

WTC047. Typed Letter from Pali Adler in Geneva to MKS in Paris, copy sent to London (letter unsigned so presumably the copy sent to London). Pali had intended to meet MKS in Geneva, but Pali has received MKS's telegram saying MKS would not be coming. Pali had not wanted to write about financial matters, but as they are not now meeting in person, he now has to. Pali proceeds to describe MKS's parents (Alice, Stefan and Ernö) being in poor financial circumstances before they died, with Stefan's farms heavily mortgaged, the loss of Ernö's income, and the cost of the clandestine journeys and of being hidden from the Germans.

[WPS Comment: it looks impossible for MKS to have been able to know whether Pali's claims were fair, as the figures provided are approximate (they feel as if Pali is pulling them out of thin air); no documentation is provided. I believe Pali's claims were probably exaggerated, and (reading all the correspondence) Alice's supposed use of her jewellery in a written guarantee to Pali's business associate is convenient and feels invented. Pali provides no evidence, and I don't believe MKS, who never went back to Bratislava and Nitra until decades later, ever saw any. Nevertheless, I know MKS accepted substantially the position described by Pali, as he told me so himself, explaining to me that the economic position of the farm was due in part to the world economic depression and other difficulties for farmers in the 1930s.]

Pali belittles MKS as "still a student" when he left for England and says his parents had probably "not made him aware of his financial circumstances". He claims - without evidence - that MKS's father's lands were heavily mortgaged and that repayments were overdue. Pali confirms Ernö lost his job because of anti-jewish regulations, and says the cost of living in war-time Budapest had become more and more expensive. Pali says Alice and Ernö had used up all their savings, and that the illegal journeys back to Hlohovec and paying people to keep them hidden had been expensive.

Pali claims both himself and a business associate had lent Alice and Ernö money, and that his associate had to be paid back. He also claims Alice had offered the associate her jewellery as guarantee for their loans.

[WPS Comment: there is no mention of this new claim on Alice's jewellery in Pali's letters 043 and 044 written 10 and 8 weeks earlier.]

Pali then throws in further "debts", including the cost of "maintaining Grandfather Szilard for 4 years". Pali says MKS's share of the house in Hlohovec *[is this referring to Simon Szilard's? or Anni's?]* is 50% and it has no mortgage. But Pali writes that the overall debt exceeds the value of all the land and properties, effectively telling MKS he is owed nothing, and that the bank must take Alice's jewellery to cover the overdrawn accounts and mortgages.

Genève, 7.VII.1940
Geneva, 7th July 1940

Mein lieber Matyi.
My dear Matyi.

Dein Telegramm habe ich erhalten und musste mit Bedauern feststellen, dass Du leider nicht hierher kommen konntest. Es ist sehr schade, da ich mit Dir sehr viele Sachen besprechen wollte, welche am Besten persönlich zu erledigen waren. Ich wollte eben darum bisher nicht über diese Sachen schreiben, da ich auf eine persönliche Ausseprache rechnete. Es handelt sich über die materiellen Angelegenheiten.

I received your telegram and had to find out with regret that unfortunately you couldn't come here. It's a shame because I wanted to discuss a lot of things with you, that are best done in person. For that very reason I didn't want to write about these things until now, because I was counting on a personal expression. It is about financial matters.

Vor Deiner Abreise nach London warst Du noch ein Student und ich glaube Deine sel Mutter hat Dir nicht klargemacht Euere materiellen Verhältnisse. Ausser Wohnungseinrichtung, Kleider, Pelze, Schmuck hat die sel. Mutter nur eine intabulierte Forderung von ca. 1.5 Millionen gehabt. Trotzdem diese Forderung ziemlich illusorisch war - da die Felder Deines Vaters stark überlastet waren - hat die Bank durch Ernö bacsis Einfluss doch sub titulo Zinsen 9000.- K. monatlich flüssig gemacht im September 1940 resp.

Before you left for London you were still a student and I don't think your mother made your financial circumstances clear to you. Apart from home furnishings, clothes, furs, jewellery, dear mother only had an intabulated claim of around 1.5 million. In spite of this, this demand was quite illusory - since your father's fields were heavily overloaded - the bank, through Uncle Ernö's influence, made sub titulo interest 9000.- K. monthly liquidated in September 1940 resp.

Schon im Jahre 1939 hat die Bank sämtliche Zahlungen eingestellt, und lebte Deine Mutter in Budapest eigentlich von Ernö bacsis erspartes Geld. Nachdem in Budapest Ernö gar keine neue Einkünfte hatte - wegen der Judenverordnungen musste er aus der Bank ausscheiden - und das Leben in Budapest immer teurer geworden ist, verbrauchten sie alles. Eben zu dieser Zeit kamen die schweren Zeiten, so dass erst die Mutter auf legalem Wege zu mir nach Galgoc kam und einige Wochen später Ernö illegal. Diese illegale Reise und später das Leben im s.g. "Bunker" haben sehr viel Geld erfordert.

As early as 1939 the bank stopped paying all its payments, and your mother actually lived in Budapest on Uncle Ernö's saved money. After Ernö had no new income at all in Budapest - he had to leave the bank because of the Jewish regulations - and life in Budapest became more and more expensive, they used up everything. At this time the hard times came, so that first the mother came to me legally in Galgocz and a few weeks later Ernö illegally. This illegal journey and later life in the so-called "Bunker" cost a lot of money.

Mein damaliger Kompagnon, Schindler hat sich sehr anständig benommen - er war auch mit Mutter und Ernö sehr gut befreundet - und hat das Geld vorgestreckt. Als Garantie hat ihm die Mutter schriftlich mitgeteilt, dass nach dem Kriege, falls keine andere Möglichkeit sein wird, die Schmucksachen jedenfalls vorhanden sein werden. Sie haben einen Betrag von K.120000.- in Anspruch genommen, und um valutarische Differenzen auszuschalten in Sfr.7000.- fixiert. Ausserdem habe ich ihnen ca. 100000.- geborgt und die letzten 4 Jahre Grosspapa Szilard erhalten. Meine Forderung ist nicht wichtig, aber unsere Schuld bei Schindler müssen wir unbedingt realisieren.

My [business] associate at the time, Schindler, behaved very decently - he was also very good friends with mother and Ernö - and advanced the money. As a guarantee, mother informed him in writing that after the war, if there was no other option, the jewellery would be there anyway. You have used an amount of K.120,000.- and fixed it in Sfr.7000.- to eliminate value-date differences. I also lent them around 100,000 and maintained Grandfather Szilard for the last 4 years. My request is not important, but we absolutely have to conclude our debt to Schindler.

Die Sache eilt nicht, weil Schindler orientiert ist über die Schwierigkeiten, welche die hiesige Bank wegen Rückgabe der Schmucksachen macht. Diese sind eigentlich keine Schwierigkeiten, sondern nur formalitäten, aber die Liquidierung wird 2-3 Monate dauern. Die nötigen Schriften und Zeugnisse werde ich schon besorgen und von zu Hause an Susi ein pünktliches Bericht über meine Verhandlungen schicken.

The matter is in no hurry, because Schindler is aware of the difficulties the local bank is having when it comes to getting back the jewellery. These are actually not difficulties, just formalities, but the liquidation will take 2-3 months. I'll get the necessary documents and certificates and send in good time a report on my negotiations to Susi from home.

Wenn Du zurückfährst bespreche bitte mit Susi wie Ihr die Schindlerische Angelegenheit erledien wollet, muss ich aber leider Bemerken, dass mit einen Vermögen in der Tschechoslowakei nicht gerechnet warden kann, da Alles sehr belastet ist. Papas Schulden bei der Bank sind heute über 8 Millionen un der Wert der Immobilien kaum 5 Millionen; Unbelastet ist das Haus in Hlohovec, wo Euer Anteil 50% ist. Die Liquidierung dieser Sachen wird einige Monat dauern, inzwischen werden wir Alles schriftlich oder persönlich besprechen.

If you go back, please discuss with Susi how you want to deal with the Schindler matter, but unfortunately I have to remark that a fortune cannot be expected in Czechoslovakia as everything is very burdened. Father's debt to the bank is now over 8 million and the property's value is barely 5 million; the house in Hlohovec is unencumbered, where your share is 50%. The liquidation of these things will take a few months, in the meantime we will discuss everything in writing or in person.

Ich schreibe Dir diesen Brief nach Paris und eine Kopie an Deine Londoner Adresse. Ich fahre nach Zürich und Mittwoch weiter nach Bratislava. Schade dass unsere Pläne nur Pläne geblieben sind.

I am writing you this letter to Paris and a copy to your London address. I'm going to Zurich and on Wednesday to Bratislava. It's a shame that our plans have remained just plans.

Ich wünsche Dir in Frankreich viel Erfolg und Vergnügen und
grüsse Dich herzlichst

I wish you every success and enjoyment in France and give
you my warmest regards

Dein
Yours

*[The original is not signed, presumably it is the copy sent to
London.]*

WPS Notes 25/2/2021

Intabulierte Forderung. Translated as 'Intabulated claim', this presumably means consolidated financial assets, overall bank position, or something similar. Pali uses several financial terms which are germanic in form but not modern german financial terminology; it is possible these terms were in use in Slovakia at that time, but he could also be using terms intended to obfuscate.

Currency. It looks like Czechoslovak Koruna (Crowns) are used throughout, except Sfr. which are Swiss Francs. The exchange rate used for MKS's supposed individual debt of K 120,000 is SFR 1 = K 17.14

Stark Überlastet. Translated as 'heavily overloaded', this presumably means heavily mortgaged.

Sub titulo interest. Unclear what this means, possibly just 'nominal', or some reference to re-mortgaging.

Ernö bacsí. Hungarian for Uncle Ernő, what MKS called his mother's partner.

Galgocz. Hungarian name for Hlohovec, in Slovakia. Pali uses what looks like a Slovak spelling without the final z.