

Krakow 22 April 1937

[1/1] My Beloved Friend!¹

[1/2] You'll probably be surprised when you get this letter, after a long interruption, [1/3] from me. It is concerned with the person delivering it, dr. W.Z. Birnbaum [1/4] who will thoroughly explain to you the character of his stay in the United [1/5] States. I'm very concerned for this man, to whom [1/6] I am joined by ties of heredity and friendship. Be so kind and [1/7] good and grant him your help with professional beginnings [1/8] on the other side of the Great Waters.

[1/9] There is nothing new with me; on the other hand in our homeland there are many new things. [1/10] You'll no doubt ask at this moment, how these new things look. I'll [1/11] answer with an anecdote that is circulating within the spheres of the Jagiellonian² University regarding [1/12] the book review of a book written by one of the professors: "the book—wrote [1/13] the reviewer—contains many new and interesting things, however, the things [1/14] that are interesting are not new, and the new things are not interesting." And so it happens that here [1/15] there are plenty new and good things, but the good things aren't new, [1/16] and the new aren't good.

[1/17] As you can see, I have a dark sense of humor, but I'm not losing my optimism, [1/18] because, after all, things are starting to kick into gear despite everything.

I send you a warm embrace and I thank you in advance,
Ludwik Rubel

¹ Dr. Karol Ripa (1895-1983), Consul of the Polish Commonwealth in the United States when this letter was written. He was a friend of piano virtuoso Paderewski and other Polish luminaries abroad.

² Founded in 1364, the Jagiellonian University has been an integral part of Krakow life ever since. In the 15th century, the Jagiellonian was one of most international universities in Europe with approximately 44% of the students coming from abroad. Today, the Jagiellonian is once again drawing an increasing number of the world's best students to its ancient halls. Among its distinguished alumni are figures like Copernicus (1491-95) and Pope John Paul II (1938-39, 1942-46).