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徐 燕 謀 編

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T E X T

X.

LETTER TO MR. EMANUEL BLOCH

by Ethel Rosenberg

Dear Manny:

June 8, 1953

The lame attempts of the Justice Department to "brainwash" the public on an issue that had been the main burden of a sickening refrain for over two long years, bring to mind Iago's cynical assertion that "Knavery's plain face is never seen till used!"

As you may recall, on Tuesday June 2, Mr. James V. Bennett, Federal Director of Prisons, paid us a "routine" visit at Sing Sing and we wired you at once.

Ever since the imposition upon us of a manifestly savage and vengeful sentence we have been periodically advised via newspaper, radio and television, that the opportunity to save ourselves rested upon our willingness to "co-operate" with the Government and "confess" our "guilt". Often, these unofficial "invitations" to "talk" had risen in pitch and intensity to such an extraordinarily well-timed and collective clamor, as would have indicated a definite purpose on the part of the Government. Indeed, hot upon the heels of the Supreme Court's latest refusal to review, it was deliberately and falsely reported that an offer had been made us; and when you, as our counsel, roundly and publicly denounced this "news item" as an unethical fabrication, the Government was forced to show its hand.

After Judge Kaufman had, with his usual indelicate haste, fixed the week of June 15 for our joint execution, two U.S. Marshals, in the presence of the Warden, personally served me with official notification papers, setting aside June 18 (our 14th wedding anniversary, incidentally) for the grand event. That was Monday, June

1. The very next day, just as I was sitting down to lunch, Mr. Bennett entered the women's wing of the Death house and announced himself. Contrary to all established practice, he was alone with me, the Principal Keeper and the matron having discreetly stationed themselves at the outer barred gate to the corridor, and the Warden, who invariably escorts official visitors through the prison, was conspicuously absent.

Mr. Bennett came right to the point. Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Jr. had directed him to inform me that he could make available to me any official to whom I might care to divulge espionage information I had hitherto withheld. If I co-operated in this fashion, the Government stood ready to invalidate the death penalty. He had been visiting with Julie for an hour, and now he was anxious to get my viewpoint.

I made it short and sweet. I was innocent, my husband was innocent, and neither of us knew anything about espionage. And if the Attorney General were to send a highly placed authority to see me, I should simply reiterate what I had just stated and urge that clemency be recommended to remedy a shocking situation.

Gently, Mr. Bennett prodded me to "co-operate". "Surely you must know something," he coaxed. I picked him up quickly, "Well, now, how could I when I did not participate in any way? In order to co-operate as you desire, I should have to deliberately concoct a pack of lies and bear false witness against unoffending individuals. Is that what the authorities want me to do — to lie?"

He was properly horrified. "Oh, dear, no, of course we don't want you to lie. But now take a family for example. One member might not be actively engaged in certain activities, but still have knowledge concerning another member's activities."

I was exceeding polite but firm. "The fact still remains that I don't know any more than I knew during the trial. I told the full and complete truth then, and I don't intend to start lying now."

He tried another tack. "I am a perfectly honest individual myself, yet my experience in these matters has shown me that for one

reason or another, a person will sometimes plead innocent, knowing full well that he is guilty. Wouldn't you agree with that?"

"I will be just as frank," I replied evenly, "and grant you that there have been such instances. Nevertheless, I couldn't concern myself as to the motives involved in such cases. I do, however, know my own mind and heart, and I tell you in all conscience that I continue to maintain my innocence for the sole reason that I am simply not guilty of the charge."

"Well, the Government claims to have in its possession documents and statements that would dispute that, so if only you were willing to co-operate, there might be a basis for a commutation."

I remained entirely unimpressed. "To begin with I couldn't possibly know, nor do I care, what they have or don't have. Whatever it might be, it has nothing to do with me. Besides, if what they have is so damaging, why do they need me to confirm it, at this late stage? If you are persuading me to confess to activities concerning which I have solemnly sworn I have no knowledge, on the basis of evidence with which I was never confronted in court, then obviously the validity of this evidence must be strongly questioned, if it in fact exists at all. I will tell you this very bluntly. The most powerful Government on earth has sent its representative to approach us with a disgraceful proposition, because it is fully aware that the convictions were illegally procured, the sentence vindictive. And rather than risk exposing their participation in a rotten frame-up, and with a double execution they are anxious not to carry out only days away, they have the effrontery to try to forcibly wring from us a false confession, by dangling our lives before us like bait before hapless fish. Pay the price we demand, or forfeit your lives, is that the idea?"

At this juncture Mr. Bennett hastened to stem the rising tide of my indignation. "Come, come, I have not said anything of the sort, you are misinterpreting me." "On the contrary," I retorted, "I have understood you far too well. Of course, you are not quite so cold-blooded, but I interpreted to you, and correctly, the Govern-

ment's intent. So here is our answer. We will not be intimidated by the threat of electrocution into saving their faces, nor will we encourage the growing use of undemocratic police state methods by accepting a shabby, contemptible little deal in lieu of the justice that is due us as citizens. That is for Hitler Germany, not for the land of liberty. A truly great, truly honorable nation has the obligation to redress grievances, not to demand tribute of those who have been wronged for grudgingly sparing their lives — lives that should never have been placed in jeopardy at all!"

"But we are trying to help you by seeking your co-operation," he pleaded, beginning to flounder in earnest now. Somehow, he was not managing things as he had doubtless intended, and the mask of nonchalant authority was beginning to slip, revealing his very real discomfiture.

"Say what you will," I declared unmoved, "camouflage it, glamorize it, in any way you choose, but this is coercion, this is pressure, this is torture," I pointed to the clock that was cheerfully ticking away my life. "Let me say to you in all sobriety you will come to me at ten minutes of 11.00 p.m. on Thursday, June 18, and the fact of my innocence will not have changed in the slightest."

Mr. Bennett gazed at me with a look which said plainly, "She must be crazy to reject life when it is there for the taking — ar — humph — for a price, of course. Nevertheless, one has to respect her stand."

I felt sorry for him; just another cog in a wheel, doing a lousy, thankless job. Wanting so desperately to convince me that he was impartial and finding it increasingly difficult to maintain an untenable position against a virile and dedicated honesty!

Throwing up his hands in despair, finally, he requested that Julie be brought in. For another half-hour he fairly entreated us to "co-operate," even promising to enlist the aid of his good friend, Gordon Dean, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. My husband was wonderfully poised and forthright.

"How can America stoop to such tactics," he demanded, "and hope to command the continued respect and affection and support of our friends. It is simply unthinkable! Frankly, as one human being to another, can you offer me one reason that might possibly justify the unheard of barbarity of the sentence? And don't you feel at all called upon to recommend clemency to the Attorney General as a matter of plain, ordinary decency and common sense? How can this nation afford to let such villainy go unchallenged, and be indelibly recorded to the everlasting shame of incoming generations! Wouldn't it be the better part of valor to grant Mr. Bloch the opportunity to prove our contention that the entire conduct of the case was marked by passion, prejudice and perjury? Just imagine! Even if it were true, and it is not, my wife is awaiting a horrible end for having typed a few notes! A heinous crime, 'worse than murder,' no doubt, and deserving of the supreme penalty, while the most atrocious and wanton killers known to civilization, the Nazi war criminals, are being freed daily."

Mr. Bennett began to look a little distraught. "What you're saying is not germane. Please, if you would only agree to co-operate, something could be worked out. There just won't be any other way." "Of course," I interjected, "a hearing based on new evidence is not germane; after all, we might actually be able to prove our claims! But it is germane for the Government of a great nation to victimize two helpless people just because a world controversy has developed as to their guilt, and to tell them in effect, 'to knuckle under or die!'"

Oh, I neglected to mention that a good bit after Julie's arrival, the Warden had finally come hurrying in. Now the visit was beginning to draw to a close. My husband was speaking. "Consider carefully, wouldn't it be more advantageous to the United States to let us live. Wouldn't it be a real proof to the peoples of the world that this country is genuinely concerned with human rights? Doesn't your coming here at the behest of the Attorney General indicate that the handling of this case has cost us a good deal of prestige on

the other side? Obviously, it would be much less costly in terms of this prestige to give us the opportunity to prove our innocence!"

"Oh, oh, there's been so much politics made of this case — too much and it isn't germane. You say you have never hurt your country, you say you love your country, do you?"

As we vigorously assented, he said, "well, then, co-operate and give us the information we need to enable us to recommend a commutation!" We stared at him, appalled; then Julie said slowly. "You see, Mr. Bennett, we love her so much, we will not permit her good name to be dishonored by entering into an immoral arrangement!"

He shrugged his shoulders wearily, explained to the Warden that he was to expedite any messages we might care to send him, and bade us good-bye. As he turned to go, I made a final plea: "Grant us our day in court, Mr. Bennett, let us live that we may prove our innocence. That's the decent way, the American way!"

Afterwards, I learned that he had followed Julie back into his own corridor and had attempted yet once more to convince him that his only hope lay in "co-operation." "Would you like me to come back another time," he had inquired rather timidly. "Yes," my husband had answered pointedly, "if you can bring me some good news!"

All my love —

Ethel

THE APPLE CART

By G. B. Shaw

(Abridged)

Act II

(. . . Afternoon. The terrace of the Palace. A low balustrade separates it from the lawn. Terrace chairs in abundance, ranged along the balustrade. Some dining-room chairs also, not ranged, but standing about as if they had just been occupied. The terrace is accessible from the lawn by a central flight of steps. The King and Queen are sitting apart near the corners of the steps, the Queen to the King's right. He is reading the evening paper; she is knitting. She has a little work table on her right, with a small gong on it.)

The Queen. Why did you tell them to leave the chairs when they took away the tea?

Magnus. I shall receive the Cabinet here.

The Queen. Here! Why?

Magnus. Well, I think the open air and the evening light will have a quieting effect on them. They cannot make speeches at me so easily as in a room.

(Pamphilus enters along the terrace, from the Queen's side.)

Magnus. *(looking at his watch)* Good Heavens! They haven't come, have they? It's not five yet.

Pamphilus. No, sir. It's the American ambassador.

The Queen. *(resenting this a little)* Has he an audience?

Pamphilus. No, ma'am. He is rather excited about something, I think. I can't get anything out of him. He says he must see His Majesty at once.

The Queen. Must! An American must see the King at once, without an audience! Well!

Magnus. *(rising)* Send him in, Pam.

(Pamphilus goes out.)

The Queen. I should have told him to write for an audience and then kept him waiting a week for it.

Magnus. What! When we still owe America that old war debt. And with a mad imperialist president like Bossifield! No, you wouldn't, my dear: you would be crawlingly civil to him, as I am going to be, confound him!

Pamphilus. *(re-appearing)* His Excellency the American Ambassador, Mr. Vanhattan.

(He retires as Mr. Vanhattan enters in an effusive condition, and, like a man assured of an enthusiastic welcome, hurries to the Queen, and salutes her with a handshake so prolonged that she stares in astonishment, first at him, and then appealingly at the King with her hand being vigorously wrung and waved up and down all the time.)

Magnus. What on earth is the matter, Mr. Vanhattan? You are shaking Her Majesty's rings off.

Vanhattan. (*desisting*) Her Majesty will excuse me when she learns the nature of my errand here. This, King Magnus, is a great historic scene: one of the greatest, perhaps, that history has ever recorded or will ever again record.

Magnus. Have you had tea?

Vanhattan. Tea! Who can think of tea at such a moment as this?

The Queen. (*rather coldly*) It is hard for us to share your enthusiasm in complete ignorance of its cause.

Vanhattan. That is true, ma'am. I am just behaving like a crazy man. But you shall hear. You shall judge. And then you shall say whether I exaggerate the importance — the immensity — of an occasion that cannot be exaggerated.

Magnus. Goodness gracious! Won't you sit down?

Vanhattan. (*taking a chair and placing it between them*) I thank your Majesty. (*He sits.*)

Magnus. You have some exciting news for us, apparently. Is it private or official?

Vanhattan. Official, sir. No mistake about it. What I am going to tell you is authentic from the United States of America to the British Empire.

The Queen. Perhaps I had better go.

Vanhattan. No, ma'am: you shall not go. Whatever may be the limits of your privileges as the consort of your sovereign, it is your right as an Englishwoman to learn what I have here to communicate.

Magnus. My dear Vanhattan, what the devil is the matter?

Vanhattan. King Magnus: between your country and mine there is a debt.

Magnus. Does that matter, now that our capitalists have invested so heavily in American concerns that after paying yourselves the interest on the debt you have to send us two thousand million dollars a year to balance the account.

Vanhattan. King Magnus: for the moment, forget figures. Between your country and mine there is not only a debt, but a frontier: the frontier that has on it not a single gun nor a single soldier, and across which the American citizen every day shakes the hand of the Canadian subject of your throne.

Magnus. There is also the frontier of the ocean, which is somewhat more expensively defended at our joint expense by the League of Nations.

Vanhattan. (*rising to give his words more impressiveness*) Sir: the debt is cancelled. The frontier no longer exists.

The Queen. How can that be?

Magnus. Am I to understand, Mr. Vanhattan, that by some convulsion of Nature the continent of North America has been submerged in the Atlantic?

Vanhattan. Something even more wonderful than that has happened. One may say that the Atlantic Ocean has been submerged in the British Empire.

Magnus. I think you had better tell us as succinctly as possible what has happened. Pray sit down.

Vanhattan. (*resuming his seat*) You are aware, sir, that the United States of America at one time formed a part of your empire.

Magnus. There is a tradition to that effect.

Vanhattan. No mere tradition, sir. An undoubted historical fact. In the eighteenth century —

Magnus. That is a long time ago.

Vanhattan. Centuries count for but little in the lifetimes of great nations, sir. Let me recall the parable of the prodigal son.

Magnus. Oh really, Mr. Vanhattan, that was a very, very long time ago. I take it that something important has happened since yesterday.

Vanhattan. It has. It has indeed, King Magnus.

Magnus. Then what is it? I have no time to attend to the eighteenth century and the prodigal son at this moment.

The Queen. The King has a Cabinet meeting in ten minutes, Mr. Vanhattan.

Vanhattan. I should like to see the faces of your Cabinet ministers, King Magnus, when they hear what I have to tell you.

Magnus. So should I. But I am not in a position to tell it to them, because I don't know what it is.

Vanhattan. The prodigal, sir, has returned to his father's home. Not poor, not hungry, not ragged, as of old. Oh no. This time he returns bringing with him the riches of the earth to the ancestral home.

Magnus. (*starting from his chair*) You don't mean to say —

Vanhattan. (*rising also blandly triumphant*) I do, sir. The Declaration of Independence is cancelled. The treaties which endorsed it are torn up. We have decided to rejoin the British Empire. We shall of course enjoy Dominion Home Rule under the Presidency of Mr. Bossfield. I shall revisit you here shortly, not as the ambassador of a foreign power, but as High Commissioner for the greatest of your dominions, and your very loyal and devoted subject, sir.

Magnus. (*collapsing into his chair*) The devil you will!

(*He stares haggardly into futurity, now for the first time utterly at a loss.*)

The Queen. What a splendid thing, Mr. Vanhattan.

Vanhattan. I thought your Majesty would say so. The most splendid thing that has ever happened. (*He resumes his seat.*)

The Queen. (*Looking anxiously at the King*) Don't you think so, Magnus?

Magnus. (*pulling himself together with a visible effort*) May I ask, Mr. Vanhattan, with whom did this — this — this master-stroke of American policy originate? Frankly, I have been accustomed to regard your President as a statesman whose mouth was the most efficient part of his head. He cannot have thought of this himself. Who suggested it to him?

Vanhattan. I must accept your criticism of Mr. Bossfield with all doo reserve, but I may mention that we Americans will probably connect the good news with the recent visit to our shores of the President of the Irish Free State. I cannot pronounce his name in its official Gaelic form; and there is only one typist in our bureau who can spell it; but he is known to his friends as Mick O'Rafferty.

Magnus. The rascal! Jemima: we shall have to live in Dublin. This is the end of England.

Vanhattan. In a sense that may be so. But England will not perish. She will merge — merge, sir — into a bigger and brighter concern. Perhaps I should have mentioned that one of our conditions will be that you shall be Emperor. King may be good enough for this little island; but if we come in we shall require something grander.

Magnus. This little island! "This little gem set in a silver sea!" Has it occurred to you, Mr. Vanhattan, that rather than be reduced to a mere appendage of a big American concern, we might raise the old war-cry of Sinn Fein, and fight for our independence to the last drop of our blood.

Vanhattan. I should be right sorry to contemplate such a reversion to a barbarous past. Fortunately, it's impossible — impawsibl. The old war-cry would not appeal to the cosmopolitan crews of the fleet of the League of Nations in the Atlantic. That fleet would blockade you, sir. And I fear we should be obliged to boycott you. The two thousand million dollars a year would stop.

Magnus. But the continental Powers! Do you suppose they consent for a moment to such a change in the balance of power?

Vanhattan. Why not? The change would be only nominal.

Magnus. Nominal! You call an amalgamation of the British Common-wealth with United States a nominal change! What will France and Germany call it?

Vanhattan. (*shaking his head indulgently*) France and Germany? These queer old geographical expressions which you use here from old family habit do not trouble us. I suppose you mean

by Germany the chain of more or less Soviet Republics between the Ural Mountains and the North Sea. Well, the clever people at Moscow and Berlin and Geneva are trying to federate them; and it is fully understood between us that if we don't object to their move, they will not object to ours. France, by which I take it you mean the Government at New Timgad, is too busy in Africa to fuss about what is happening at the ends of our little Channel Tube. So long as Paris is full of Americans, and Americans are full of money, all's well in the west from the French point of view. One of the great attractions of Paris for Americans is the excursion to old England. The French want us to feel at home here. And so we do. Why shouldn't we? After all, we are at home here.

Magnus. In what sense, may I ask?

Vanhattan. Well, we find here everything we are accustomed to: our industrial products, our books, our plays, our sports, our Christian Science churches, our osteopaths, our movies and talkies. Put it in a small parcel and say our ideas. A political union with us will be just the official recognition of an already accomplished fact. A union of hearts, you may call it.

XI.

MR. JINGLE

By Charles Dickens

It was the old lady's habit on the fine summer mornings to repair to the arbour in which Mr. Tupman had already signalized himself, in form and manner following: first, the fat boy fetched from a peg behind the old lady's bedroom door a close black satin bonnet, a warm cotton shawl, and a thick stick with a capacious handle; and the old lady, having put on the bonnet and shawl at her leisure, would lean one hand on the stick and the other on the fat boy's shoulder, and walk leisurely to the arbour, where the fat boy would leave her to enjoy the fresh air for the space of half an hour; at