November 20, 1950

Dear Senator Lehman:

I confess myself extremely puzzled by recent behavior of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. I was willing to give the Service the benefit of the doubt in the case of Josef Krips, though it seemed to me outrageous that a foreigner should get a visa abroad from the United States Consul and then be refused admission to the country on his arrival here.

But the case of Joseph Szigeti seems to me altogether puzzling and on the face of it outrageous. I have known Mr. Szigeti for twenty-five years and while I realize I could be mistaken, I should be extremely surprised to learn that he has ever taken any sort of a part in politics. But what bothers me most is that a man of Szigeti's standing can be detained at Ellis Island by the Immigration and Naturalization Service while that Service refuses to give any information regarding the reason for Szigeti's detention. I must assume that whatever law there is governing these matters permits the Immigration and Naturalization Service to act in this high-handed and outrageous manner, but it seems to me time for Congress to revise or amend such an unholy statute.

If you feel that my point of view in this matter is a mistaken one, I should greatly appreciate your telling me why. But if you think you find yourself in fundamental agreement with me, just what would you as Senator like to see citizens do?

Yours faithfully,

Alfred A. Knopf

The Honorable Herbert H. Lehman
The United States Senate
Washington, D. C.