

5/7/1973

London August 2. 1853.

Honorable Dudley Mann

Dear Rev. Vasvary: Secretary of State

COLLECTION  
EDMUND VASVARY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

May I send you this as a little contribution to your collection, if you do not already know of it or have a copy. I think it is an interesting piece though there are other letters by Kossuth with a similar content.

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ought with consequences incalculable in their  
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vain partly for the arrival, partly for the  
may I even wait in vain for a positive answer  
liberty to address to you, and through you  
Excellency the President.

Thanks again for your  
generosity and hospi-  
tality in Washington.  
Sincerely yours,

Gunter E. Moltmann

Let me by all those overwhelming cares, which weigh on my soul, and  
by all the sacred interests connected with them conjure you my dear Sir! to honor  
me with a positive answer. Strike down at once all my fond hopes, and expectations,  
to which I so fondly cling, if I be doomed to receive that blow; but let me not  
longer be subject to the torture of uncertainty; that is the greatest misfortune  
amongst all, because every moment presses hard upon me to decide upon a positive  
course, and must lose, time, opportunity, reputation and influence, by being  
forced to indecision, by the continued silence from America.

It is extremely important, that the Government of the U. S. be correct-  
ly informed of the political situation in Europe, evil as it really is, and not  
as the correspondents of newspapers, starting about the town for empty chats make  
it appear.

I will not trouble you with idle speculations, more or less reasonable;  
I give you positive facts; upon which you may rely. I speak not from conjectures  
but from knowledge.

The preliminary answer from the Czar to the joint proposition of the  
maritime powers has been received in Paris July 29. The French Government has  
resolved, to consider it such, as leaves no other alternative but war; and it

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Assistant Secretary of State

COLLECTION  
EDMUND VASVARY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Dear Sir!

Amidst the complication of important events which day by day press more closely towards an issue, fraught with consequences incalculable in their bearings, I still wait with extreme anxiety and yet in vain for any sign of activity from the U. S., I wait in vain partly for the arrival, partly for the nomination of American ministers, nay I even wait in vain for a positive answer to my humble application I took the liberty to address to you, and through you to the notice and decision of His Excellency the President.

Let me by all those overwhelming cares, which weigh on my soul, and by all the sacred interests connected with them conjure you my dear Sir! to honor me with a positive answer. Strike down at once all my fond hopes, and expectations, to which I so fondly cling, if I be doomed to receive that blow; but let me not longer be subject to the torture of uncertainty; that is the greatest misfortune amongst all, because every moment presses hard upon me to decide upon a positive course, and must lose, time, opportunity, reputation and influence, by being forced to indecision, by the continued silence from America.

It is extremely important, that the Government of the U. S. be correctly informed of the political situation in Europe, evil as it really is, and not as the correspondents of newspapers, startling about the town for empty chats make it appear.

I will not trouble you with idle speculations, more or less reasonable; I give you positive facts; upon which you may rely. I speak not from conjectures but from knowledge.

The preliminary answer from the Czar to the joint proposition of the maritime powers has been received in Paris July 29. The French Government has resolved, to consider it such, as leaves no other alternative but war; and it

has resolved upon that alternative without any further hesitation or delay. I give you word for word the information which I got July 31, and which is from such a source which can neither dare to mislead me, nor can make a mistake. You can take this information for so certain, as if you yourself had assisted to the deliberations of the Ministerial Council in the Tuileries - The information is such:

"Je puis vous annoncer comme un fait certain, que la guerre en Orient est enfin resolue dans les Conseils du Gouvernement Français et qu'on y regrette bien vivement le temps qu'on a pendu en negociations inutiles et de n'avoir pas suivi vos avis. Les dernieres nouvelles (par la Caradoc) ne laissant plus d'incertitude sur les intentions du Czar on est resolu à reparer par la vigueur et l'energie, ces regrettables faiblesses, dont nous avons été les temoins. Seulement on ne sait encore trop, comment après ne pas avoir considéré l'invasion de Principautés comme un cas de guerre; on fera pour justifier le commencement des hostilités mais de quelque façon que se soit Vous pouvez être sûr que le canon sera tiré en Orient".

Now that is clear and positive enough. I have put the question: what if England persists in her disgraceful tergiversation, and hesitates to concur? The answer I received is: "We don't mind it; enough has been conceded to England's timidity; we will act, that is a "fait accompli". Besides we know that England can in no case side against Turkey, she is so jealous of her influence there as to abandon her supremacy there to France, she must go full length with France in that question.

The most important question for myself and my Country being, the position which Austria shall hold in the conflict, because if she remains in peace with Turkey, then Turkey remains shut to my activity, I insisted upon that point being cleared, and got the following notice:

"Par un courier extraordinaire, l'ordre est envoyé à l'Ambassadeur Français à Vienne, de signifier à l'Empereur François Joseph qu'on ne pouvait accepter sa neutralité armée jusque l'Autriche était signataire du traité qui garantit l'intégrité de l'Empire Ottoman on demande une réponse péremptoire dans le délai de huit jours.

On n'espère pas que l'Autriche veuille se mettre en guerre avec la Russie, et on pense que sa réponse sera évasive; mais on aimerait mieux ici son refus motivé sur n'importe quelle considération que sa coopération toujours incertaine et toujours inquiétante"

What stand Austria may endeavour to take in the beginning I would not venture to predict with certainty. She has good reason to waver in resolution. On one side there is her absolute dependence from Russia; on the other side the solicitude, not to open the field for an understanding between myself and Turkey; as her (Austria's) declaring for Russia would of course dispense Turkey from every consideration which hitherto prevented Turkey from accepting my proffered hand. How even so much I dare say; that though for the beginning Russia may be induced, to permit Austria's taking some such artificial course, which would do no real harm to Russia, and still preclude Turkey from taking me by the hand, yet in the course of war that artificial position must prove untenable.

However Switzerland also enters in the combinations

"Luvini" (from Ticino) proposed in the "séance décréte" of the National Assembly of the Confederation that the "executive Government shall be instructed, to insist upon the immediate cessation of the blockade, and indemnisation to the expelled Ticinese, and that no arrangement shall be entered into, in the slightest degree derogatory to the honor dignity and independence of the Republic; - and that if upon such satisfactory terms no arrangement can be effected; then the National Assembly, shall be again convoked, at the utmost within two months, and in the mean time, the army put on war footing."

This proposition has a majority in the assembly. It can be carried.

But in consideration of the Oriental complication, I send them to day the advise to keep the question floating, till Austria shall have answered the appeal of France. - Should Austria declare to side with Russia, and thus get involved in a war there, then will be the time for Switzerland to avenge the insult she suffered from Austria, and to assent the independence of the Republic. I trust we may succeed in encouraging the federal Government, to make a bold stand against Austrian encroachments, in that event (oh! for an energetic American minister at Paris, Bern, & Constantinople now even France could be easily made to give a corresponding advise to Switzerland.)

Such is the situation to day dear Sir! I dare say, if the cause of democracy were now supported conveniently by the U. S.; the battle array for freedom, might be extended from Caucasus to the Alpes. - Centuries may pass, without an equal favorable chance.

And to think what immortal glory has President Pierce within the reach of his hand, a fame unparalleled in history;! and how easy it would be with these circumstances for the U. S. to get the start of all the powers on earth, without the slightest risk or hazard to themselves, - having all the nations (I mean the people) with them and therefore feared and dreaded by the monarchs beyond what we imagine; and seeing in the very (though comparatively small) fact of Captain Ingraham's at Smyrna how easily the U. S. may command, if they will, they have but to raise their word at Constantinople and Berne, to blow away like an empty chaff, all the corrupt practices of European diplomacy, bartering away the right of the first born like Esau, and selling the freedom of the world together, from mere cowardice; they have only to stretch out their hand, to carry with the utmost facility the position of a first power on earth.

You will see, and I hope the U. S. Government also will see, by the situation I have conscientiously sketched, of what immense value just now would

be, whatever moral and material assistance from the U. S. to our cause; - and this circumstance will account for my daring repeatedly, and again and again to insist respectfully upon the point, that the U. S. Government should designe to instruct you to give a peremptory resolution, to my humble propositions submitted to you.

However there is yet under present circumstances a matter which I desire respectfully to submit to the speedy (and let me urge favorable) decision of the U. S. Government: viz.

From my above exposition I induce: that if Austria gets implicated in a collision either in the Orient or with Switzerland, or (probably) with both; then the liberation of Hungary and Italy depends upon the fact, that the Governments in war with Austria, accept our cooperation and open to us the field, for making a start. - To this point are and must be directed all my efforts. - Now I say, Turkey as well as Switzerland are in such financial embarrassment, by their defensive preparations; that though full aware of the importance of our assistance; still if I desire them to give me a couple of millions, to put with, Hungary and Italy under arms in their behalf, they probably will feel not only obliged to reject for want of money our proposition; but also mistrusting their own strength, when unassisted by us; will rather try to arrange matters at what ever disadvantageous terms with their enemies. Whereas if I can tell those Governments; "just open the field to my activity, and I not only do not desire anything else from You, to begin with, but for the very beginning already I bring You such assistance, which besides enabling me to raise Hungary and Italy in Your support, will prove also it itself of an immense advantage to you," then indeed I will not only have added to their resolution to defy Austria, but besides I can be quite sure, that my offers shall be readily accepted, and I taken by the hand, as an effective and important ally.

Now my dear Sir! allow me to say with perfect confidence that I know Mr. George Law, to have among the ten steamers engaged by contract in the mail service, 4 steamers of such a superior quality, that with these, armed and manned conveniently, as I know he were able to do; every difficulty would be overcome, and not only our beginning made possible but also our victory sure.

Please not to misunderstand, I don't mean to get up an armed expedition in the U. S. for the purpose of making an invasion into the dominions of a Prince, with whom the U. S. are in peace, but I mean to say to an existing Government (Turkey or Switzerland) I will procure for you, a mighty flotilla; which will sweep away the Austrian flag from the Seas, capture its steamers, destroy its maritime arsenals, bring you arms, cannons, ammunition; and make a descent for you on such a point etc. this I am sure will be lawful; Francis Joseph may procure such an aid against Turkey in the U. S.; and Turkey may do it against Austria. That is but the Monroe principle of neutrality upon which the U. S. have been acting all ways.

Well to come to such an arrangement between those governments and Mr. G. L. as would be agreeable to him, and acceptable to them is a private matter, with which the U. S. Government has officially nothing to do, (though it might assist the cause in diplomatic way,) - but the difficulty is that those steamers being engaged in the mail service, none of them can be withdrawn, without the permission of the Government.

Now, I say, if Mr. G. L. will engage himself to satisfy the requirements of the mail service, with the remaining six steamers why should the U. S. Government not do so much for the cause of liberty, as to allow him, to make use of the four, in assisting with, Turkey or Switzerland or both, against Austria?

May even if Mr. G. L. taking matters too materially and commercially should prove difficult in the arrangement; can the cause of oppressed humanity not expect so much from the Democratic Government of the U. S., that it should encourage one of their citizens to aid in a lawful way the triumph of freedom in Europe?

This is it my dear Sir! with [!] I most respectfully solicit from Your Government, and with this solicitation - I dare say - I place the future of my country and of Italy in Your hands.

Let me humbly request You to communicate this my humble petition to Your chief, Secretary of State as well, as to the President himself. If they pronounce favorably, please to give in a convenient manner some notice to Mr. G. L. that he may treat further about it, but whatever be the decision of the government, let it be in every case a speedy one; and daigne to let me know immediately the result. It may be wanted the next moment, and will in every case be almost decisive for our future course.

I know that States Secretary Marcy is no friend of Mr. G. L. but I know also that he is a man, highminded in sentiments, a Republican truly attached to the cause of freedom, and a Democrat, distinguished by character and energy.- He is far too superior, to such petty individual considerations in his important public position.

One word more & I close. There is much talking in certain quarters, about intervention & non intervention, and while disputing about words, men for fear of doing too much do nothing. Why the particularity I have mentioned, and many analogous matters (though they be direct material assistance) evidently prove, that the U. S. Government may do immense good to the cause of freedom, without getting into "entangling European alliances" on subjecting itself to the charge of directly interfering in foreign matters - Though certainly the principle of freedom can not be a foreign matter to the U. S.

Please to accept the reiterate assurance of my highest esteem, and particular consideration with which I am

Dear Sir

Yours respectfully

L. Kossuth

Kossuth levele A. Dudley Mann-hoz  
London, 1853 Aug 2

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Vasváry ötvösné

A fogalmazó alyfélt  
lásd Jványi 2130-2131