

# No Life Without You

## REFUGEE LOVE LETTERS FROM THE 1930s

EDITED BY  
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Franklin Felsenstein (ed.), *No Life Without You: Refugee Love Letters from the 1930s. Based on the Correspondence of Ernst Moritz ("Mope") Felsenstein and Vera Hirsch Felsenstein, 1936-1939* (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0334>

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Any digital material and resources associated with this volume will be available at  
<https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0334#resources>

ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80064-945-3

ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80064-946-0

ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80064-947-7

ISBN Digital eBook (EPUB): 978-1-80064-948-4

ISBN HTML: 978-1-80064-951-4

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0334

Front cover original images provided by Franklin Felsenstein.

Cover design by Jeevanjot Kaur Nagpal.

# Twenty-three: “Every Turn of the Wheel”

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18 May through 19 June 1937

*Mope's final month in Leipzig was frenetic and exhausting. Working through PalTreu, and with the participation of his cousin Julius Rosenfeld in Palestine and his brother-in-law Fred Rau in London, he believed he had at last secured a legal route to transfer a significant portion of his mother's assets and much of his own out of Nazi Germany. The transportable goods that he used were furs, which he bought in astonishing quantities throughout the month. Here is how he describes the scheme in his post-war Curriculum Vitae:*

I applied for a transfer to Palestine and received permission to send merchandise valued at 50,000 Reichmarks to Palestine under the condition that 25% of this amount would be paid in foreign currency. My brother-in-law Frederick Rau in London provided me with the needed amount in £ Sterling (appr. £ 1,080), because I did not have access to any money abroad. After I had already purchased a larger amount of fur merchandise, a fur business in Paris offered me a position as a fur buyer in Russia. This was in June 1937, and I did not want the merchandise, a quarter of which had been paid for by my brother-in-law to remain in Germany during my absence, but on the other hand, it could not be subjected to the heat of the summer months in Palestine, so I asked for permission to warehouse the raw furs in Antwerp until the autumn. I was given oral permission, just before I had to leave for Moscow, and I hurriedly made the necessary arrangements right before my departure, expecting that written permission would follow the oral one.

*The proposal by the Compagnie Internationale de Pelleteries in Paris to represent it in Russia was one that Mope would have been unwise to turn down. The offer allowed him to resign from the Gebrüder Felsenstein effective June 15, and to*

set up as an independent "commission agent." The job of a commission agent required considerable knowledge of all aspects of the trade, coupled with the ability to select and purchase furs from the Soviet Union for foreign clients. According to the agreement, he was to receive salary and expenses from the *Compagnie Internationale* plus a small commission for each purchase, and a larger commission to be shared with his main employer for acquisitions made on behalf of all other clients that he represented. In his personal affairs his priority was to secure what would hopefully be an agreed "final" date for his wedding to Vera on Sunday, 1 August, in London.

By the time he left for the Soviet Union, he had purchased most of the furs he sought with plans for further transactions upon his envisioned return in July. In the meantime, the inefficiencies of the transfer scheme under *PalTreu* caused final payments to the creditors that were due no later than 10 June to be delayed. As he was in good standing because of his ten years at the *Gebrüder Felsenstein*, all but one of his creditors expressed a willingness to wait for the payments to arrive. Mope's discomfiture concerning the delay is evident from his letters.

Mope's frenetic final month in Leipzig was taken up too with the herculean task of planning in consultation with his absent siblings a future for his mother outside Germany. He also expedited the process of reducing his own possessions (including his extensive collection of books) and storing the remainder. In this he was helped by Erich Gödicke (known as Max), a longtime employee at the *Gebrüder Felsenstein*. He renegotiated his lease with his landlord, Dr. Jacobson, so that he maintained only a single room in Leipzig. His long days of purchasing furs and clearing his desk at the office would end as they often had with late nights at *Felsche's* or *Zellner's*, where he would pen his love letters to Vera. Many of the circle of Jewish friends and acquaintances that he would meet and socialize with did not escape from the grip of the Nazis and became victims during the Holocaust.

When Mope left Leipzig, he fully expected to return within the month, and so he left behind his most intimate personal possessions, the stream of letters that he had received from Vera. He took with him only two or three of her most recent, and they allow us our first direct experience of a daily two-way conversation. After 16 June, Mope was never again to set foot in the city of his birth.

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 19 May 1937

After I worked on the man for three weeks, I bought fourteen thousand five hundred Reichmarks worth of merchandise for myself today. It took a long time until he was ready to sell it at a decent price. The merchandise has already arrived at Gebrüder Felsenstein. I have a sure feeling that I did not make a mistake and in this day and age, that is almost more than you can stipulate even for yourself, because the season is over and there are many other reasons that make purchasing difficult. I will most likely be able to send a precise report to Fred tomorrow as to what amount in pound sterling he has to make available to the Haavara for it.

It comes to just about exactly £ 270, and it would be best if he remitted it right now by airmail or telegram, as soon as my deposit has been confirmed, something that might possibly still happen this week. I would be very grateful to you if you would call Fred and talk to him about this matter. The transfer has to happen quickly, because I owe it to the seller who is decent enough to wait for payment up to two weeks at most to pay on time. I will probably also close on several small batches in the next few days. That's enough about business now!

They will throw me out of here any minute now (at Felsche's) and I put my arms around you tightly—very tightly and inseparably and infinitely thankful for this beloved, charming human being who loves me back. Your Mope

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 21 May 1937

Today is another Friday evening. Over lunch, a lady who never wanted to know anything about being a Jew before and raised her boys accordingly told me how she now celebrates the Friday evenings and the Seder evenings and how her children who have to attend the Jewish school and have to learn about all the traditions encourage her. She has found real joy in it, just like her husband. There was actual love in her voice and a great willingness to understand, so that I was really happy about listening to her, thinking of you, because I know that you will be just as understanding when such questions relating to the upbringing of children will become acute.

I took care of some private correspondence until 9.30 p.m. and went to Zellner's for dinner. By the way, I purchased another batch of merchandise today for about four thousand five hundred Reichmarks, which was *relatively* low-priced. Hopefully, Fred agrees with everything and is ready to act.

In the meantime, I have landed in a hotel lobby, since it is after 1.00 a.m. and will finish this letter quickly, before the porter becomes ungracious.

### MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 23 May 1937

My dear mother arrived here around midday today. I picked her up and determined the first moment I saw here that her appearance was not quite satisfactory. In the meantime, the two of us ate lunch together after we took the luggage to her room, and now she is looking a little better. Both of us are sitting in the store and are taking care of correspondence. I had to type several business letters on the typewriter, and now, I am taking care of my favorite writ to you that, contrary to all the others, is restful to my nerves.

It will be of interest to you that I have bought several thousand Reichmarks worth of merchandise since Friday. I have been bargaining for the single batches for many weeks and now, the buying is finally taking place. However, I also had to decide to invest a little more than I wanted to originally. The main point is that the market conditions are good for me at the moment. The contracts have been made in such a way that payment has to be made on 10 June. That is also an accommodation resulting from the market situation, since immediate payment is customary in our trade. How sweet of you that you passed along my two messages to Fred and that he seems to have reacted so positively.

In the meantime, it is midnight. Mother and I went for a little walk and then to Felsche's. At 7 o'clock, there was synagogue—unfortunately, early tomorrow at 7.00 as well so that I have to get up in time—and then I watched the dear lady unpack her things until 9.00 p.m. Now I am sitting at Zellner's, with my heart and soul's favorite drink—mocha—and I am with you again completely and exclusively and immersed in thoughts of you. Your Mope



## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 24 May 1937

Early today, at 7 a.m., we were in the Synagogue and afterwards, I took Mother to my place for breakfast, something she gladly accepted, because she does not have any of the supplies needed to make herself a decent breakfast. Then, we went to the cemetery around 12 o'clock. I was glad to be able to accompany Mother, although cemeteries are unable to make any kind of sentimental impression on me. We passed by an unending number of famous names and, aside from an interest in the history of the milieu and the art, I remained untouched on the inside, just like during earlier visits.<sup>53</sup>

You are wondering why the letter I was going to write to Fred has not arrived and I have to tell you that I was not able to write it yet, because the idiots at the Paltreu in Berlin have made quite a mess of things again. I am counting on being able to compose the writ by the end of this week, or to have put everything in order for it, as the case may be. So far, I have bought 30,196.74 Reichmarks worth of merchandise that, as soon as the time is ripe, can be sent off. From this, 25% minus 10% loss allowance in currency has to be made available. Expressed in pounds sterling, that means approximately £540.-. Please be so nice and give notice to Fred about this. This amount includes the formerly disclosed sum. I have obligated myself to pay my distributors by June 10. So everything has to be taken care of rather quickly and I intend to buy more merchandise I have already made deals on, merchandise that will add to the foreign currency exchange amount.

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 25 May 1937

Your question concerning Fred's lack of clarity regarding the transfer matter made me wonder, as everything should be cleared up by now. The request for payment of the required foreign currency exchange portion will take place through me or through the carrier in Antwerp, as soon as the merchandise has been stored in the icehouse there. In the

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53 The visit was to commemorate the third anniversary of the death of Mope's father, Isidor Felsenstein, who was buried in the old Jewish cemetery off Berlinerstrasse.

meantime, I hope to keep buying so that the sum mentioned yesterday will keep growing.

I think it is absolutely necessary for Mother's future, which occupies my thoughts all the time, that Fred comes over here for a short meeting in front of an attorney. After all the siblings have butted in with "pros" and "cons" in the further development, I am not willing to carry the responsibility of making a final decision by myself. I want to protect myself from later accusations, because I want to have peace and quiet once I am working on the building of a new existence.

But when fourteen children and several siblings intercede, *no single person should have to take all of the responsibility by himself*.<sup>54</sup> If Fred flies here on a Friday around noon, he can be back on Monday, and since it concerns large amounts (at least in comparison to Mother's wealth), the expenses are worth it. I would like to ask you to let Fred know about my opinion so he can think about it carefully and hopefully follow my urgent wish.

What a terrible business letter and I have not even said one word about our personal relationship. But you will excuse that, because you do know how necessary all of that is.

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 26 May 1937

It is possible that I will have to go on a very important business trip that might well decide my future, and that I will come to you from there directly so I will be there in time for the civil wedding ceremony. The matter is still very, very questionable, which is why I don't really want to tell you about it yet.<sup>55</sup> For this reason, it would be especially urgent for me that Fred come here for a weekend, because when I depart from here, I will also persuade Mother to go to Ketty or Grete, and the problems absolutely have to be solved before I leave.

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54 Mope is referring to his siblings and their spouses, including himself and Vera to make fourteen.

55 This is the first oblique mention of Mope's rapidly realized plan of traveling to the Soviet Union as a buyer of furs representing a client in Paris, thus no longer depending on the Gebrüder Felsenstein.



## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 27 May 1937

Many thanks for your report to Fred concerning my letters. Fred called me early this morning so that I was able to talk about everything with him—as much as possible anyway. He is very willing to help and I am really very grateful to him. Shortly before talking to him, I talked to my attorney and I found out that I can count on the request for remittance for tomorrow or day after tomorrow. Since I promised my payment for 10 June, that would really be the latest deadline so I can pay on time.

But now, that is enough of those vexing business reports. As a matter of fact, the two of us have much more beautiful things to talk about—although the other stuff cannot be avoided. Your fears of having depressed me during our telephone conversation on Tuesday will have been allayed by my letters that you have received. I have such a completely confident feeling that difficulties do not depress me. We will understand how to overcome them *viribus unitis*.<sup>56</sup>

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 28 May 1937

The Alpha and Omega is that it is not certain at all if the matter will work out and all the talking about it could be just nonsense in the end. Nevertheless, if I can obtain a visa—I will go on a business trip in eight to ten days which, if I am the right man for the job, will last until approximately 20 or 22 July.

For this trip, I will receive a salary of 750 Reichmarks per month and all expenses paid, and if I prove to be of value, I will have secure employment with a fixed allowance of £ 35 a month, but I will be traveling a lot and will get all my expenses taken care of during my travels. Since I will have to travel in the opposite direction, my beloved will have to deal with the Registry Office by herself, and ask to move the deadline for our marriage permit to the end of July.

This evening, I declared myself in agreement with the above-mentioned terms. Once the matter gets off the ground, I can build a fantastic position for myself over time (and I won't have to bow before

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<sup>56</sup> i.e., with combined forces.

the Dresden branch manager and his bosses any longer), and a whole new world will open to me in our trade. For these reasons, which I might have told you about a little too early, I was so intent on Fred coming here, because you will understand that I can leave here even less now when I also have to take care of everything else in the few days that I have left. My theoretical organ, I mean my heart and my soul, are divided in their feelings, but the mind tells me that I cannot let such a chance pass by, because even if I am commanded back—as the wrong man for the job—I can learn a lot of new things. But why should I not be the right man?

Poor, beloved and ever so disappointed Veralein, is what I am telling you really that bad? Will you now smile at another man instead of me? Will your patience be put to a test that is too hard? I am certain that we will spend our vacation together beginning August 1 (wedding day) and I will do everything in my power to make it up to you with my strength and love and passion.

I started writing this Friday evening letter after I put my dear mother to bed shortly after 11.00 p.m. Before that, we had been sitting on the Felsche patio in the pleasantly fresh air and were happy in our being together; something both of us had been missing for too long. When we came to her apartment, her Friday evening lights were shining through the window and made for a solemnly happy mood that I had had to go without for a long time.

I already told you about my telephone conversation with Fred, and we are, as far as I can see right now, of one mind on everything concerning the accreditation. The question of my dear mother's emigration that occupies my mind is still completely unresolved and I do not know how I can solve this with the speed necessary or even prepare for a solution, as the case may be.

The Park Café is closing in just a bit. The chairs are being put to bed on the tables for a rest and are being given valerian preparations to calm their hearts. The waiters are cleaning the ashtrays so that they will be considered new tomorrow, and are preparing themselves for a deserved rest. If everything wants to sleep, then I alone cannot stay awake and that is why I am finishing this writ which is supposed to bring you my most heartfelt wish for a relaxing and pleasing weekend and the most loving embraces and kisses and an expression of my great longing for my ever so beloved and sweet Lilongo, Your Mope

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 30 May 1937

This morning, I took care of quite a bit of business correspondence. The dispatch of the merchandise will take place on Tuesday at the latest, and it will be in Antwerp within a day, stored in the icehouse. Tomorrow, I will send detailed information and would like to insure the transport as well as the storage against fire, robbery, theft and water damage in the amount of £ 2,800. The insurance is supposed to take effect on 1 June.

The time is ripe for sleeping, the sheet of paper is filled and I want to send my darling a vast number of passionate kisses that are supposed to shock and delight her. I am, despite and through all the things that occupy me, always connected to you in the most deeply felt bond of love, because in everything I do, I wonder if I can make you happy by doing it. Your Mope

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 31 May 1937

An exceptionally hot day filled with humid air has made room for a wet, much cooler evening. I was at the store until after 9 o'clock and our secretary wrote a few private business letters for me. One of them, and really the most important one, was a letter to Fred. The writ that he was expecting a week ago was finally due, after everything else had been taken care of. Most likely, it will come into his possession tomorrow around noon. Tomorrow, the first shipment will be sent off.

Despite great effort, I still did not manage to buy a bigger batch of merchandise that seemed quite interesting, because the seller was asking 10% more than I could invest, even if I forced my bid up as high as possible. Buying merchandise is anything but easy.

There is a lot of great indignation over the bombing of the "Deutschland." It is really terrible how world peace is exposed to constant dangers by insane undertakings of a few wild people. Hopefully, this bad event does not result in worse.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> The German pocket battleship, the *Deutschland*, was attacked from the air by Republican aircraft off Ibiza on 29 May 1937 during the Spanish Civil War. Thirty-one seamen were killed. Hitler actively supported the Nationalists under General Francisco Franco.

I think that you can tell by my boring way of writing that I am exhausted. That is no wonder after the hot day and the sudden weather change. I will seek the horizontal position very soon and just add my most heartfelt greetings. I wish this constant letter writing would be over soon and I could lie down beside my darling when I am tired and cuddle and caress her, because I would never be too tired for that. Your Mope

### MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 1 June 1937

Today, I was able to make a few smaller deals, that is buys, and hope to have made some progress concerning several larger purchases. In any case, everything will be taken care of until Fred's transfer and the request for payment of my shippers on the part of the Haavara will have been carried out. If Fred has not written to me about it yet, please ask him to confirm that he took care of the insurance for my shipment. That is of the utmost importance to me, because any kind of loss would otherwise be irreplaceable.

I turned in my passport for renewal today and was told that I would be able to pick it up on Thursday. I won't need the Dresden people *for the time being*. In the meantime, everything else can develop and be realized in its own time, and then, I could go into further talks with them.

I will take along my typewriter and Max from the store will take care of everything else. Max is rather well suited for this and he likes doing it.<sup>58</sup> For the time being, I gave my landlord, Dr. Jacobson, notice on one of the rooms, because two will be too much space.

This letter, like every letter I write to you, is supposed to bring you my most passionate kisses, my darling, and all my embraces and tokens of love. Your Mope

### MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 3 June 1937

I made several purchases today. Everything is moving forward, albeit slowly. I consider today's buy especially advantageous.

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<sup>58</sup> "Max" whose actual name was Erich Gödicke was a trusted employee of the Gebrüder Felsenstein.

My mother made the same petition as I did—or I did it for her actually—and she can undertake the same steps as me. Her assets have gone down quite a bit over the last few years, and the Reich tax is extremely high in relation to those assets. Tomorrow or Monday, I will send off another shipment, smaller and less valuable than the first, but still something.

Today, I received my book<sup>59</sup> which will come in very handy until the middle of January 1938. I am very happy with it.

It is 1.45 a.m. already and I am thinking of going to bed soon. It is questionable whether the mailbox will be emptied today or not so it might not reach the airmail plane on time. Maybe I will take it to the main post office so that you won't be at a loss for mail.

I enfold you in my arms, my most passionately loved sweet wife, and kiss you again and again and again, everywhere and with all the intensity of my feeling that is filled with the knowledge of you and my great love for you. Your Mope

### MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 4 June 1937 [Envelope contains sticker: "Opened by customs agents for foreign currency inspection"]



Figs. 73 (a) and (b) Front and back of envelope to letter from Mope to Vera dated 4 June 1937 with vetting stickers added by the Nazi authorities.

Today, just like yesterday, was a very exhausting day for me—I did not even have time for lunch. When one is terribly tired there are tree and rock martens running around in one's brain, besides the beloved who has a right to most of one's thinking, and there are asset calculations in number form moving around the whorls of the brain, it becomes difficult to put correct sentences and considerations down on paper.

<sup>59</sup> i.e., my passport.

Tomorrow, Max is coming over, and we will talk about everything that might happen, such as how to sort my books and how my furniture should be treated. Hopefully, I will hear from Fred tomorrow whether he has taken care of the transfer or not. I need that money to be able to fulfill my obligations in a timely manner.

Years ago, I tried to learn Russian for a while, but aside from some declinations and conjugations, there is nothing left in my memory. It is still uncertain if I will be able to visit Dr. Jacobson one more time, but it is possible.<sup>60</sup>

At noon, I went to attorney Dr. Goldschmidt with my dear mother in order to talk to him concerning everything that needs to be done on her behalf in the immediate future, but he is going on vacation for four weeks. The bold wish that he might take care of matters the way they should be taken care of will hopefully not be disappointed, after the good man has already proven himself to be very good at failing.

Let me kiss you and hug you and whisper many loving words to you which are meant to wrap around you in a long and strengthening sleep and tell you about my great, strong love for my most beloved girl again and again.

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 7 June 1937

We, mother and I, just sat down at Felsche's on the gallery-in air that is a little fresher than what the inner city usually offers. She has given me exactly half an hour to write to you.

This afternoon, I had another telephone conversation with Fred. There are constantly new difficulties to overcome that are so ridiculous at times that I can hardly believe it myself sometimes. However, I am willing to confront serious and ridiculous obstacles, and until now, I have actually succeeded quite well. I am just amazed about my mood which remains even and unchanged, and I am glad for the heat that heightens my spirit of enterprise visibly. I was able to purchase a small batch today and there will be a shipment tomorrow-nothing of great worth actually. Your Mope

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60 Here is the first near direct reference to the fact that Mope was shortly to leave Germany for the Soviet Union. "Dr. Jacobson" (the name of his landlord) is his coded way of referring to Leipzig to which he was uncertain whether he would return en route to traveling to England to marry Vera.

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 9 June 1937

Early today, your card arrived at the same time as your every so loving Monday letter. Your lovely words give me great joy every single day and such an inner peace and happiness that makes my work easier. What is going to happen when I can no longer be supplied with the ever so longed for messages as punctually and within 24 hours? Well, even this period of time will be overcome and my new boss who arrived today answered my question as to whether the wedding date fit into his plans or not by saying that it was perfectly alright with him. So: Long live August 1 and the following days which we will spend free and happy in Italy, I have been carrying my letter of credit for Lire 2650.—in my pocket since yesterday.

Around the beginning of next week, I will probably begin to travel and just hope that everything concerning my purchases will be in order by then.

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 10 June 1937

It is 12.30 a.m. Until now, I was sitting at a table with my old boss and my new one, and we chatted a little and also talked about my future work, which I might already be starting at the beginning of next week. In any case, I am resigning from Gebrüder Felsenstein on 15 June. Today, I had a lot of work to do and did not have time to read your lovely letter, which arrived with the second mail delivery. I did not even get around to having lunch—this only to justify the neglect of my beloved, or her letter, as the case may be.

I was glad that I succeeded in buying another batch of merchandise this afternoon, after I had been trying for 10 days. On the other hand, there is so much turbulence, because the transfer, or better the request for remittance has not been effected as of today. I am completely in the dark, because I don't have any kind of message from Tel-Aviv in front of me, and my suppliers were promised payment for today. I am really very uncomfortable in this situation, although the delay can only be a matter of a few days and Julius Rosenfeld is hopefully expediting the matter. Other than that, my head is a fantastic labyrinth of numbers.



The things that are happening in there cannot be accommodated in any logarithm chart.

Just a few minutes ago, I explained to Semy: On the first of August, we are getting married, come what may, and the date is set. Unfortunately, I have to leave all the preparations to you. Will you please ask Fred, in case the opportunity presents itself, if he will talk to his teacher, Mr. Marmmerstein about marrying us? It might also be necessary to send out a greater number of wedding announcements, which will have to be printed. You might talk to Hannalein about who should receive one in my family. Without these announcements, all the people will be bitterly offended, and we really don't want to start our life together surrounded by the anger of our friends and family, with whom we have to maintain relationships, even if the two of us are more than enough for each other. I am really sad to cause so much work for you, but can that really be helped?

I kiss you, my most passionately loved girl, with all the fervor and much greater heat than even the last few days were able to produce.  
Your Mope

### MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 11 June 1937

Around 6 p.m., Fred called me to tell me about a telegram he received from Julius Rosenfeld. At 7 o'clock, I also received one. It was very good that I had been informed by Fred beforehand and, because of that, was able to bring together all the needed material and could dictate the necessary letters. Now, everything has been sent off and will arrive Monday morning in Julius's office. This new delay is very unpleasant to me, because I was reminded by several of my different suppliers today. It is incomprehensible to me that Julius did not know until today, that he did not pass on his knowledge that the invoices, etc., would have to be presented to Haavara, before the disbursement order will be given. I am afraid that Julius is not contributing to the acceleration, but to the delay of the process.

A little while ago, I went out to eat with my mother and then we sat on the terrace at Felsche's until 10.45, and the air on the terrace was a little cooler at least. Semy left again today, after we had dinner together last night. By the way, he was of great help in my matters for which I am

very grateful to him, and this proved to me again that he is a dependable friend, despite all of his weakness.

Now, after hours of lightning, the thunder is finally starting to roll announcing that a loud night is on its way. This letter is meant to go to the mailbox before it gets emptied, so that it will hopefully reach you tomorrow. My Friday evening letter has turned out to be quite a silly writ again, but I feel a little exhausted and my bed is audibly calling me, so that I ask you to forgive the emptiness of this scribbling.

### MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 13 June 1937

Yesterday morning, I went to see my new boss who asked me to inspect various merchandise for him. I did this quite quickly and with great certainty, because, after all, I do know a little bit about it. Later on, I heard him say to his companion, "He understands the merchandise. I think he is important to us!" I had not even considered that he wanted to test my professional knowledge, and that is why I did not feel any stage fright at all.

In the afternoon, I wrote a few business letters and then, around six o'clock, I met my dear mother with whom I have been sitting in cafes or gone for walks until now. In the evening, I did some calculations concerning my mother's various accounts and talked to her about her income and expenses, and then, we made a list of the people who should receive wedding announcements. Please don't be startled—we reached 120 and I am sure that we forgot a few.

If my hope comes true, my suppliers will get paid on Tuesday. I believe I wrote to you on Friday that there were new difficulties to deal with which I hope will be overcome very soon.

Just now, the violinist Schwarz sat down at our table, but I won't let him disturb me all that much. It has been hot here, without any kind of break in the weather. Just now—it is evening—a fresh breeze came up, but most people are asleep while my life impulses are gaining in strength.

I do love you indescribably, my sweetest, golden girl, Your Mope

## VERA TO MOPE

London, 13 June 1937 [German sticker on back with: “opened by customs for foreign currency inspection”–also stamp on front– “inspected by customs law”]

Pepper and Mutti are sitting next to me in deck chairs and all three of us are sitting in Ravenscourt Park (entrance to the registry office is at an oblique angle across from here, if you know what I am talking about; I don’t think that you saw it back then).<sup>61</sup>

Today, I am spending a more than lazy day; around 9 o’clock, I heard the rain hitting the windows, turned to the other side and slept until almost lunch time. Unfortunately, it turned a little cooler than I would prefer–normal temperate people think this weather is perfect–the sun is peeking down from between the clouds every once in a while and there is quite a palpable little breeze blowing.

Julius Rosenfeld does not seem to understand all that much about business matters, otherwise he could not have acted so nonchalantly and just about irresponsibly. I am sure that he will receive your letter tomorrow and will hopefully arrange everything necessary immediately.

Did the suppliers accept the reasons, or were you not able or willing to explain the details to them? And did Semy whose name they surely know very well stand by your side?

My most beloved, I know that peace and quiet is extremely hard to come by at this time or is hardly possible, but isn’t it a fact that, as soon as you remember that it really is a complete waste of time to get upset and that you will only get worked up physically and psychologically without really accomplishing anything, and that there is someone on the other side of the Channel who loves you so indescribably much, then you just calm down again, not only physically, because my beloved was very calm and I admired that a lot, but also deep down on the inside, right?

How long will your trip take, by the way? I mean, until you reach your destination? Will it be cold there? Hopefully not!

I want to close and mail the letter off today, but before I do, I want to give my beloved many, many passionate kisses and snuggle up to

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61 This was the Registry Office at which Mope and Vera were planning their official marriage. It is a happy coincidence that the first of Vera’s surviving letters to Mope was addressed from outside there.

him ever so closely in my thoughts. I believe that I can feel his beloved embraces, and I caress him gently and want to be with him completely.

You—Your Lilongo

### MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 14 June 1937

Just now, it rang midnight from all the church towers. How I missed the sound of Big Ben among all that ringing and how much better I would feel if I was near enough to you to hear it, but I long even more, much, much more, to be able to listen to your beloved voice, to lie next to my lover and forget about the world with all its worries.

My mother and I had dinner at Zellner's, after she picked me up from the store. Later on, we made a stop at my room where I wanted to show her paintings and etchings by Max Schwimmer which she had not seen yet. And because of all these "important things," it got to be quite late again.

I am still waiting for my order to depart and I am actually glad about it in some way, because I would like to have everything arranged beforehand. I hope that everything will be taken care of by Julius Rosenfeld tomorrow, so that I can go on my trip with my mind at rest, as soon as the protracted visa is here. Maybe I can make another purchase tomorrow. It is merchandise that I have been expecting for fourteen days and that arrived here this afternoon.

My suppliers have reacted very decently—quite unexpected in part—and did not present me with any difficulties. By the way, Semy made the amount needed for another purchase available to me from his private assets until the payment is made. The people know me at least as well as Semy and act quite decently towards me because of that—knock on wood.

However, I have to close now and will keep on reading your dear words in bed and go to sleep happy in the thought of how close my darling is to me. Your Mope

## VERA TO MOPE

London, 14 June 1937 [postcard]

Evening

What happened? I have no message from you, neither on Saturday nor on Sunday? I am only writing a card since I am not even sure that it will still reach you in Leipzig.

If only you would call today so that I could be sure everything is fine and there is no serious reason for your silence. It is horrible to have such a great distance between us and I hope that I will hear from you tomorrow before I go to the store.

*All good luck for everything and wherever you are and for all you do, Fondest love, Lilongo*

## MOPE TO VERA

Leipzig, 15 June 1937

Although the reason for your call early today, namely that you had not heard anything from me, seems regrettable, I was extremely happy to have been awakened by my beloved. I was still quite groggy, but you found out from my addle-headed statements that I *did* write to you.

In the afternoon, around five o'clock, after I had just received news about my departure tomorrow, I thought about announcing my telephone call by sending a telegram, but I didn't because I did not want to scare you. Contrary to the usual custom—the telephone calls are usually connected within five minutes—I had to wait for over a half hour today. As your dear father will have told you, I will call you tomorrow evening, *if possible*, from Berlin. However, I cannot give you an exact time for that. Had I talked to you today, I would not be writing this letter, because I am feeling a little exhausted and, although it is 10.30 p.m. have not met my dear mother yet, but did eat dinner just a little while ago.

I still had to take care of quite a few things at the store—correspondences, cleaning up, etc., that needed to be done—despite various earlier preparations for departure.

Unfortunately, the order of remittance still has not been carried out. Aside from this awful feeling, I am happy and filled with joy and see the new future with a large measure of hope and great expectations.

Max is sitting opposite me—the one from the store. He kept me company until now and helped me and will also help me tomorrow, I hope, with my packing. He will also move everything out of my large room, since I canceled the lease as of June 30, as I wrote to you earlier, and he will keep my things at the store for the time being. I will keep the bedroom for now.

Despite all the adversity, I am always in a good and sometimes even excellent mood. The basis for all that good mood is the awareness that my beloved—although she is so very far away—is always close to me. You have become the substance of my life in such a way that I cannot even describe and you chase away all the little quirks before they have time to find room inside of me.

I will probably come back here from my trip around the middle to the second half of July. Although I am really looking forward to it and will most likely see many, many interesting things, I would be happier if it was already behind me. It is really high time that we two lovers finally come together. How long the trip will take I cannot say and really depends on whether I go by train or plane.

### VERA TO MOPE

London, 17 June 1937 [Mope in transit]

Once again, my beloved is sitting on another train and once again, every turn of the wheel takes him farther away from me, instead of bringing him closer, but despite this knowledge, I am glad and happy about his success. Mopelein, this could really not have been done any better or quicker, and I see my great friend and lover and dear, most beloved man from afar with the feeling of limitless happiness about his capabilities, his energy, his care and his stamina; and that is aside from his other much loved qualities: his goodness, his gentleness, his spiritual being and the power of expression and impression, his imagination and, yes—his love for me.

This is meant to become a birthday letter, aside from many other things! The happiness that I am experiencing now is something so complete and harmonious and ultimately beautiful and all-encompassing that I do not know anything more beautiful I could wish for my beloved for his new year of life.

How sweet it was just a little while ago to hear your dear voice so close to me, before you went to your train. How many impressions of new and sometimes strange character for you will lie between now and the point in time when this letter reaches you?

My beloved, it is very late, or better, it is very early in the morning. I will sleep myself to your side wherever you are and I love you with all my heart, all my soul, my body and everything that makes me who I am, Your Lilongo

### MOPE TO VERA

In transit through Poland, 18 June 1937 [postcard]

Just now, we are going through a tunnel to Warsaw and I wanted to tell you quickly just *how* happy I am to have talked to you yesterday. Yesterday afternoon, I had to go to the necessary meetings with my boss, Mr. Ruwim Schapiro,<sup>62</sup> whose wife will write to you in the next few days to give you my most heartfelt regards. And he might also call you in London on occasion, which is something I asked him to do. He is a great guy and speaks Yiddish. This only so you can be prepared. I was so busy with my affairs yesterday morning that I had to say goodbye to my dear mother on the telephone, and then I just barely got to the train in time to jump on. Tonight, I have slept very well, except for the disturbance at the border and I am still a little addle-brained while I am writing. I cannot see anything of Warsaw except for a few gasometers and the train station. Maybe I will have some time to look around on my trip back. I am so exceedingly happy and relieved that some of my suppliers will finally get their money this week. With all the difficulties, everything worked out really well and I hope that Fred will transfer the amounts requested by Tel-Aviv as fast as possible, so that I can use the

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62 Ruwim Schapiro was one of the Ost-Juden (Eastern European Jews) in the fur trade who had settled in Leipzig, though by the time Mope became his agent in Russia he had already moved the headquarters of his fur business—the Compagnie Internationale de Pelleteries—to Paris. The Leipzig Jewish database at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York records that he was born in Homel bei Mogilow in present-day Belarus on 5 January 1880, and was married to Ida Friedland (born 7 April 1901). Mope and he were to have a contentious business relationship over the next two years.



time I have in Leipzig during my trip back to make further purchases which my representative will prepare.

My most passionate, loving greetings and kisses, my beloved girl. All my best to you. Only write about personal matters to Moscow Hotel Metropol

Your Mope who is very much in love!

VERA

Journal entry, 19 June 1937

Today is my Mopelein's birthday and he is in Russia. During the last few months and weeks, my husband has proven to me that he is not lacking in drive, energy, endurance, or bravado. I am completely steeped in a feeling of joy, of security, because of the knowing that perfect, loving, strong, intelligent man.

This love is something completely new to me; it exhilarates without singeing my wings, or let them be captured by cold, as it was with Mitja two years ago. It fills me, without devouring and extinguishing me, it is within me, in every single cell of my body, like a precious metal that creates an alloy and still retains the idiosyncrasies of both source materials, and because of the mixture, it brings out new, even better characteristics. Dear God, fate, life, karma, I thank you. —and I live in trembling anticipation of the fulfillment of our mutual wishes. Dear God, I thank you for my Mopelein.

