would you like to write direct to him, or shall I ask him to send you some of his poems? I will ask him, in any case. In addition, Penguin have just published a book of South African poetry but I have not yet been able to obtain a copy and do not know if it contains prison poetry. Would you like me to obtain a copy and send it to you? As far as other poems are concerned, I think Dennis Brutus would probably know more than I, so I am waiting for his return.

Tell me what you would like in the way of illustrations. I have done a number of drawings myself, and could send you, for instance, a couple of woodcuts which you might be able to use. But would like some idea of what your husband is looking for.

I am happy to enjoy your friendship, and hope that one day I can come to Hungary and we will meet.

With best wishes,

Hilda Bernstein

Charges to pay

POST OFFICE

TELEGRAM

No. _____
OFFICE STAMP

RE TS 15/2 LN

Prefix. Time handed in. Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words.



At _____ m

At _____ m

Q100 CFL571 EOF144 ZBP080 BUDAPST 15 4 1852

ELT MRS HILDA BERNSTEIN ⁵ ROTHWELL ~~LTRDET~~ ^{57 STREET}

LONDONNU1

WE HAVE AFRICAN WOMEN RHODESIA MINI EVA

COL ELT ¹ † TS 15/2 LN

For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form, and, if possible, the envelope.

B or C

MARX KÁROLY KÖZGAZDASÁGTUDOMÁNYI EGYETEM
NEMZETKÖZI KAPCSOLATOK TANSZÉK

Budapest, IX., Dimitrov tér 8.

*

KARL MARX UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Budapest, 26th April 1968.

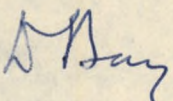
Dear Mrs. Bernstein,

Please excuse us for being so late in informing you about your book: it has taken somewhat long, it appears, to decide on the translation, but it usually takes a long time.

Now, in the absence of Prof. Réczei, I am glad to tell you a happy piece of news: one of our publishers will deal with the translation, they are about to ask for the copyright.

With best regards, I am

faithfully yours,


/ Dr. L. Bati/

Mrs. Hilda Bernstein

L O N D O N

MARX KÁROLY KÖZGAZDASÁGTUDOMÁNYI EGYETEM
NEMZETKÖZI KAPCSOLATOK TANSZÉK
Budapest, IX., Dimitrov tér 8.

*

KARL MARX UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

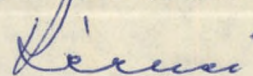
Dear Mrs. Bernstein,

in reply to your kind letter of 26/9/67

I have the pleasure to inform you that I contacted one of the greatest Hungarian publishing houses the Kossuth Publisher. They are certainly interested in your book and would be glad to look into it in order to find out whether it is suitable for their purposes. At any rate, if your work is not fitting into the scope of their publications they promised me to find the proper publisher. I request you therefore to send a copy of your book to my address.

I was very glad to hear about you and to be at your service.

With best wishes



/L. Réczei/

Budapest, 4/10/67

Mrs. Hilda Bernstein
43, Frognal
London, N.W.3,
England.

Budapest, VII.
Lenin krt.40-42.
II.em. 12/a.

HUNGARY

7th April 1969

Dear Hilda,

It was a great pleasure for me to receive your letter, thank you for the detailed information you gave me to my questions.

I answer you immediately, for it was very interesting what you wrote about the drawings and it gave me an idea. If you have some sketches about for example the Rivonia trial, or drawings in connection with the persons or events occurring in your book, wouldn't you like to send them to me for illustrating "The world that was ours", which has not yet gone to press, so it would be easy to insert them, provided they could arrive within a short term, the latest the first days of May.

To write in more detail about the anthology my husband is compiling:

That will contain three parts: a Spanish, a Greek and a South-African one. In the Spanish part we shall publish details from the hand-written illegal review "The wall", the Spanish political prisoners made in the prison of Burgos. Among the authors there is Marcos Ana, the poet, who spent an uninterrupted 23 years in prison, which is a sad record in Europe. He had been arrested as a young boy immediately after the defeat of the Spanish civil war and the years spent in jail made him a poet. He has been released in 1962, as a result of the international pressure. A collection of his poems is given place in the

book, translated by my husband; the illustrating material given by Agostin Ibarrola.

The Greek part contains a diary published in Roumania, written by a political prisoner held in a jail of Athens, and poems of Jannis Ritsos, illustrated by drawings of Greek political prisoners.

Finally, I translated some parts from the "Jail diary of Albie Sachs" /by the way, I should like to ask you, what do you know about him, is he still in South-Africa? Hasn't he been arrested again?/

Thank you for giving me the address of Dennis Brutus, I shall get in contact with him, but for the shortness of time I turn to you, please, ask him to send me some of his prison poems.

As for the illustrations, I was very glad to hear about your woodcuts. It would be ideal to harmonize them with the poems of Dennis Brutus and - if you agree with it - with the jail diary of Albie Sachs, as to say it would be good for them to express the atmosphere of the solitary confinement.

Sorry to say, the deadline of this anthology is soon enough, so I am obliged to ask you for sending us all the materials asked as soon as possible in order not to miss the press deadline, which means the end of April or the first days of May.

I apologize ^{to} you for asking so many things, although I am sure, you are pressed for time yourself. However, please send me the Penguin's South-African anthology as well; if there are no prison poems in it, it is not so urgent, but it may be useful for the future, when I could offer a collection of South-African poetry for publishing.

book, translated by my husband; the illustrating material given by Agostin Iberrola.

The Greek part contains a diary published in Roundtable. Many thanks in anticipation, and I am

grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to open correspondence with you.

Finally, I translated some parts from the "Jail diary of Aldie Sachs" by the way, I should like to know about him, is he still in South-Africa? He has been arrested again. My best regards to you and your family.

Thank you for giving me the address of Dennis Brutus. I shall get in contact with him, but for the shortness of time I turn to you, please, ask him to send me some of his prison poems.

As for the illustrations, I was very glad to hear about your woodcuts. It would be ideal to harmonize them with the poems of Dennis Brutus and - if you agree with it - with the jail diary of Aldie Sachs, as to say it would be good for them to express the atmosphere of the solitary confinement.

Sorry to say, the deadline of this anthology is soon enough, so I am obliged to ask you for sending us all the materials asked as soon as possible in order not to miss the press deadline, which means the end of April or the first days of May.

I apologize to you for asking so many things, although I am sure, you are pressed for time yourself. However, please send me the Penguin's South-African anthology as well; if there are no prison poems in it, it is not so urgent, but it may be useful for the future, when I could offer a collection of South-African poetry for publishing.

5 Rothwell Street,
London, N.W.1,
England.

15th April 69

Dear Eva,

1) I have sent you a couple of woodcuts and little sketches made at the Rivonia trial - if the sketches can be inserted anywhere in the book, it would be very nice. We wanted to use them in the English edition, but then they said it would make the price too high. However, I do not know if there are enough to be worth using.

Regarding the woodcuts, the one called 'Rhodesia' was done after the execution of Africans in Salisbury jail last year - on the TV we saw the relatives of the executed men fling themselves to the ground in just the way I have tried to show. The one called 'Mini' was done to honour a great South African who was a member of the African National Congress, a man who had a marvellous voice and always sang for the people - he was executed by the South African government for sabotage.

2) I have sent a copy of the Penguin book of South African verse, more for the enjoyment of yourself and your husband than in the hope that he will find anything for his anthology there. There is one poem, by Driver, page 178 - Driver was a student leader at the time he was arrested and held in solitary confinement under the 90-day law. And another poem which means a great deal to me is the one on p 235 by Ingrid Jonker; her father is a leading figure in the apartheid government, and she drowned herself a couple of years ago, running into the sea. The poem was written just after Sharpeville - Nyanga is an African area in Cape Town where strikes and demonstrations took place the week of the Sharpeville shootings.

Apart from 'South African' themes, I think the poem by Lerner, 'Years Later', p 147, is one of the most moving I have ever read.

On the whole, the book is a disappointment because of the omission of a number of leading South African poets including Raymond Kunene, the leading South African Zulu poet of today. Other names not in, Dennis Brutus, for example, indicate that the compilers were careful to make a selection that would not be too unacceptable inside South Africa - Kunene and Brutus are two among dozens who are banned from publication in South Africa, and if their poems appeared, then the book could not be sold in that country. One can't help feeling that these political motives have detracted from the value of the anthology as a whole.

3) Albie Sachs lives here, near me. He wrote a sequel to his 'Jail Diary', called 'Stephanie on Trial', this being the story of his second arrest, his involvement with another young

resister, Stephanie Kemp, her trial and the sequel. They both came to London when Stephanie was released from jail, and are now married. She is a beautiful, intelligent girl.

4) I spoke to Dennis Brutus who told me he would get his publishers - Heinemanns - to send you a copy of his poems immediately. I have not yet seen the book, as I do not know if it has gone on sale. I gave him your address, so if the book does not arrive, let me know.

With best wishes

Budapest, VII.

Lenin krt. 40-42.

II.em. 12/a.

HUNGARY

30 April 1969

Dear Hilda,

I had received the drawings and the Penguin's anthology, and recently Heinemanns have sent me the book of Dennis Brutus as well.

Thank you very much for everything.

I was very happy to receive the drawings, we can use all of them, these are exactly the type I was thinking of. I have already forwarded your sketches to the editor of your book, and she liked them very much, so we hope, there would be no difficulties on part of the publishing house. Your woodcuts are beautiful, we shall use them in the anthology. My husband has already translated a poem of Dennis Brutus /On the Island/ and the Driver's poem, you mentioned in your letter.

I am enjoying reading the South African poems, and we intend to translate some of them for our literary reviews, because South African poetry is fairly unknown in Hungary.

I'd like you to know that it was a great pleasure for us to be informed from your first letter about the recent events in South Africa, and that as for the future we have the same opinion about the only solution.

In these days I work day and night, I am control-editing a book /how to say in English?/ that is I compare the translation with the original; it is a book of James Aldridge: The Last Exile, a very good, but a very long one. And next week I'll begin to learn for my exams.

Thanking you again for the material you have sent, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

Eva

II. ker. Kupeczky u.8.

I.em. 1.

Budapest, Hungary

22nd July 1969

Dear Hilda,

Your book is going to press now, and the anthology will follow it soon. Your woodcuts have met with a great success in the editorial, and the editors asked me to interpret their request, please, send us two more woodcuts /if possible, a vertical and a horizontal one, because of the easier arrangement of the illustrations/, for in the Spanish and Greek parts there are more illustrating material available, and we should like to complete the South-African part, too. Naturally, if you could send us more woodcuts, we should be pleased, and the book would contain all of them. We can use photographs of woodcuts, as well.

Many thanks for them in advance, in our name and in the name of the editorial. As I now, these will be the first series of South-African drawings to appear in Hungary.

We have read a very interesting article about the Bantu Education, in the supplement no.38 of the review Tricontinental. I wish, some day we had an occasion to talk personally about South-Africa.

With best regards

Eva



LÉGIPOSTA
PARAVION

Mrs. Hilda Bernstein

Feladó:
Exp. Éva Dobos

5, Rothwell Street,
London, N.W.1.

Budapest, II. ker.

ENGLAND

Kupeczky u. 8. I. em. l.

5 Rothwell Street,
London, N.W.1,
England.

26th July 69

Dear Eva,

You will think me very silly, but I cannot now remember which woodcuts I sent to you! This makes the task of choosing two more impossible.

This is a waste of time, of course, but if you can write me immediately the titles of the ones you have, I will be able to send some others. If time is very short, perhaps you can cable them to me.

I am really pleased they are being used in the book - I am looking forward to seeing it immensely. Also my own book, of course. I did not thank you for sending me the art book. I do thank you now, I like it very much, and it is exactly the right gift for me. (I have~~x~~ told my family many times, when they ask what I~~x~~ would like for my birthday, or Christmas: Art books or plants in pots - don't you dare give me anything domestic, like things for the kitchen!)

Yes, let's meet some time. You come here to England, and we will find a place for you to sleep in a corner - I am sure we will have enough room. And I do hope that one day I can come to Hungary.

Best wishes,

We enjoyed the company of your husband's 'big brother' and his friend.

II. ker. Kupeczky u.8.
I.em.1.
Budapest

16 August 1969

Dear Hilda,

Thank you very much for the woodcuts, they are beautiful. We have chosen three of them for the book. It is a very good idea to write articles for Hungarian magazines, for you can't find anything about South-Africa in our newspapers /unless the daily temperature of Blaiberg/. We shall make inquiries about the possibilities of publishing articles, but please, be patient, because, knowing our magazines, they do not hurry to answer. We'll ask the possibilities of payment for the woodcuts, as well. We would be pleased, if you could come to Hungary. We are planning to go to London next summer, although, for the moment, it is no more but a plan.

Some weeks ago we have met Albie Sachs and Stephanie, sorry, for a short time, only. We were quite upset when they've left, it was so good to talk with them, we felt as if they were old friends of us.

I'll translate to Hungarian the "Stephanie on trial"; it is a great pleasure for me, because I like this book very much, and it will also help our reading public to complete its knowledge about South-Africa.

Very truly yours,

Eva

Collection Number: A3299

Collection Name: Hilda and Rusty BERNSTEIN Papers, 1931-2006

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: **Historical Papers Research Archive**

Collection Funder: **Bernstein family**

Location: **Johannesburg**

©2015

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of the *Hilda and Rusty Bernstein Papers*, held at the Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.