

From: Cope, Lida
Sent: Thursday, July 12, 2012 8:44 PM
To: Bord, Joseph
Subject: RE: Dr. Absolon - personal letters (summary)
Importance: High

Letter to his relatives in the US [from the second letter I understood it's Ali and John - see below]

- Apologizes for not writing sooner but the political events of 1948 prevented any contact with the West
- Writes that he had to escape Czechoslovakia after he was expelled from "all school in Czechoslovakia" and was threatened with hard labor. He was given no reasons.
- Describes his escape and arrival in Salzburg
- Says that it was helpful to him to tell people there that he's got relatives in the US
- Asks the addressee to send a telegram from someone of significance - an influential American to help him
- Says that he's trying to speak English with various people and that it's going OK
- Would like to get to Munich and then contact the pre-1948 Czechoslovak government officials in exile, or, possibly study, if he gets a stipend, at Utrecht. He could also work while studying. Still, he says, he'd rather make it to the US.
- He says he should write a novel about his experiences when he gets a chance
- Back to reality, he's talking about finding dinner that evening
- In a note at the end of the letter, he asks them to write to his Mother, but not mention anything about him and where he is. [There's something else but hardly legible; would have to spend more time pouring over it. "Pavel" is mentioned there]

The second letter -- Munich, April 19, 1948 (some 28 days after his escape, it appears)

The letter is to Ali and Johniček (a diminutive of John), his sister and her husband, living in the US.

- Talks about a Herry Lichster who's apparently helping "them" (not sure who the other person or other people are)
- Says that the telegram they [as Ali and John arranged] sent has helped although it was intercepted by Russians and so "they" were in danger of being deported; to prevent it, they were quickly transported to a different location.
- At this point he seems to be thinking about finding his way to Britain, staying in Europe, but realizes the danger of deportation within the occupation zone.
- Awaits news from Ali and John
- Says that he needs a sponsor in Britain so he could work there; thinks it would be a good opportunity for him to improve his English as well; eventually, he hopes, he'll get accepted for studies in the US.
- The letter includes Herry's [Harry? or Henry? -- again the issue of handwriting] address in case they'd want to send him something
- Says, "bleeping out" some language, something like: Well, what else can I tell you - it was "shit" when I was in Czechoslovakia and it's "shit" here as well; the difference is that had I stayed, I'd have worked in Ostrava mines [a mining city in Northern Moravia], but if I make it to Britain, I may end up mining in Britain - some more gloomy stuff and complaints
- Says that he learned to eat cats and dogs, mend socks, wash dishes, polish shoes, and got used to being abused by officials there

[And I don't remember if it was the first or the second letter where he says he's going to sell some of his things to buy "them" [who was he traveling with?] some dinner.]

This much I can put together from the notes. It's hardly accurate, but I hope it helps at least some.

It was nice to meet you, Joe. I look forward to hearing more about this interesting project.

Best wishes,
Lida

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