

142 W 49 th , New York, N.Y. Ms 5369/213

January 21 , 1941.

Dear Laci and Loli,

disregarding your reluctance to read English novels I have to use H.B.M.^s language not only to oblige the British censor, but not being the happy owner of a Hungarian typing machine the vibration of New York life does not allow for sufficient leisure to put the missing accents on a Hungarian letter. By analysing, as it appears from your letter, that strange predilection for the literature of a semi-Asiatic tribe which after so many centuries remained maladjusted to Western civilisation there is some hope for eliminating a personally unwarranted culture conflict. My faith in British victory being as it always was unshakable I trust we shall discuss this problem on the Oxford High Street where in the shadow of Maudlin College a ~~maudlin~~ maudlin mood may easier prevail. Or is it not possible that now after the U.S. have unblocked the Hungarian immigration quota you are going to pay ~~xx~~ a visit to these hospitable shores ?

What I am doing is sooner told than done. Almost two years I spent on the study of the American criminological literature of the last twenty years and on writing a book myself. The book is ready, but publishers are not always ready to pursue their vocation and publish a Synthesis of European and American Criminology which not being a penny dreadful (or as the Americans say a dime novel) has little hope to become a best seller. However, it may be possible that my literary agent still discovers a publisher whose hobby is to print unprofitable books. Furthermore I contribute to The Nation mostly book reviews and editorials or to the N.Y. Times which as Mrs. Jaszi (Recha) the other day wrote has a ghastly resemblance with the defunct Neue Freie Presse.

Some weeks I had to waste on our immigration and your information that my son is still in Havana was correct in spite of the efforts Columbia University made to get him back. Not even the Presidents Advisory Committee acting on behalf of Roosevelt himself was successful in counteracting the malevolence of a

silly petty official who took revenge on him because I got his decision reversed. Now, of course, he will get a quota visa and will be in New York within 1-2 weeks. He is not to be pitied anyway as Havana is a heavenly city with an admirable vista and delightful old Spanish architecture. Everything is extremely cheap and vultures flying over the island supplement the deficiencies of the sanitary service. In August and September it was hot enough, never below 80 F., but now the nights are cool and there is always a breeze.

And now I am coming to brass tacks this means business. Thus far I did not practice law, but had only the pleasure to be heard as an expert witness on Hungarian authorship rules in a funny case. A fellow, Stephen Tamas (may be you know him, I did not) had sued the Fox-Century film co. in Budapest for using a story of his, "The Stowaway" in a Shirley Temple film. The Hungarian Court dismissed his claim and now he found an enterprising attorney in New York who brought a lawsuit against the Fox-Century, because the same story appeared not only in the Szinhazi Elet but in the Szabadkai Naplo too where it was supposedly copyrighted. ~~The~~ Most amusing was the deposition of Mr. Incze whom counsel asked what he had paid for the story the author of which is claiming now 10,000 dollars. Incze little embarrassed said "I paid him 50 pengoes, I really do not know why I ~~gave him not more~~ ^{did not give him more}". He was even more embarrassed when defendants counsel asked him whether, as a rule, he used to pay higher fees.

Although I ~~am not an attorney~~ have no authority to act as an attorney I shall certainly not fail to protect your or rather poor Remenyik's interests. Mr. Jeszenszky I saw last in February 1919 in the waiting room of the Prime Ministers office. From your friend Goendoer whose home grown ignorance luxuriously thrives in the fertile American soil I learned that he is the husband or the bully of a rich American woman. In view of his deplorable moral standard I don't think a friendly letter in which I asked him to repay Remenyik the support ¹ he got from you would prove of any use. If you could name any definite sum ~~of~~ which you are supposed to have given him as a loan I should be only too glad to ask one of my American lawyer friends to send him a notice of monition. By the way Goendoer asked me to send you his sincere apologies and his best love. In his

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his hospitable house I had the doubtful privilege to meet some representatives of that South-East European scum which used to ~~claim~~ be called "liberal" journalism and is soliciting Roosevelt's support for the restoration of St Stephen's realm. They still do not believe in what the Magyar poet visioned: "In your past there is no joy, in your future there is no hope".

But coming back to brass tacks I have to inform you about what I know of Lengyels. Last year they were in New York or rather most part of the year Lidi and her daughter ~~was~~ living in a fairly expensive hotel. Menyus himself was in Hollywood his family following him in May. They were living on the money which Menyus received for Ninotchka some years ago. Whether he has a permanent job now or what money he makes I could not tell you. For Christmas Lidi sent us a box of fresh Californian dates. But dates although delicious are not expensive in Hollywood. I am convinced he will not take it amiss if I remind him of his obligation and this I certainly shall do asking him to send his answer directly to you. He impressed me as a good-natured silent and timid man who has various soft spots in his heart. He is certainly less ignorant than I thought.

Poor Remenyik I have not seen since his yearbook appeared. I presume he has sent you a copy. I call him "poor" because he mistakes America for Kiskunhalas and ignores the conspicuous fact that the Magyars in this country are still far below the intellectual standard of that famous city. Revisionist propaganda on which the Hungarian Govt spent a lot of money in these last twenty years did its best to lower this standard in a way that the interest of your countrymen centers exclusively on food, drink and ~~an~~ movies. The younger generation took as a mental recreation to baseball. Remenyik and his kind are no good in this country. I was much amused by your suggestion to recommend him through Dorothy a suitable literary agency. It would be easier to do it through Eleanor Roosevelt or Lady Halifax. Or what about you asking Her Majesty Queen Mary? Dorothy is, no doubt, the busiest woman in the U.S. and it is easier to get an audience from Her British Majesty than from the uncrowned Empress of America. Since we are here we saw her only two or three times having been invited once at her home and on an other

occasion we met with mutual American friends. She is writing and talking in meetings or on the air almost every day. And it has to be admitted that her backing of Roosevelt helped a good deal.

There are, of course, a good many of your German friends here, but the refugees are not much better than those left at home. I mean not only those who are recognisable by the modesty of the Jew and the charm of a Prussian. The other day I met an ex-M.P. who is as a Socialist opposed to the Nazi rule but told me that Germanic territories conquered by the Nazis like Holland ~~must~~ must remain German. Now, what are you going to do with these lunatics? Drowning them in the North Sea would scarcely be a solution of the problem. Keep them in bondage for two generations and teach them human civilisation instead of ~~in~~ their home made ~~culture~~ Kultur is probably the only chance mankind has. I am afraid, however, Americans are still unaware of the impending difficulties which victorious Anglo-Saxons will have to face.

I shall have to finish this letter because as you say you read only Jane Austen and, I am afraid my poor English will never soar to the lofty altitude of her style. Please give my wives and my own best love to Loli and tell Kuerti how much we would like to re-visit with him Winchester cathedral..

As ever

If you write Irene tell her how often I think of her, but do not write because I am afraid the Hungarian censor would not like what I have to say

Russett

MAJFAR
BUDOMÁNYOS AKADEMIA
KÖNYVTÁRA