

Titel: BREV TIL: Louis Hjelmslev FRA: Roman Jakobson (1965-07-13)

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Anvendt udgave: Louis Hjelmslev og hans kreds

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY

SLAVIC LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURES

July 13, 1965

BOYLSTON 301
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

Mrs. Louis Hjeltslev
Ordruphøjvej 40
Charlottenlund, Denmark

Dear Vibeke,

Louis could only live a whole, amazing life of a great thinker, scholar and worker, which he was, or not to live at all. He was not a man of halfway solutions, and precisely therefor I loved and admired him particularly.

Thirty years of rare friendship united us, and I shall never forget all its stages--our visit to you in Aarhus in 1936 with our first fascinating discussions, your visit to Brno, the unusual case when Louis and I danced in the Dean's office and sang in the Brno streets; then his and your unforgettable help to us in tragic 1939 and our happy common celebration of your nephew's birthday, and our charming dinners and inspiring talks in your hospitable home; our summer visit to you in the country, where Louis was so wonderfully relaxed; and then our goodbye talk at the harbor before our departure from Norway. At our postwar meetings we were older and more experienced, but never less attached to each other, whether it was in Copenhagen or Cambridge or under the torrid sun of Bloomington.

A few days ago Svatja and I spoke about Louis, and to both of us one scene was the most vivid: when we miraculously succeeded in passing through Germany and saw through the window of our coach the tall and jovial figure of Louis, who then for a moment suddenly disappeared, and we were frightened because we associated with him the vision of salvation. Svatja's and my lives are so closely linked with thoughts about you and Louis, and when talking with Svatja the other day, both of us realized how great and strong you are and how this strength and this unique gift for enjoying life and beauty will ever guide you.

There is a great task of saving and publishing all of Louis' sketches which he didn't succeed in finishing but which are, I know, full of ideas which for long years will enrich and fructify international science.