

Pcc/11815762



March 2, 1964

The Honorable Jan De Klerk  
Minister of the Interior  
Houses of Parliament  
Capetown, South Africa

Dear Sir:

As the New York producer of the Union Artists' production of SPONONO, by Alan Paton and Krishna Shah, may I take the liberty of using this means to introduce myself to you and to express my appreciation for the cooperation we have received from your office in the expedition of passports for the cast and for the visa which permitted Mr. Shah to visit South Africa to supervise and arrange many of the details of the production which would not have been possible at a distance of 7,000 miles.

I am enclosing the first clippings from the New York newspapers on the arrival of the company. They show, we feel, the interest here in the forthcoming production and this response has been a source of excitement for us and the company.

With the arrival of the company and the beginning of rehearsals, however, I find myself in need, once again, of your good offices. It has become immediately obvious that the successful presentation of the play demands the presence of Alan Paton. He is needed to participate in the creative problems which must be solved as the play is adapted for American audiences. While his collaborator, Mr. Shah, is marvellously talented, we are all aware that Mr. Paton is the source of the mood, the philosophy and the genesis of the play. There is no substitute for his personal contribution to the realization of his inspiration. This is a practical fact in the production of any play and we should perhaps have not allowed our optimism to minimize the need for his services before now.

I have debated the best means of impressing Alan Paton with our need of his creative assistance and have concluded that in addition to a written communication from me, a strong personal appeal from you would be invaluable. I presume to make such a request of you because I know that you are aware of the long process of negotiation and organization which has

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been involved in this production and because I know that your past assistance reflects a belief that the play will represent South Africa's cultural scene to advantage. I feel that you will agree that the final result of all these efforts and hopes should not suffer for any reason that can be solved.

I am so involved with the creative elements which now occupy us completely that I may be inconsiderate of any personal interests which Alan Paton would consider more demanding of his time at the moment. My hope is that you will understand that our sole purpose is to give SPONONO the best possible production, particularly since we share with you a pride and a respect for the artistry of the Bantu, and that you will agree he should be impressed with the importance of his active involvement if we are to achieve this aim.

I realize that a theatrical production is not customarily among the problems which require your attention but I feel that your willingness to foster this venture to this point demonstrates a conviction that it deserves the international attention which will come to it. Such a conviction from one so high placed in the government, I feel, will encourage Mr. Paton to commit himself to contributing his artistic effort to the final result.

Again may I thank you for all your attentions and courtesies on my behalf.

Sincerely,

Mary K. Frank

MKF:kk

cc: Alan Paton

P.S. May I remind you that we are currently in rehearsal in anticipation of our March 30th opening and we would, therefore, be most appreciative of your immediate attention.