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XII Meredek utca 38,
Budapest, July 21, 1957.

Mr. Alger Hiss,
c/o Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.,
New York City, U.S.A.

Dear Alger:

Having just finished reading your absorbingly interesting book, "In the Court of Public Opinion", I am taking the occasion to congratulate you on its amazingly dispassionate presentation and analysis of the "Hiss Case." Your determination to let the facts speak for themselves and the absence of all special pleading are the more impressive when one bears in mind the ordeal of fighting false charges that has disrupted your life and brought pain to you and your family - to use your own restrained understatement. I hope and trust that your book will powerfully assist in at long last bringing to fruition your undaunted struggle for vindication.

Ever since my release from jail in November 1954, I have had it on my mind to write you, particularly when, in the course of time, I learned about your own calvary - for no news of the outside world had reached me during my five and a half years of solitary confinement. I refrained from doing so, however, in line with the general principle I had decided to follow - particularly after the announcement of my decision to remain in Hungary - of not taking the initiative in communicating with former acquaintances in the West. I did this on the assumption that they might find it distasteful to resume contact with one who, after having acquired so much unsolicited notoriety, had developed in a political direction and was now taking a political stand which he could not expect them to understand, far less approve. This all the more so in the light of the many false interpretations of my motives or distorted reproduction of my occasional public statements which have appeared in the Western press.

These newspaper fabrications were so numerous and, as a rule, so fantastic, that I felt it would be useless to dignify them by my denial. There is one of them, however, which I think I should deal with here, since it relates to your case and has only recently come to my attention:

During the latter half of May, Radio Free Europe, in one of its Hungarian language broadcasts, apparently summarized certain statements which the former A.P. correspondent in Budapest, Endre Marton, was alleged to have made before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee concerning my supposed reasons for remaining in Hungary. At that time, I drew up a statement for possible release to the press, the gist of which reads as follows:

"Endre Marton is a barefaced liar, and he knows it. His allegations concerning his conversation with me are invented out of wholecloth. There was no reference, either direct or indirect, either off the record or on the record, to the Hiss case during the entire course of the only conversation that ever took place between Mr. Marton and me, which was on Dec. 27, 1956."

Since it was hard for me to believe that Marton had perjured himself to such an extent and since I could find no reference to the matter in the European editions of either the New York Times or the Herald Tribune, I decided to await further confirmation. By the time I saw the U.F. despatch on the subject under Washington date line in the New York edition of the Times of May 14, so much water had flown under the bridge that I thought it better to drop the matter, at least until an appropriate occasion should present itself.

Meanwhile I have also had an opportunity to peruse the official minutes of Marton's testimony and to note that, in addition to his false declarations concerning my reasons for remaining in Hungary - the real reasons, incidentally, were set forth in my letter to the Szabad Nép of September 14, 1956, extracts from which were quoted or, more often, misquoted abroad -, it also contained numerous other fabrications concerning myself in particular and Hungarian events in general.

I might add that Marton did not have the decency to arrange for an interview in advance, but broke in on Herta and me unannounced one evening, in the company of his wife and a third person whose name I did not catch. Immediately after they left, Herta and I prepared extensive notes on the conversation for our files. A reading of these notes reveals the complete lack of scruple with which Marton perjured himself in almost every line of his testimony concerning his conversation with us.

Speaking of perjury, it was, of course, not until after I came out of jail that I learned of the part played in your second trial by false testimony of a perjured witness with regard to a purported meeting and a conversation, neither of which ever took place, either within or without the confines of our Washington apartment. That my own imprisonment prevented me from nailing this outrageous lie is not the least part of the tragedy which befell me in 1949. My definite and absolute personal knowledge of the complete untruth of this particular bit of evidence is the clearest proof to me - aside from my experience of your personality and outlook - of the falsehood of the rest of the "evidence" on which you were convicted.

You are, of course, free to use this letter in whole or in part in any way you may see fit. I should be glad, if you so desire, to embody the substance in an affidavit or some other public form, but you may consider that my actions in recent years - and still more so the inaccurate and unfavorable interpretations placed on them in the West - have so lowered my reputation as to discredit any testimony on my part.

Hoping that you and your family are in good health and trusting that life still has much joy and happiness in store for you,

I remain

Cordially yours, Joel

22 E. 87, 243, 24
Feb 15, 1955

Dear Noel,

(Clear copy)

I am half a year late in thanking you for your letter. It was pleasant to hear from you after so many years and to gather that both you and Herta are well and that despite all you have been through you ^{have} retained your objectivity and your sympathy for others. It is kind of you to say what you did about my book and thoughtful of you to send me your denial of Mrs. Mason's testimony and that you are able to communicate with me.

I took up with my lawyers your offer to put your statement in affidavit form or to make it public. They feel that isn't necessary at the present time. I personally find it hard to believe that any sensible person took Mrs. M's testimony about me seriously at the time. Certainly there is no reason to believe that it has any influence today. Few would remember her or what she said. But I am glad to have your letter with its explicit repudiation of her story.

Morton's appearance before a Congressional Committee last Spring caused little interest. What he said seemed so garbled and inconclusive that it was not followed up. But again I thank you for setting the record straight.

I can't find any good reason why I've taken so long to respond to your generous letter. Summer is a slow time here, but I was unusually busy. The combination of my lawyers being away during long absences just when I was preoccupied with a new job led me to postpone writing, & thus having followed delay - and often I would forget about my intention of writing during periods of weeks together. So please excuse me for seeming unappreciative of your thoughtfulness and accept my belated thanks.

My best to you and to Herta

as ever,
Edgar