

LAWYER TO MARK 60TH YEAR AT BAR

Hungarian-Born Morris Cukor
Says Native Americans Don't
Know How Lucky They Are

MORRIS CUKOR



GRAND REPRESENTATIVE
SYMBOLIC GRAND LODGE OF HUNGARY

Saved Ministers in 1918

Morris Cukor will celebrate today his sixtieth anniversary as a practicing lawyer.

"I may not be the best lawyer I know in New York," he said genially one day last week in his little office at 261 Broadway, "but I certainly have been at it longest."

Mr. Cukor will mark his anniversary, as he does every day, with a silent prayer of thankfulness that his family emigrated to the United States from Hungary. That was in 1884, when he was 15 years old. Since then he has never ceased preaching the virtues of America.

"I guess I must be pretty good at it," he said. "They put me on the Voice of America to Hungary on Feb. 2. Do you think I wasted radio time denouncing the Communists and calling the present rulers names? Not a bit. The Hungarian people know their Government officials better than I.

"I told them about America, as I, a native Hungarian, had found it. How a greenhorn like me could get a free education in the public schools and could be graduated from New York University Law School with honors. I even was president of the Municipal Civil Service Commission in New York for three years.

"I told them about man-to-man democracy, personal freedom, liberality and decency in American life. For example, in 1918, the Attorney General threatened to intern the pastors of the Hungarian Reform churches in the United States as enemy aliens. That would have closed the churches, you know. As counsel to the churches, I appealed to President Wilson.

"Although he was overworked in the midst of a war, the President received us, eight or ten of the accused clergymen and me. 'I know you are not traitors,' he told the ministers. 'You are welcome in America.' Then he made a beautiful speech, saying America had always taken in the oppressed from all over the world. The tears flowed down the faces of those grateful ministers.

"And in this war, we were enemies with Hungary again. I was chairman of the Hungarian section of the war bond drive, and my committee and I raised \$2,000,000 in forty-eight hours.

"When I asked President Roosevelt for a token of recognition to the Hungarian people, he authorized naming a liberty ship for Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, you know, my wife christened it. In 1943, mind, while we were fighting Kossuth's country! Americans Don't Know Blessings

Democracy? Why, you young fellows who were born in America have no appreciation of your blessings. You must come from Europe, the old Central of Eastern Europe, for that.

"In 1903, we citizens of the old East Side, Hungarians, Rumanians, Jews, Germans, Poles, Russians, gave a dinner for President Teddy Roosevelt—where do you think? In the Waldorf? Not on your life. In Liberty Hall at Norfolk and Hudson Streets.

"And again, in 1910, for Taft when he was President, at the Café Boulevard, on Second Avenue at Tenth Street. He tucked his napkin in his vest and dived into his favorite bograch goulash. Can you imagine such a thing in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1910?

"That's the United States of America, boy."

The 81-year-old barrister jabbed a finger at his interviewer, while his eyes snapped.

"That's what I told them in Hungarian on the Voice of America."

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