

July 10, 1952

Dear Dr. Szilard,

I am writing to you because I am in a legal fight with the family and they are trying to prove that I am incompetent to handle money, that I am insane, that I am a liar and a lot of other charges.

My family have money rightfully belonging to me on my twenty-first birthday - some \$16,000 - my mother recently died, papers were given me to sign and on the advice of a friend I enlisted the help of a lawyer who has since uncovered this. I have now three children and was divorced in 1948 since which time I have been in the hospital countless times for over-work and worry. I have worked every year of my life - which can be proved. I need proof however, that I worked for you from 1939 until the spring of 1942; also that you lent me \$100 in the spring of 1942 (which, incidentally if I get the money I shall be very glad to pay back because this has worried me for all these years) for my father is trying to prove that he gave me the money to go to California.

If you would require any charge for this service of simply writing what you know is to be the truth - that I worked for you from 1939 to 1942 and that you loaned me this money I shall be glad to pay this in addition to what I owe you, and you may use this letter as legal proof of promising to pay.

I am sorry to bother you. Dr. Michael of Columbus who is a psychiatrist and knew me for five years has already written to Mr. Kweskin, my lawyer, that I am perfectly competent to handle money and perfectly sane. There is not much my father can say because there is so little proof of anything wrong with me simply because I have done no wrong. But he and my sisters are busily twisting the truth and have told several lies, among which was the lie that he paid our way to California in the spring of 1942 and that he has paid our bills all of these years. If you could also say that you knew that Joe had deserted us then it would also help.

Sincerely,

*Janet Coatsworth*

Janet Coatsworth



5650 Ellis Avenue

July 14, 1952

Mrs. Janet B. Coatsworth  
41A Bracewood Lane  
Stamford, Connecticut

Dear Mrs. Coatsworth:

I am writing in reply to your letter of July 10, 1952,  
to confirm the following.

In the interval from 1939 to 1942 you have worked for  
me during an extended period as a secretary on a part-time  
basis. Your work consisted mostly of shorthand and typing,  
and was in every respect very satisfactory. When your husband  
left for California and you wanted to join him there, I loaned  
you \$100.00 as a contribution to your traveling expenses.

I hope that the above statement is satisfactory, and if  
you want me to repeat it in the form of an affidavit I shall be  
glad to do so.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Leo Szilard

LS/sds



April 28, 1961  
102 Montgomery Street  
Highland Park, New Jersey

Dear Dr. Szilard,

It was only at Christmas that I learned that you are in Memorial Hospital, and I was, as usual, surrounded so much by my own problems, that I was at a loss as to what I could do. Since then, between working and bringing up, as usual, again, this family of boys of mine, there hasn't been much time for anything else. I am enclosing a photograph of us all, John is the one on the extreme right. He is home on leave of absence from Wesleyan University where he is Junior on a four-year scholarship. The next oldest is in high school and the small one has developed quite a talent for music. I am, as usual, working - at this time as secretary to the President of the Bienfang Paper Company.

A few months ago, I met a Dr. Bryson, a good friend of yours, I believe, who is head or assistant head of - again I'm not sure whether it is microbiology or what. But anyway, I did some secretarial work for him, and we spoke of you. - I said I hesitated to come to call on you at Memorial Hospital for fear the visit might burden you, and so I am writing instead.

Is there anything I can do? I worked for Remington Rand for a couple of years and was able to obtain a very good electric typewriter free of charge. Is there any work I could do for you on Saturdays or Sundays - my free days? I mean, for free. You have probably an excellent secretary, much better than me, but if there are any errands you would like run, or any papers you need to have typed, or anything at all won't you please let me do something for you? I have never forgotten your kindness twenty odd years ago when I was your secretary. Looking back, all I can remember is that I don't think I was a very good secretary, but you were always doing something for me - lending me money, taking me to tea, making some excuse, always, to be doing something kind. It makes me very ashamed to think that all of these years I have not kept in touch, but honestly, the struggle to just even exist has been incredible. Now, however, things are a little easier, and I do want to help if I can, if you will let me. One day, perhaps, I will be in a situation wherein finances are not the miserable problem they are - and then I will be able to return the money I owe you, after twenty bungling years full of mistakes and searchings. Looking back, it seems unbelievable that anyone could have been as stupid and as capable of making so many mistakes. At least, I can say, perhaps, that thank God I have made no serious ones with the children - but only time can tell as far as that goes.

You would enjoy John. He is the "white hope" of Wesleyan, was vice president of the Freshman class; the one who instigated the idea there in his sophomore year of raising money for negro scholarships. All this he has done on his own. He is full of beans, entirely too intellectual for me - you may remember I never was one for much intelligence - and he saw you one night on television and wrote to me about it. He said that you were 100% right about whatever it was you and the other scientist were discussing, and was full of scorn for the other man whoever he was.

It may be a complete bore for you to have to answer this, so please don't unless it involves no effort at all. But if there is anything at all that I can do, - trite phrase - but most sincere - please let me know.

Best wishes,

Sincerely,

*Janet Coatsworth*  
Janet Coatsworth

*Halp...  
sent*







102 Montgomery Street  
Highland Park, N.J.  
August 8, 1961

Dear Dr. Szilard:

I am writing again to let you know how much I enjoyed and am still enjoying your book. I am its best press agent. The older boys read it also, and we couldn't agree more with what you are so cleverly and satirically writing about. I loved the part about Szilard being named for the back side of the moon by the Russians. But why not the top side? But the best was the story about Grand Central Terminal.

At this point, I am so upset by the stupidities of the Kennedy administration. Doubtless, we will have underground shelter companies mushrooming about and this will help take the people's minds off their being unemployed and being kicked around by Newburgh and Oneida's welfare groups, to say nothing of Goldwater. Now THERE'S a crusading staunch and righteous spirit for you! Have you ever read Murray Kempton in the New York Post? He had a word for it, i.e.: "Down with the Congressional Record, men, full speed ahead for bed inspection at Oneida."

I did not get the job with Dr. Jukes. Possibly because my ever-loving family in 1952 and in 1954 spread the word around (I happened to have the misfortune of breaking one of my vertebra just before the last child was born) and for a time they (Dr. Bob Goldbey of Memorial Hospital) thought I had kidney t.b. and was unfortunate to have to request aid from the Aid to Dependent Children, Connecticut Welfare Department of Connecticut, - who, having been told by my aforesaid family that I was a "hopeless mental case, and had been thrown out of her father's house, and had been divorced by her husband on moral grounds" - all of which was untrue - spread this gospel around Stamford and other places so that it was practically impossible to get a job in Connecticut. After having spent \$2,000 of the \$3,000 the lawyer was able to pry out of my father, in 1952, (you may remember it) on doctors' bills and hospital bills, and \$1,000 in lawyers' fees, I was pretty sick and broke, too. It took a year for me to realize that, whether or not the t.b. was going to kill me, I still couldn't sit idly by at home and watch my children starve to death, and there weren't any decent looking men that I could consider playing house with, - so I went to work again, and despite all sorts of gloomy predictions, feel pretty well. The kids are getting big and are able to help some. The only thing - my youngest decided to truuant in Connecticut - and all sorts of agencies and social workers descended upon us, and the Child Guidance Clinic in Norwalk said either put him in boarding school or the court will. I put him in a boarding school here in New Jersey, but this didn't work out either. Apparently, according to several eminent psychiatrists, his "dependency needs" were not being met because I have to work. But then if I do not work his physical needs, one of which being the need to eat and wear clothes, would not be met. Ah me. But he and I are much better now.

The only reason I write all this gobbledygook to you, poor man, is to try to let you realize why I haven't at once done something drastic to raise some money that I have owed you for 10, these many years. Dad is now 96, and when he is dead, I may have a chance. I may, except that my older sisters were, and are still determined that people think of me as a dreadful person, full of immorality and schizophrenia, and also determined that they, not I, benefit from his will.

who had cheated me of \$15,000  
of my grandmother's will & was  
proceeding with same,



I wish there was something I could do. I'd like to put on my hat and trot right down to Washington and do something for you - like - perhaps bake you a cake, or make you some tea or do some typing for you or just perhaps talk to you.

Anyway, please know that you are always in my thoughts and my prayer, and I wish for you ease of mind and body. Best of everything.

Sincerely,

*Janet Coatsworth*  
Janet Coatsworth

NO CONTENT

WVCCYBEE BOND



*File*

102 Montgomery Street  
Highland Park, New Jersey  
September 7, 1961

Dear Dr. Szilard:

Well, John and I went to the SANE Policy Committee meeting and found some nice, intelligent people who are really trying to find a solution and an answer. There I sat, presumptuously basking in the undeserved light of your fame. They all were interested in you, tremendously interested, and all were unanimous in their joy that you are on the way to recovery.

Would you be interested in coming to speak to them? Several members are on the staff of Rutgers University and you would receive a nice, handsome fee and, I hope, good entertainment. I told them I didn't know if you were well enough to travel or speak, but that I would write and ask.

You know, the things I remember most about you didn't have anything to do with your being famous - I remember your kindness and understanding, and the fact that you were the only one who stood up to my father and "told him off" that terrible spring when I had the decision to make - whether to do what was right but disastrous or to stay and do something wrong. Do you think that suffering somehow pays for all the mistakes one makes? I hope so. I have had twenty-one years of suffering and struggle but I've got them almost reared, and I haven't done such a bad job.

Oh please say you will come. You have no idea how warmly people you do not even know feel about you, and how awed they are at your accomplishments. - And then, too, I would so love to see you again.

When I think of all your kindness to me, and the fact that you are such a big, important person while I am nothing but another stenographer, I stand aghast at my presumption in even asking you. But you might enjoy it, and I know that many, many people would come to hear you - the SANE Committee said they could guarantee at least 1,000. They told me to tell you to pick your own time and fee. Again, let me say how happy it has made me to know that you are feeling better. I hope and pray that you continue to feel well and happy.

Sincerely,

*Janet Coatsworth*  
Janet Coatsworth