

**WTC044.** Typed Letter from Pali Adler in Bratislava to Jean Bolton in England. Pali plans to drive to Geneva and then come to England in June. He has spoken to lawyers about registering family deaths. He asks for chocolate, and recalls seeing Susi off at Bratislava train station to travel to Vienna with her mother. He relates the fate of various relatives, and reports that Grandfather Szilard died a natural death at home in 1944.

Bratislava, den 10.V.1946.

Bratislava, 10th May 1946

Meine liebe Susi !

Deinen letzten Brief habe ich erhalten und ich freue mich Dir mitteilen zu können, dass ich bereits meinen Reisepass in den Händen habe und Montag nach Prag fahre um das englische Vizum anzusuchen. Ich beabsichtige in ca. 3 Wochen mit Auto nach Genf zu fahren – dort habe ich einige geschäftliche Sachen zu erledigen – und von dort in weiteren 3 Wochen fliege ich zu Euch.

My dear Susi !

I received your last letter and I am happy to tell you that I already have my passport in my hands and that I am going to Prague on Monday to apply for an English visa. I intend to drive to Geneva in about 3 weeks – I have some business matters to do there – and from there in another 3 weeks I will fly to you.

Wenn also alles glatt geht bin ich gegen den 15.Juni in London. Selbsverständlich werde ich Matyi noch rechtzeitig verständigen. Nachdem ich in Genf mehrere Tage sein werde will ich die Bank aufsuchen und die ganze Angelegenheit persönlich bereinigen. Ich benötige aber hierzu unbedingt die Ábschrift des Briefes, welchen die Bank Dir geschrieben hat, und bitte Dich sende mir diesen in Abschrift ein. Ich habe auch bei mir den letzten Brief der sel. Mutter in Originalhandschrift, so dass ich mich genügend legitimieren kann.-

So if everything goes well, I'll be in London around June 15th. I will of course notify Matyi in good time. After being in Geneva for several days, I want to visit the bank and settle the whole matter personally. However, I absolutely need the copy of the letter that the bank wrote to you, please send me a copy of it. I also have the last letter from our dear mother in her original handwriting with me, so that I can identify myself sufficiently.

Heute habe ich mit meinen Advokaten gesprochen und die nötigen Schritte eingeleitet in der Angelegenheit der Todeserklärungen. Das Gesuch wird noch im Laufe der nächsten Woche eingereicht und die Erledigung wird ca. 3 Monate dauern. Dies ist die kürzeste Frist.

Today I spoke to my lawyers and took the necessary steps in the matter of the death declarations. The request will be submitted during next week and it will take about 3 months to process. This is the shortest possible timescale.

Susilein, in dank Dir im Vorhinein, dass Du mir Zigaretten schicken wirst. Ich hoffe sie werden ankommen, aber wegen der Schokolade mache Dir keine Sorgen, Kinder bekommen schon auch hier wöchentlich eine kleine Zuteilung und das genügt.

Susilein, thank you in advance for sending me cigarettes. I hope they arrive, but don't worry about the chocolate, children already get a small allotment here every week, and that's enough.

Ich freue mich sehr, dass wir uns hoffentlich recibald wiedersehen werden. Ich sehe Dich noch am Bahnhof in Bratislava, Anny war damals nic mit, mid die Mutter hat Dich bis Wien begleitet. Seither sind 6 Jahre vergangen, über diese wir und erzählen müssen. Du Freudiges und ich Trauriges!

I am very happy that we will hopefully meet again soon. I can still see you at the train station in Bratislava, Anny wasn't there then, and your mother accompanied you to Vienna. 6 years have passed since then and we have to tell about them. You joyful and I sad!

Du fragtest mich über die Familie Deines Vaters. Leider nichts Gutes. Jozsi Schwitzer und die Tanten, sowie auch Szörényi Gyuri wurden deportiert und sind ums Leben gekommen. Onkel Emil ist noch im Jahre 1942 gestorben.

You asked me about your father's family. Unfortunately not a good thing. Jozsi Schwitzer and your aunts, as well as Szörényi Gyuri, were deported and perished. Uncle Emil died in 1942.

Szilard Grosspapa hat Glück gehabt. Man hat ihm in Ruhe gelassen und er ist in der Wohnung am 30.XII.1944 eingeschlafen. Er hat über nichts gewusst und glaubte wir sind alle in Sicherheit. Die Tante Micka war bei ihm und hat sich wunderbar benommen.- Szemző Béla lebt in Budapest, Jancsi und

Erika in Prag, zwei Szörényi Kinder, die ich persönlich nicht kenne, in Budapest, Gyuri Polgar auch. Ob sein Vater lebt habe ich nicht erfahren könne. Die arme Boriska war das erste Opfer in der Familie. Eine kurze aber tragische Geschichte.-

Grandfather Szilard was lucky. He was left alone and passed away in the apartment on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1944. He didn't know about anything and believed we were all safe. Aunt Micka was with him and behaved wonderfully. Szemző Béla lives in Budapest, Jancsi and Erika in Prague, two Szörényi children, whom I don't know personally, in Budapest, as does Gyuri Polgar. I couldn't find out whether his father was alive. Poor Boriska was the first victim in the family. A short but tragic story.

Bitte übergebe an John meine besten Grüsse, ich lerne schon fleissig englisch, dass ich mit ihm ein paar Worte sprechen könne. Viele Küsse an Patricia.

Please pass on my best regards to John, I am already diligently learning English so that I can speak a few words with him. Lots of kisses to Patricia.

Mit herzlichen Grüssen                      Dein

With kind regards                              Yours

(signed) Pali

### WPS notes 21/2/2021

**Susi** is Jean Bolton, MKS's sister, who forwarded the letter to MKS (see her letter 045). **Susilein** is an affectionate form of Susi.

**London around June 15th.** As far as I am aware, Pali never came to England. Whether he intended to when writing this letter is unclear, but after taking the entire contents of their mother's safe deposit box in Geneva for himself, instead of the agreed one-third as his deceased wife's share, he clearly didn't want to see MKS and Jean. One can speculate how this happened, may be he originally intended to bring all the contents to London but then became tempted. Despite Pali professing to be learning English in the final paragraph, I sense a tone in this letter that is a little over-affectionate, which makes me think he may have intended all along to keep their mother's jewellery for himself.

**Send me a copy of the bank letter.** Pali's insistence and tone here is noticeable.

**I also have the last letter from our dear mother.** This refers to letter 106 ("Mother's Testament") which includes what amounts to a will (see page 6 of MKS's translation), referring to a letter dated 10-12-1941 from a Geneva bank confirming that the bank is holding a small parcel for Alice Schwitzer, and giving contact details of the bank and a contact name. Alice states clearly that the parcel belongs to all three of her children (after giving to her partner Ernő Weisz "what he wants or needs") and asks that they "split the contents in a brotherly manner and wear them with my blessings and with pleasure". Evidently therefore the parcel contained only jewellery, which Alice must have deposited in Switzerland some time before the war.

**Death declarations.** Presumably this refers to probate matters for Alice and Stefan Schwitzer, MKS's parents, in order to deal with their estate in Slovakia of property and farms.

**Happy that we will hopefully meet again soon.** This phrase strikes me as slightly awkward, the 'hopefully' sounds like the possibility of not travelling to England was already in Pali's mind.

**Jozsi Schwitzer and your aunts.** Josef Schwitzer (b. 1878) was MKS's Uncle, his father Stefan Schwitzer's older half brother. 'Your aunts', refers to MKS's two other aunts, Leonka Schwitzer and Frieda Schwitzer (b.1894, Bela Szemzo's wife). *Note that the German is not specific here, it only says "the aunts", but the individuals are clear from the context.*

**Szörényi Gyuri** (1906-1944) was a first cousin of MKS. His mother Berta Szörényi née Schwitzer (1883-1919) was MKS's aunt.

**Uncle Emil** means Dr Emil Schlesinger, MKS's Uncle, the husband of Leonka Schwitzer.

**Grandfather Szilard** means Simon Szilard (1861-1944), MKS's maternal grandfather. Pali is reporting that he was not taken away, presumably because of his great age [he was 83 in May 1944] and died a natural death in the winter of 1944. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Hlohovec. MKS, WPS and YIES found his plot in Easter 2010, and MKS paid for a headstone for the hitherto unmarked grave, which was carved and installed later that year. MKS related that nobody could be found to take the body of Grandfather Szilard to the Jewish cemetery, so his body had to be taken scross town in the cold winter in a hand cart. *This cemetery remained intact throughout the war and soviet period, it includes one of the lead turrets from Hlohovec synagogue that had been burned to the ground during the war.*

**Aunt Micka** means Simon Szilard's carer, who continued to live in Simon Szilard's house in Hlohovec after his death for many years.

**Szemzö Béla** was MKS's Uncle, through his marriage to Frida Schwitzer. **Jancsi** (1924-1958, Ilona's father) and **Erika** (1925-1952) are his children. Pali's report that the two children were in Prague may not be correct.

**Two Szörényi children.** There were three other Szörényi children who survived, all first cousins of MKS: Bozsi b. 1904 (WPS met in Budapest in 1979), Imre b. 1905, and Pista b. 1907 (who stayed twice with MKS and family in Highgate in the late 1970s).

**Gyuri Polgar** is George Polgar (b. 1919), who survived because he was needed as a doctor in the camps. He later emigrated to the U.S. He is Barbara Massey's father.

**Boriska was the first victim in the family.** Refs to MKS's Aunt Boris Polgar née Hajos (1898-1944), see her final communications 104 and 105. This sentence strikes me as having a somewhat callous overtone.

**John** refers to John Bolton, Susi's husband.

**Patricia** refers to Patricia Sargent, Susi's newborn baby, and WPS's first cousin.