



Bertolt Brecht before The Committee on Un-American Activities

An historical encounter: presented by Eric Bentley / Folkways Records FD 5531

BERTOLT BRECHT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES / FOLKWAYS FD 5531

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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On this record you will hear the questioning of Bertolt Brecht by the HUAC, as of October 30th, 1947. It is an encounter that rivals in drama some of the great trial scenes in Brecht's plays, and it will fascinate equally both those interested in Brecht and those interested in the HUAC.

Although tantalizing fragments of the recording have been heard in *Brecht on Brecht*, and the complete transcript has been printed by the government, this is the first time that the encounter as a whole has been brought to the public. Bertolt Brecht's voice was recorded few times in any language, and this is almost certainly the only recording of Brecht speaking English.

Folkways is proud to have secured the services of Eric Bentley as editor and commentator.



Text of the recording.

Introduction.

Because this is a historical document, and because it affects the reputation of persons still living, authenticity is of the essence, and the listener deserves to be told exactly what he is listening to and how it got that way. Both the record and the text have been edited by me and by me alone. More precisely: the text has been edited by me alone, and the record has been edited by me and a sound engineer. Roughly speaking, the record may be truthfully said to give the complete dialogue of Brecht's encounter with the HUAC. All the engineer did with his scissors was to shorten some of the pauses, eliminate some noises, and very occasionally lop off an unintelligible or redundant word or syllable. When we were through there was slightly too long a program to go on two sides of even a generous hi fi disc, and I went through marking bits which Folkways could cut when they actually made the disc. I chose the least significant bits I could find. I did not do anything that could be called political doctoring from the viewpoint of anyone's politics. In other words,

this is an honest and scrupulous presentation. And for that matter, the bits left out of the disc have been left in the printed text, so that in fact no one has been deprived of anything whatever. Let me explain one oddity, though. The printed text here is the government's own official transcript, but it is not wholly accurate, as anyone who compares it with the dialogue on the disc will discover. But I left the transcript uncorrected precisely so that the interested student can discover for himself the differences between history and official transcripts thereof. In other words, the printed text is not edited by me at all. Here it is, errors included. The statement which Brecht was not allowed to read is not, of course, to be found in the official transcript. If my version of it differs in details from other versions the reader may have come across, let me take the responsibility for some of these differences. I often helped Brecht improve the English of something he had tried to put into our language, and I have done so here. I have not tampered with the meaning. As for my spoken comments, they are intended to fill in the picture. Listeners will reach their own conclusions. If at one point I interrupt in order to criticize an investigator for misrepresenting a text, it is because the

listener is likely to be unfamiliar with that text, and so unable to recognize misrepresentation for himself. True, I was a friend of Bertolt Brecht, but that friendship has not upset my mental balance, and in any event I was not a friend of all his opinions.

I believe this record will make people think: if it will make communists think we have some malign and dangerous committees, it will make anti-communists think we have some stupid and ineffectual committees. And since I have kept my own views off the disc itself, it may be proper for me to state here, in part, what the disc makes me think. What strikes me most forcibly is that the men talking to Bertolt Brecht had no notion with whom they had to deal. They had no sense of his genius; for that they can be excused. But they had also no sense of his talent; that means they had neither intuition nor even... information. Why did they have to have someone reading out Brecht's minor works unintelligibly, when after all some of his major works reposed in their own Library of Congress, and translated into English at that? And if they could have The Measures Taken translated, they could have anything else translated. Even if the questioners of Brecht were under no obligation to read the works of Brecht, still, had they had any perspicuity at all, they could have sensed what stamp of man they had on their hands, or at least that he was not exactly a party hack! And if they were under no obligation to be interested in the man's humanity, but were only commissioned to look into his politics, what did these men know of

communism? Any good anti-communist should fear for their ignorance. They did not know about communism; they only knew about communist espionage. Conceive of someone knowing about American espionage, but not knowing anything else about America! Some people have listened to Brecht's encounter with the HUAC and found it trivial. So much quibbling about variant translations, so much spelling of names, giving of addresses and dates! True, much taxpayer's money has been squandered on such trivia, and not just in 1947, but emergent from the appalling trivia of the ridiculous dialogue is a tragi-comedy of broad meaning and considerable pathos. This tragi-comedy goes far beyond the question of the HUAC. It transcends the spectacle of a communist-sympathizer cannily evading questions and winning a compliment from his arch-enemies. We have here, among other things, the intellectual confronting the Philistine, the man of Mind confronting the man of Power. What difference would it make, were Thomas the communist, Brecht the anti-communist? There is a drama here of human types who have never seen eye to eye and never will. There is a tragedy, here, of human incomprehension: the Thomases of this world are constitutionally incapable of understanding the Brechts. And comedy enters inevitably in when society invites precisely the Thomases to "investigate" the Brechts...

Some people to whom I have played the tapes which existed before the present disc was made regretted that they did not get to hear "the real Brecht." But Brecht was protecting himself from Thomas, not



revealing himself to Thomas. And anyway, was that "the real Thomas"? Assuming that a real Thomas existed, wasn't it, too, to be concealed, so that the world might see the artefact he had wrought, this mask of the anti-communist hero? Shadow-boxing, yes. But shadow boxing is fascinating, even if one of the boxers isn't too good at it. And, finally, since Brecht was a man, and was an artist, it is not true that nothing of his real self comes through. Ignore much of the content of his answers, if you will, much is still said by the manner of his answers, and even, for that matter, by the tone of his voice. Tenuous as is the overt content of much of this interview, just as there is political dynamite beneath the bickering, (as my spoken commentator makes clear), so also the bickering itself, the teasing, the fencing implies a human tragi-comedy of -- shall we say Brechtian proportions?

E. B.
New York, June 1963

Notes:

1. Those whose memory does not go back to 1947 may be puzzled by references to "the witnesses of Mr. Kenny and Mr. Crum." The allusion is to a group of witnesses who were "unfriendly" to the Committee and who stood on the Fifth Amendment.

2. Few people realize that a complete transcript of the Committee's public hearings reposes in larger libraries in printed form. The Brecht hearing is reported in a special 549-page section: Hearings Regarding the Communist Infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry, devoted to the hearings of October 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, and 30, 1947. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1947.

This is the voice of Eric Bentley speaking to you from the Studios of Folkways Records in the spring of 1963. Between the 20th and the 30th of October, 1947, the Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives held some "hearings regarding the communist infiltration of the Motion Picture Industry."

The Chairman of the Committee was J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey, and among its members were several men who either were or would later be famous such as Richard M. Nixon of California, Karl E. Mundt of South Dakota, and John E. Rankin of Mississippi.

Among the witnesses called during that ten-day period were: Jack L. Warner, Louis B. Mayer, Ayn Rand, Adolph Menjou, Robert Taylor, Robert Montgomery, Ronald Reagan, Gary Cooper, Walt Disney, John Howard Lawson, Dalton Trumbo, Albert Maltz, Alvah Bessie, Samuel Ornitz, Herbert Biberman, Emmet Lavery, Edward Dmytryk, Adrian Scott, Dore Schary, Ring Lardner Jr., and Lester Cole.

"We have subpoenaed witnesses," Mr. Thomas said, "representing both sides of the question," and the testimony turned out to be chiefly of two kinds. One group of witnesses spoke against Communism and named persons in Hollywood whom they regarded as Communists, the other group pleaded the Fifth Amendment, and maintained that the investigation was improper. The second group would later get jail sentences for contempt of Congress. But one or two witnesses stood outside both the groups. Dore Schary is an example. Another is Emmet Lavery who stated a social philosophy close to that of Pope John XXIII's encyclicals of the nineteen sixties.

The witness who stood furthest apart from the others was Bertolt Brecht, whose testimony you are now about to hear.

The scene of this Brechtian tragi-comedy is the crowded Caucus Room of the Old House Office Building, Washington, D. C. The date is Thursday October 30, 1947.

Present are only 3 members of the Committee, Parnell Thomas, John McDowell of Pennsylvania, and Richard B. Vail of Illinois. With them is Robert E. Stripling, chief investigator. Bertolt Brecht is accompanied by two attorneys, Bartley Crum and Robert W. Kenny. The voice first announcing Bertolt Brecht's name is that of Stripling. The voice asking Brecht to stand is that of Parnell Thomas. Most of the questions afterwards and throughout the session are put by Stripling.

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Berthold Brecht.
The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Brecht, will you stand, please, and raise your right hand?
Do you solemnly swear the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?
Mr. BRECHT. I do.
The CHAIRMAN. Sit down, please.

**TESTIMONY OF BERTHOLD BRECHT (ACCOMPANIED BY COUNSEL,
MR. KENNY AND MR. CRUM)**

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, will you please state your full name and present address for the record, please? Speak into the microphone.
Mr. BRECHT. My name is Berthold Brecht. I am living at 34 West Seventy-third Street, New York. I was born in Augsburg, Germany, February 10, 1898.
Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, the committee has a—
The CHAIRMAN. What was that date again?
Mr. STRIPLING. Would you give the date again?
The CHAIRMAN. Tenth of February 1898.
Mr. McDOWELL. 1898?
Mr. BRECHT. 1898.
Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Chairman, the committee has here an interpreter, if you desire the use of an interpreter.
Mr. CRUM. Would you like an interpreter?
The CHAIRMAN. Do you desire an interpreter?
Mr. BRECHT. Yes.
The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Interpreter, will you stand and raise your right hand, please?
Mr. Interpreter, do you solemnly swear you will diligently and correctly translate from English into German all questions which may be propounded to this witness and as diligently and correctly translate from German into English all answers made by him, so help you God?
Mr. BAUMGARDT. I do.
The CHAIRMAN. Sit down.

Bentley. An interpreter named David Baumgardt is seated beside Brecht.

Mr. STRIPLING. Would you identify yourself for the record, please, sir?

Mr. BAUMGARDT. David Baumgardt.

Mr. STRIPLING. Where are you employed, Mr. Baumgardt?

Mr. BAUMGARDT. In the Library of Congress.

Mr. BRECHT. Mr. Chairman, may I read a statement in English?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes; but has the chief investigator completed his investigation of both the interpreter and the witness?

Mr. STRIPLING. No, sir; I have not.

Now, would you speak into the microphone, Mr. Baumgardt?

Are you employed in the Congressional Library?

Mr. BAUMGARDT. I am employed in the Congressional Library, yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. What is your position in the Congressional Library?

Mr. BAUMGARDT. Consultant of philosophy of the Library of Congress.

Mr. STRIPLING. Now, Mr. Brecht, will you state to the committee whether or not you are a citizen of the United States?

Mr. BRECHT. I am not a citizen of the United States; I have only my first papers.

Mr. STRIPLING. When did you acquire your first papers?

Mr. BRECHT. In 1941 when I came to the country.

Mr. STRIPLING. When did you arrive in the United States?

Mr. BRECHT. May I find out exactly? I arrived July 21 at San Pedro.

Mr. STRIPLING. July 21, 1941?

Mr. BRECHT. That is right.

Mr. STRIPLING. At San Pedro, Calif.?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. You were born in Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany, on February 10, 1898; is that correct?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. I am reading from the immigration records—

Mr. CRUM. I think, Mr. Stripling, it was 1898.

Mr. BRECHT. 1898.

Mr. STRIPLING. I beg your pardon.

Mr. CRUM. I think the witness tried to say 1898.

Mr. STRIPLING. I want to know whether the immigration records are correct on that. Is it '88 or '98?

Mr. BRECHT. '98.

Mr. STRIPLING. Were you issued a quota immigration visa by the American vice consul on May 3, 1941, at Helsinki, Finland?

Mr. BRECHT. That is correct.

Mr. STRIPLING. And you entered this country on that visa?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Where had you resided prior to going to Helsinki, Finland?

Mr. BRECHT. May I read my statement? In that statement—

The CHAIRMAN. First, Mr. Brecht, we are trying to identify you. The identification won't be very long.

Mr. BRECHT. I had to leave Germany in 1933, in February, when Hitler took power. Then I went to Denmark but when war seemed imminent in '39 I had to leave for Sweden, Stockholm. I remained there for 1 year and then Hitler invaded Norway and Denmark and I had to leave Sweden and I went to Finland, there to wait for my visa for the United States.

Mr. STRIPLING. Now, Mr. Brecht, what is your occupation?

Mr. BRECHT. I am a playwright and a poet.

Mr. STRIPLING. A playwright and a poet?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Where are you presently employed?

Mr. BRECHT. I am not employed.

Mr. STRIPLING. Were you ever employed in the motion-picture industry?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; I—yes. I sold a story to a Hollywood firm, Hangman Also Die, but I did not write the screen play myself. I am not a professional screen-play writer. I wrote another story for a Hollywood firm but that story was not produced.

Bentley. Credit for the screenplay of Hangmen Also Die went to John Wexley.

Mr. STRIPLING. Hangmen Also Die—whom did you sell to, what studio?

Mr. BRECHT. That was to, I think, an independent firm, Pressburger at United Artists.

Mr. STRIPLING. United Artists?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Are you familiar with Hanns Eisler? Do you know Johannes Eisler?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Bentley. With this it becomes clear that Bertolt Brecht's presence in Washington had less to do with American writers from Hollywood than with an even more celebrated case. In September, 1947, the German Communist Gerhard Eisler had been

brought before the Committee. J. Edgar Hoover had reported that he had been the representative of the communist international to the communist party of the USA. Eisler's sister Ruth Fischer denounced him before the Committee as a leading agent of the Russian secret police. "I regard him as a most dangerous terrorist," she said. "... I consider Eisler the perfect terrorist type... conditioned to hand over to the GPU his child, his sister, his closest friend." There followed a lengthy questioning by the Committee of the composer Hanns Eisler, brother of Gerhart and Ruth. The Hanns Eisler material in the Committee's printed records fills more than 200 pages. It also only narrowly missed creating the biggest national scandal since the Teapot Dome Scandals, for it was made to seem possible that Mrs. Roosevelt's name was involved in conspiracy. She had had something to do with getting Hanns Eisler a visa, and Hanns Eisler had had a great deal to do with the international communist movement. The published transcript is illustrated with photographs showing Eisler leading Russian children in song, Eisler giving the clenched-fist salute, and what not. Well, one name that was bound to come up was that of Bertolt Brecht, whose words Hanns Eisler had often set to music. The committee had a complete translation made of the Brecht-Eisler oratorio, The Measures Taken and wrote it into the record.

Gerhart Eisler was convicted of contempt of congress and of passport violations. Hanns Eisler, having been arrested, was out on bond awaiting a hearing on a deportation order. It was at this interesting point in time that Mr. Stripling put the question: how long have you known Johannes Eisler?

Mr. STRIPLING. How long have you known Johannes Eisler?

Mr. BRECHT. I think since the middle of the twenties, 20 years or so.

Mr. STRIPLING. Have you collaborated with him on a number of works?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, are you a member of the Communist Party or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. May I read my statement? I will answer this question but may I read my statement?

Mr. STRIPLING. Would you submit your statement to the chairman?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. All right, let's see the statement.

Bentley. Parnell Thomas looked over the statement and made the following comment.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Brecht, the committee has carefully gone over the statement. It is a very interesting story of German life but it is not at all pertinent to this inquiry. Therefore, we do not care to have you read the statement.

Bentley. The statement Brecht was not allowed to read was as follows.

"I was born in Augsburg, Germany, the son of an industrialist, and studied natural sciences and philosophy at the universities of Munich and Berlin. At the age of twenty, when participating in the war as a member of the medical corps, I wrote a ballad which the Hitler government used fifteen years later as reason for my expatriation. The poem *Der Tote Soldat* (*The Dead Soldier*) attacked the war and those wanting to prolong it.

"I became a playwright. For a time, Germany seemed to be on the

path of democracy. There was freedom of speech and of artistic expression.

"In the second half of the 1920's, however, the old reactionary militarist forces began to regain strength.

"I was then at the height of my career as a playwright, my play *Dr. Faustus* being produced all over Europe. There were productions of plays of mine at Berlin, Munich, Paris, Vienna, Tokio, Prague, Milano, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Budapest, Warsaw, Helsinki, Moscow, Odessa, Amsterdam, Zurich, Bucharest, Sofia, Brussels, London, New York, Rio de Janeiro, etc. But in Germany voices could already be heard demanding that free artistic expression and free speech should be silenced. Humanist, socialist, even Christian ideas were called "undeutsch" (un-German), a word which I hardly can think of without Hitler's wolfish intonation. At the same time, the cultural and political institutions of the people were ~~viciously~~ attacked.

"The Weimar Republic, whatever its faults ~~had been~~, had a powerful slogan, accepted by the best writers and all kinds of artists: *Die Kunst dem Volke* (Art ~~belongs~~ to the People). The German workers, their interest in art and literature being very great indeed, formed a highly important part of the general public of readers and theatre-goers. Their sufferings in a devastating depression which ~~more and more~~ threatened their cultural standards, the impudence and growing power of the old militarist, feudal, imperialist gang alarmed us. I started writing ~~some~~ poems, songs and plays reflecting the feelings of the people and attacking their enemies who now ~~openly~~ marched under the swastika of Adolf Hitler.

The persecutions in the field of culture increased gradually. Famous painters, publishers and distinguished magazine editors were persecuted. At the universities, political witch hunts were staged, and campaigns were waged against ~~modern~~ pictures such as *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

"These, of course, were only preparations for more drastic measures, ~~still to come~~. When Hitler seized power, painters were forbidden to paint, publishing houses and film studios were taken over by the Nazi party. But even these strokes against the cultural life of the German people were only the beginning. They were designed ~~and executed~~ as a spiritual preparation for total war which is the total enemy of culture. The war ~~finished it all up~~. The German people now have to live without roofs over their heads, without sufficient nourishment, without soap, without the ~~poor~~ foundations of culture.

"At the beginning, only a very few people were capable of seeing the connection between ~~the~~ reactionary restrictions ~~in~~ the field of culture and the ultimate assaults upon the physical life of a people itself. The efforts of the democratic, anti-militarist forces, of which those in the cultural field were, of course, only a modest part, then proved to be weak ~~altogether~~. Hitler took over. I had to leave Germany in February, 1933, the day after the Reichstag fire. A veritable exodus of writers and artists began, of a kind such as the world had never seen before. . . . I settled down in Denmark and dedicated my total literary production from that time on to the ~~fight~~ ^{struggle} against Nazism, writing plays and poetry.

"Some poems were smuggled into the Third Reich, and Danish Nazism, supported by Hitler's embassy, soon began to demand my deportation. Of course, the Danish government refused. But in 1939 when war seemed imminent, I left with my family for Sweden, invited by Swedish senators and the ~~late~~ Mayor of Stockholm. I could remain only one year. Hitler invaded Denmark and Norway.

"We continued our flight northward, to Finland, there to wait for immigration visas to the U.S.A. Hitler's troops followed. Finland was full of Nazi divisions when we left for the United States in 1941. We crossed the USSR by the Siberian Express which carried German, Austrian, Czechoslovak ~~and~~ refugees. Ten days after our leaving Vladivostok aboard a Swedish ship, Hitler invaded the USSR. During the voyage, the ship loaded copra ⁱⁿ Manila. Some months later, Hitler's allies invaded that island. We applied for American citizenship (first papers) on the day after Pearl Harbor.

"I suppose that some poems and plays of mine, written during this period of the fight against Hitler, have moved the Un-American Activities Committee to subpoena me.

"My activities, even those against Hitler, have always been purely literary ~~and~~ ^{and} of a strictly independent nature. As a guest of the United States, I refrained from political activities concerning this country even in a literary form. By the way, I am not a screen writer. Hollywood used only one story of mine, for a picture showing the Nazi savagery in Prague. I am not aware of any influence which I could have exercised in the movie industry whether political or artistic.

"Being called before the Un-American Activities Committee, however, I feel free for the first time to say a ~~few~~ words about American matters: looking back at my experiences as a playwright and a poet in the Europe of the last two decades, I wish to say that the great American people would lose much and risk much if they allowed anybody to restrict free competition of ideas in cultural fields, or to

interfere with art, which must be free in order to be art. We are living in a dangerous world. ~~Our state of civilization is such that~~ mankind ~~already~~ is capable of becoming enormously wealthy but, as a whole, is still poverty-ridden. Great wars have been suffered, greater ones are imminent, ~~we are told~~. One of them might well wipe out mankind, ~~as a whole~~. We might be the last generation of the specimen man, ~~on this earth~~.

"~~Big~~ Ideas about how to make use of the new capabilities of production have not been developed ~~much~~ since the days when the horse had to do what man could not do. Do you not think that, in such a predicament, every new idea should be examined carefully and freely?

Art can present such ideas clearly and even enable them." The hearing continued as follows.

MR. STRIPLING. Now, I will repeat the original question. Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party of any country?

MR. BRECHT. Mr. Chairman, I have heard my colleagues when they considered this question not as proper, but I am a guest in this country and do not want to enter into any legal arguments, so I will answer your question fully as well I can.

I was not a member or am not a member of any Communist Party. The CHAIRMAN. Your answer is, then, that you have never been a member of the Communist Party?

MR. BRECHT. That is correct.

MR. STRIPLING. You were not a member of the Communist Party in Germany?

MR. BRECHT. No; I was not.

MR. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, is it true that you have written a number of very revolutionary poems, plays, and other writings?

MR. BRECHT. I have written a number of poems and songs and plays in the fight against Hitler and, of course, they can be considered, therefore, as revolutionary because I, of course, was for the overthrow of that government.

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Stripling, we are not interested in any works that he might have written advocating the overthrow of Germany or the government there.

MR. STRIPLING. Yes; I understand.

Well, from an examination of the works which Mr. Brecht has written, particularly in collaboration with Mr. Hanns Eisler, he seems to be a person of international importance to the Communist revolutionary movement.

Now, Mr. Brecht, is it true or do you know whether or not you have written articles which have appeared in publications in the Soviet zone of Germany within the past few months?

MR. BRECHT. No; I do not remember to have written such articles. I have not seen any of them printed. I have not written any such articles just now. I write very few articles, if any.

MR. STRIPLING. I have here, Mr. Chairman, a document which I will hand to the translator and ask him to identify it for the committee and to refer to an article which refers on page 72.

MR. BRECHT. May I speak to that publication?

MR. STRIPLING. I beg your pardon?

MR. BRECHT. May I explain this publication?

MR. STRIPLING. Yes. Will you identify the publication?

MR. BRECHT. Oh, yes. That is not an article, that is a scene out of a play I wrote in, I think, 1937 or 1938 in Denmark. The play is called *Private Life of the Master Race*, and this scene is one of the scenes out of this play about a Jewish woman in Berlin in the year of '36 or '37. It was, I see, printed in this magazine *Ost und West*.

Bentley. And in fact *The Private Life of the Master Race* had been presented in New York in '45, complete with the Jewish Wife scene.

MR. STRIPLING. Mr. Translator, would you translate the frontispiece of the magazine, please?

MR. BENTLEY. "East and West, Contributions to Cultural and Political Questions of the Time, edited by Alfred Kantorowicz, Berlin, July 1947, first year of publication enterprize."

Bentley. Kantorowicz was a communist or communist sympathiser at that time. In 1956 he was to break with the communists and flee from East to West Germany.

MR. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, do you know the gentleman who is the editor of the publication whose name was just read?

MR. BRECHT. Yes; I know him from Berlin and I met him in New York again.

Mr. STRIPLING. Do you know him to be a member of the Communist Party of Germany?

Mr. BRECHT. When I met him in Germany I think he was a journalist on the Ullstein Press. That is not a Communist—was not a Communist—there were no Communist Party papers so I do not know exactly whether he was a member of the Communist Party of Germany.

Mr. STRIPLING. You don't know whether he was a member of the Communist Party or not?

Mr. BRECHT. I don't know, no; I don't know.

Mr. STRIPLING. In 1930 did you, with Hanns Eisler, write a play entitled, "Die Massnahme"?

Mr. BRECHT. Die Massnahme.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did you write such a play?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Would you explain to the committee the theme of that play—what it dealt with?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; I will try to.

Mr. STRIPLING. First, explain what the title means.

Mr. BRECHT. Die Massnahme means [speaking in German].

Mr. BAUMGARDT. Measures to be taken, or steps to be taken—measures.

Mr. STRIPLING. Could it mean disciplinary measures?

Mr. BAUMGARDT. No; not disciplinary measures; no. It means measures to be taken.

Mr. McDOWELL. Speak into the microphone.

Mr. BAUMGARDT. It means only measures or steps to be taken.

Mr. STRIPLING. All right.

You tell the committee now, Mr. Brecht—

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING (continuing). What this play dealt with.

Mr. BRECHT. Yes. This play is the adaptation of an old religious Japanese play and is called No Play, and follows quite closely this old story which shows the devotion for an ideal until death.

Mr. STRIPLING. What was that ideal, Mr. Brecht?

Mr. BRECHT. The idea in the old play was a religious idea. This young people—

Mr. STRIPLING. Didn't it have to do with the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. And discipline within the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes, yes; it is a new play, an adaptation. It had as a background the Russia-China of the years 1918 or 1919, or so. There some Communist agitators went to a sort of no man's land between the Russia which then was not a state and had no real—

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, may I interrupt you? Would you consider the play to be pro-Communist or anti-Communist, or would it take a neutral position regarding Communists?

Mr. BRECHT. No; I would say—you see, literature has the right and the duty to give to the public the ideas of the time. Now, in this play—of course, I wrote about 20 plays, but in this play I tried to express the feelings and the ideas of the German workers who then fought against Hitler. I also formulated in an artistic—

Mr. STRIPLING. Fighting against Hitler, did you say?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Written in 1930?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes, yes; oh, yes. That fight started in 1923.

Mr. STRIPLING. You say it is about China, though; it has nothing to do with Germany?

Mr. BRECHT. No, it had nothing to do about it.

Mr. STRIPLING. Let me read this to you.

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Throughout the play reference is made to the theories and teachings of Lenin, the A, B, C of communism and other Communist classics, and the activities of the Chinese Communist Party in general. The following are excerpts from the play:

"The Four Agitators: We came from Moscow as agitators; we were to travel to the city of Mukden to start propaganda and to create, in the factories, the Chinese Party. We were to report to party headquarters closest to the border and to requisition a guide. There, in the anteroom, a young comrade came toward us and spoke of the nature of our mission. We are repeating the conversation.

"The Young Comrade: I am the secretary of the party headquarters which is the last toward the border. My heart is beating for the revolution. The witnessing of wrongdoing drove me into the lines of the fighters. Man must help man. I am for freedom. I believe in mankind. And I am for the rules of the Communist Party which fights for the classless society against exploitation and ignorance.

"The Three Agitators: We come from Moscow.

"The Young Comrade: The two of us have to defend a revolution here. Surely you have a letter to us from the central committee which tells us what to do?

"The Three Agitators: So it is. We bring you nothing. But across the border, to Mukden, we bring to the Chinese workers the teachings of the classics and of the propagandists: The ABC of communism; to the ignorant, the truth about their situation; to the oppressed, class consciousness; and to the class conscious, the experience of the revolution. From you we shall requisition an automobile and a guide.

"The Four Agitators: We went as Chinese to Mukden—4 men and a woman—to spread propaganda and to create the Chinese Party through the teachings of the classics and of the propagandists—the ABC of communism; to bring truth to the ignorant about their situation; the oppressed class conscious, and class conscious, the experience of the revolution.

"The Young Comrade: The individual has two, the party has a thousand eyes. The party sees seven states. The party has many hours. The party cannot be destroyed, for it fights with the methods of the classics which are drawn from the knowledge of reality and are destined to be changed in that the teachings spread through the masses. Who, however, is the party? Is it sitting in a house with telephones? Are its thoughts secret, its revolutions unknown? Who is it? It is all of us. We are the party. You and I and all of you—all of us. In your suit it is, Comrade, and in your head it thinks; wherever I live there is its home and where you are attacked there it fights."

Bentley. The translation is close enough to the German: it is Mr. Stripling's way of reading that makes it hard to follow. He says suite for suit, class-conscious for class consciousness, it is for is it, and so on. He also skips from page to page without saying so. Sometimes he even doubles back without saying so. Let me refer anyone who wishes to read The Measures Taken properly to the full text as now published in my own collection, The Modern Theatre. The point here is that Stripling had quizzed Hanns Eisler on The Measures Taken a month earlier and that Eisler said the play was about the murder of a communist by three other communists and that the title could be translated The Disciplinary Measure.

Mr. STRIPLING.

Now, Mr. Brecht, will you tell the committee whether or not one of the characters in this play was murdered by his comrade because it was in the best interest of the party, of the Communist Party; is that true?

Mr. BRECHT. No, it is not quite according to the story.

Mr. STRIPLING. Because he would not bow to discipline he was murdered by his comrades, isn't that true?

Mr. BRECHT. No; it is not really in it. You will find when you read it carefully, like in the old Japanese play where other ideas were at stake, this young man who died was convinced that he had done damage to the mission he believed in and he agreed to that and he was about ready to die in order not to make greater such damage. So, he asks his comrades to help him, and all of them together help him to die. He jumps into an abyss and they lead him tenderly to that abyss, and that is the story.

The CHAIRMAN. I gather from your remarks, from your answer, that he was just killed, he was not murdered?

Mr. BRECHT. He wanted to die.

The CHAIRMAN. So they kill him?

Mr. BRECHT. No; they did not kill him—not in this story. He killed himself. They supported him, but of course they had told him it were better when he disappeared, for him and them and the cause he also believed in.

Bentley. Brecht would seem to be speaking here, not of The Measures Taken, but of Der Jasager, He who says yes, another play of his that is derived from the same Noh play as The Measures Taken. No one will ever know whether Brecht's memory was playing him tricks, or whether he wanted to lead Mr. Thomas a dance.

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, could you tell the committee how many times you have been to Moscow?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes. I was invited to Moscow two times.

Mr. STRIPLING. Who invited you?

Mr. BRECHT. The first time I was invited by the Volks Organization for Cultural Exchange. I was invited to show a picture, a documentary picture I had helped to make in Berlin.

Mr. STRIPLING. What was the name of that picture?

Mr. BRECHT. The name—it is the name of a suburb of Berlin, Kuhle Wampe.

Bentley. The picture was shown in the U.S. under the title Whither Germany? Ernst Busch was a leading actor in it, and it had a score by Hanns Eisler. The Brecht-Eisler Solidarity Song, to be mentioned shortly by Stripling, was sung in the picture.

Mr. Stripling. While you were in Moscow did you meet Sergi?

Tretyakov—S-e-r-g-i T-r-e-t-y-a-k-o-v; Tretyakov?

Mr. BRECHT. Tretyakov; yes. That is a Russian playwright.

Mr. STRIPLING. A writer?

Mr. Brecht. Yes.

Bentley. Sergie Tretyakov was indeed a Russian playwright and quite a famous one. He wrote Roar China, which the Theatre Guild produced in New York in 1930. It is ironical that the article cited by Stripling appeared in a Moscow magazine as late as 1937, since soon after that Stalin purged Tretyakov as a Trotskyite. Brecht, though he is speaking ten years later, probably did not know how and why Tretyakov died.

Mr. BRECHT. He translated some of my poems and, I think one play.

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Chairman, the International Literature No. 5, 1937, published by the State Literary Art Publishing House in Moscow had an article by Sergie Tretyakov, leading Soviet writer, on an interview he had with Mr. Brecht. On page 60, it states: He is quoting Mr. Brecht—

"I was a member of the Augsburg Revolutionary Committee," Brecht continued. "Nearby, in Munich, Levine raised the banner of Soviet power. Augsburg lived in the reflected glow of Munich. The hospital was the only military unit in the town. It elected me to the revolutionary committee. I still remember Georg Brem and the Polish Bolshevik Olshevsky. We did not boast a single Red guardsman. We didn't have time to issue a single decree or nationalize a single bank or close a church. In 2 days General Epp's troops came to town on their way to Munich. One of the members of the revolutionary committee hid at my house until he managed to escape."

He wrote *Drum at Night*. This work contained echoes of the revolution. The drums of revolt persistently summon the man who has gone home. But the man prefers quiet peace of his hearthside.

The work was a scathing satire on those who had deserted the revolution and toasted themselves at their fireplaces. One should recall that Kapp launched his drive on Christmas Eve, calculating that many Red guardsmen would have left their detachments for the family Christmas trees.

His play, *Die Massnahme*, the first of Brecht's plays on a Communist theme, is arranged like a court where the characters try to justify themselves for having killed a comrade, and judges, who at the same time represent the audience, summarize the events and reach a verdict.

When he visited in Moscow in 1932, Brecht told me his plan to organize a theater in Berlin which would reenact the most interesting court trials in the history of mankind.

Brecht conceived the idea of writing a play about the terrorist tricks resorted to by the landowners in order to peg the price of grain. But this requires a knowledge of economics. The study of economics brought Brecht to Marx and Lenin, whose works became an invaluable part of his library.

Brecht studies and quotes Lenin as a great thinker and as a great master of prose.

The traditional drama portrays the struggle of class instincts. Brecht demands that the struggle of class instincts be replaced by the struggle of social consciousness, of social convictions. He maintains that the situation must not only be felt, but explained—crystallized into the idea which will overturn the world.

Do you recall that interview, Mr. Brecht?

Mr. BRECHT. No. [Laughter.] It must have been written 20 years ago or so.

Mr. STRIPLING. I will show you the magazine, Mr. Brecht.

Mr. BRECHT. Yes. I do not recall there was an interview. [Book handed to the witness.] I do not recall—Mr. Stripling, I do not recall the interview in exact. I think it is a more or less journalistic summary of talks or discussions about many things.

Bentley. Brecht was right. And Stripling omitted to say that this was all explained in the article itself. Stripling also did not bother to explain that he did not read straight on in the article but made omissions ad lib.

Mr. STRIPLING. Yes. Have many of your writings been based upon the philosophy of Lenin and Marx?

Mr. BRECHT. No; I don't think that is quite correct but, of course, I studied, had to study as a playwright who wrote historical plays. I, of course, had to study Marx's ideas about history. I do not think intelligent plays today can be written without such study. Also, history now written now is vitally influenced by the studies of Marx about history.

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, since you have been in the United States, have you attended any Communist Party meetings?

Mr. BRECHT. No; I don't think so.

Mr. STRIPLING. You don't think so?

Mr. BRECHT. No.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, aren't you certain?

Mr. BRECHT. No—I am certain; yes.

The CHAIRMAN. You are certain you have never been to Communist Party meetings?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; I think so. I am here 6 years—I am here those—I do not think so. I do not think that I attended political meetings.

The CHAIRMAN. No; never mind the political meetings, but have you attended any Communist meetings in the United States?

Mr. BRECHT. I do not think so; no.

The CHAIRMAN. You are certain?

Mr. BRECHT. I think I am certain.

The CHAIRMAN. You think you are certain?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; I have not attended such meetings, in my opinion.
Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, have you since you have been in the United States, have you met with any officials of the Soviet Government?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes, yes. In Hollywood I was invited, sometimes three or four times, to the Soviet consulate with, of course, many other writers.

Mr. STRIPLING. What others?

Mr. BRECHT. With other writers and artists and actors who they gave some receptions at special Soviet [speaking in German]—

BAUMGART. Festivities.

Mr. BRECHT. Festivities.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did any of the officials of the Soviet Government ever come and visit you?

Mr. BRECHT. I don't think so.

Mr. STRIPLING. Didn't Gregory Kheifets visit you on April 14, 1943, vice consul of the Soviet Government? You know Gregory Kheifets, don't you?

Mr. BRECHT. Gregory Kheifets?

The CHAIRMAN. Watch out on this one.

Mr. BRECHT. I don't remember that name, but I might know him; ✓ 25.

Bentley. Gregory Kheifetz was a Soviet vice consul in San Francisco. Eisler seems to have been questioned about him by a subcommittee of the HUAC that went out to California in the spring of 1947. Later, on the same day as Bertolt Brecht appeared in Washington, a Committee investigator, Louis J. Russell, would claim to have linked Gregory Kheifetz, through intermediaries, to J. Robert Oppenheimer. One could say with some reason that the whole Oppenheimer Case dates from here.

Mr. BRECHT.

I don't remember—

Mr. STRIPLING. Did he come and visit you on April 14, 1913?

Mr. BRECHT. It is quite possible.

Mr. STRIPLING. And again on April 27, and again on June 16, 1944?

Mr. BRECHT. That is quite possible, yes; that somebody—I don't know. I don't remember the name, but that somebody, some of the cultural attachés—

Mr. STRIPLING. Cultural attachés.

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Spell the name.

Mr. STRIPLING. Gregory, G-r-e-g-o-r-y Kheifets, K-h-e-i-f-e-t-s. I will spell the last name again, K-h-e-i-f-e-t-s.

Mr. BRECHT. Kheifets?

Mr. STRIPLING. Yes. Do you remember Mr. Kheifets?

Mr. BRECHT. I don't remember the name, but it is quite possible. But I remember that from the—I think from the—yes, from the consulate, from the Russian consulate some people visited me, but not only this man, but also I think the consul once, but I don't remember his name either.

Mr. STRIPLING. What was the nature of his business?

Mr. BRECHT. He—it must have been about my literary connections with German writers. Some of them are friends of mine.

Mr. STRIPLING. German writers?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; in Moscow.

Mr. STRIPLING. In Moscow?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes. And there appeared in the Staats Verlag the Sergei Tretyakov translations of my plays, for instance, this *Private Life of the Master Race, A Penny for the Poor*, and poems, and so on.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did Gerhart Eisler ever visit you, not Hanns, but Gerhart?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; I met Gerhart Eisler, too. He is a brother of Hanns and he visited me with Hanns and then three or four times without Hanns.

Mr. STRIPLING. Could you tell us in what year he visited you? Wasn't it the same year that Mr. Kheifets visited you?

Mr. BRECHT. I do not know, but there is no connection I can see.

Mr. STRIPLING. Do you recall him visiting you on January 17, 1944?

Mr. BRECHT. No; I do not recall such date, but he might have visited me on such date.

Mr. STRIPLING. Where did he visit you?

Mr. BRECHT. He used to ask for his brother who, as I told you, is an old friend of mine, and we played some games of chess, too, and we spoke about politics.

Mr. STRIPLING. About politics?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. What was the last answer? I didn't get the last answer?

Mr. STRIPLING. They spoke about politics.

In any of your conversations with Gerhart Eisler, did you discuss the German Communist movement?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. In Germany?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; we spoke about, of course, German politics. He is a specialist in that, he is a politician.

Mr. STRIPLING. He is a politician?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; he, of course, knew very much more than I knew about the situation in Germany.

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, can you tell the committee when you entered this country, did you make a statement to the Immigration Service concerning your past affiliations?

Mr. BRECHT. I don't remember to have made such a statement, but I think I made the usual statements that I did not want to or did not intend to overthrow the American Government. I might have been asked whether I belonged to the Communist Party, I don't remember to have been asked, but I would have answered what I have told you, that I was not. That is what I remember.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did they ask you whether or not you had ever been a member of the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. I don't remember.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did they ask you whether or not you had ever been to the Soviet?

Mr. BRECHT. I think they asked me, yes; and I told them.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did they question you about your writings?

Mr. BRECHT. No; not as I remember, no; they did not. I don't remember any discussion about literature.

Mr. STRIPLING. Now, you stated you sold the book, the story, Hangmen Also Die, to United Artists; is that correct?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; to an independent firm; yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did Hanns Eisler do the background music for Hangmen Also Die?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; he did.

Mr. STRIPLING. Do you recall who starred in that picture?

Mr. BRECHT. No; I do not.

Mr. STRIPLING. You don't even remember who played the leading role in the picture?

Mr. BRECHT. I think Brian Donlevy played it.

Mr. STRIPLING. Do you remember any of the other actors or actresses who were in it?

Mr. BRECHT. No; I do not. You see, I had not very much to do with the filmization itself. I wrote the story and then to the script writers some advice about the background of Nazis, nazism in Czechoslovakia, so I had nothing to do with the actors.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Stripling, can we hurry this along? We have a very heavy schedule this afternoon.

Mr. STRIPLING. Yes.

Now, Mr. Brecht, since you have been in the United States have you contributed articles to any Communist publications in the United States?

Mr. BRECHT. I don't think so; no.

Mr. STRIPLING. Are you familiar with the magazine New Masses?

Mr. BRECHT. No.

Mr. STRIPLING. You never heard of it?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; of course.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did you ever contribute anything to it?

Mr. BRECHT. No.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did they ever publish any of your work?

Mr. BRECHT. That I do not know. They might have published some translation of a poem, but I had no direct connection with it, nor did I send them anything.

Bentley. I believe that Brecht's answer is truthful: search in the New Masses files does not turn up anything by him. It seems that he sent the New Masses a letter in 1935 protesting against the Theatre Union's production of his play The Mother but that the New Masses did not print this letter. "In Praise of Learning," which Mr. Stripling is about to mention is a song from The Mother, and it was often sung by itself, as for example on an American phonograph record of the Thirties issued under the label of Timely Recording Company, sung by the New Singers, with Marc Blitzstein at the piano. The line which will be debated reads in German: "du musst die Fuehrung uebernehmen," which means: "you must take over the leadership." The translation which Brecht is about to object to is actually rather close to the original.

Mr. STRIPLING. Did you collaborate with Hanns Eisler on the song In Praise of Learning?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; I collaborated. I wrote that song and he only wrote the music.

Mr. STRIPLING. You wrote the song?

Mr. BRECHT. I wrote the song.

Mr. STRIPLING. Would you recite to the committee the words of that song?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes; I would. May I point out that song comes from another adaptation I made of Gorky's play, Mother. In this song a Russian worker woman addresses all the poor people.

Mr. STRIPLING. It was produced in this country, wasn't it?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes, 35, New York.

Mr. STRIPLING. Now, I will read the words and ask you if this is the one.

Mr. BRECHT. Please.

Mr. STRIPLING. (reading):

Learn now the simple truth, you for whom the time has come at last; it is not too late.

Learn now the ABC. It is not enough but learn it still.

Fear not, be not downhearted. ~~Again~~/you must learn the lesson, you must be ready to take over—

Mr. BRECHT. No, excuse me, that is the wrong translation. That is not right. [Laughter.] Just one second, and I will give you the correct text.

Mr. STRIPLING. That is not a correct translation?

Mr. BRECHT. That is not correct, no; that is not the meaning. It is not very beautiful, but I am not speaking about that.

Mr. STRIPLING. What does it mean? I have here a portion of The People, which was issued by the Communist Party of the United States, published by the Workers' Library Publishers. Page 24 says:

In praise of learning, by Bert Brecht; music by Hanns Eisler.

It says here:

You must be ready to take over; learn it.

Men on the dole, learn it; men in the prisons, learn it; women in the kitchen, learn it; men of 65, learn it. You must be ready to take over—

and goes right on through. That is the core of it—

You must be ready to take over.

Mr. BRECHT. Mr. Stripling, maybe his translation—

Mr. BAUMGARDT. The correct translation would be, "You must take the lead."

The CHAIRMAN. "You must take the lead"?

Mr. BAUMGARDT. "The lead." It definitely says, "The lead." It is not "You must take over." The translation is not a literal translation of the German.

Mr. STRIPLING. Well, Mr. Brecht, as it has been published in these publications of the Communist Party, then, if that is incorrect, what did you mean?

Mr. BRECHT. I don't remember never—I never got that book myself. I must not have been in the country when it was published. I think it was published as a song, one of the songs Eisler had written the music to. I did not give any permission to publish it. I don't see—I think I have never saw the translation.

Mr. STRIPLING. Do you have the words there before you?

Mr. BRECHT. In German, yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Of the song?

Mr. BRECHT. Oh, yes; in the book.

Mr. STRIPLING. Not in the original.

Mr. BRECHT. In the German book.

Mr. STRIPLING. It goes on:

You must be ready to take over; you must be ready to take over. Don't hesitate to ask questions, stay in there. Don't hesitate to ask questions, comrade—

Mr. BRECHT. Why not let him translate from the German, word for word?

Mr. BAUMGARDT. I think you are mainly interested in this translation which comes from—

The CHAIRMAN. I cannot understand the interpreter any more than I can the witness.

Mr. BAUMGARDT. Mr. Chairman, I apologize. I shall make use of this.

The CHAIRMAN. Just speak in that microphone and maybe we can make out.

Mr. BAUMGARDT. The last line of all three verses is correctly to be translated:

"You must take over the lead," and not "You must take over." "You must take the lead," would be the best, most correct, most accurate translation.

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Brecht, did you ever make application to join the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. I do not understand the question. Did I make—

Mr. STRIPLING. Have you ever made application to join the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. No, no, no, no, no, never.

Mr. STRIPLING. Mr. Chairman, we have here—

Mr. BRECHT. I was an independent writer and wanted to be an independent writer and I point that out and also theoretically, I think, it was the best for me not to join any party whatever. And all these things you read here were not only written for the German communists, but they were also written for workers of any other kind; Social Democrat workers were in these performances; so were Catholic workers from Catholic unions; so were workers which never had been in a party or didn't want to go into a party.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Brecht, did Gerhart Eisler ever ask you to join the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. No, no.

The CHAIRMAN. Did Hanns Eisler ever ask you to join the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. No; he did not. I think they considered me just as a writer who wanted to write and do as he saw it, but not as a political figure.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you recall anyone ever having asked you to join the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. Some people might have suggested it to me, but then I found out that it was not my business.

The CHAIRMAN. Who were those people who asked you to join the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. Oh, readers.

The CHAIRMAN. Who?

Mr. BRECHT. Readers of my poems or people from the audiences. You mean—there was never an official approach to me to publish—

The CHAIRMAN. Some people did ask you to join the Communist Party.

Mr. KENNY. In Germany. [Aside to witness.]

Mr. BRECHT. In Germany, you mean in Germany?

The CHAIRMAN. No; I mean in the United States.

Mr. BRECHT. No, no, no.

The CHAIRMAN. He is doing all right. He is doing much better than many other witnesses you have brought here.

Do you recall whether anyone in the United States ever asked you to join the Communist Party?

Mr. BRECHT. No; I don't.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. McDowell, do you have any questions?

Mr. McDOWELL. No; no questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Vail?

Mr. VAIL. No questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Stripling, do you have any more questions?

Mr. STRIPLING. I would like to ask Mr. Brecht whether or not he wrote a poem, a song, rather, entitled, "Forward, We've Not Forgotten."

Mr. McDOWELL. "Forward," what?

Mr. STRIPLING. Forward, We've Not Forgotten.

Mr. BRECHT. I can't think of that. The English title may be the reason.

Mr. STRIPLING. Would you translate it for him into German? /

Bentley. A literal translation of the German would read: "Forward and do not forget." It is a song well-known to German leftwingers, and generally called Solidaritätslied, Solidarity Song. The translation deviates from the German a good deal because the translator is hard up for rhymes and has to fit his words to Eisler's music. This translation, attributed to one Henry Jordan, was also put on a disc by Timely Recording Company in the Thirties.

Mr. BRECHT. Oh, now I know; yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. You are familiar with the words to that?

Mr. BRECHT. Yes.

Mr. STRIPLING. Would the committee like me to read that?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes; without objection, go ahead.

Mr. STRIPLING (reading):

Forward, we've not forgotten our strength in the fights we've won;
No matter what may threaten, forward, not forgotten how strong we are as one;

Only these our hands now acting, build the road, the walls, the towers. All the world is of our making.

What of it can we call ours?

The refrain:

Forward, March on to the tower, through the city, by hand the world;
Forward, Advance it on. Just whose city is the city? Just whose world is the world?

Forward, we've not forgotten our union in hunger and pain, no matter what may threaten, forward, we've not forgotten.

We have a world to gain. We shall free the world of shadow; every shop and every room, every road and every meadow.

All the world will be our own. *

Did you write that, Mr. Brecht?

Mr. BRECHT. No. I wrote a German poem, but that is very different from this. [Laughter.]

Mr. STRIPLING. That is all the questions I have, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Brecht. You are a good example to the witnesses of Mr. Kenny and Mr. Cumm.

[We will recess until 2 o'clock this afternoon.]

(Whereupon, at 12:15 p. m., a recess was taken until 2 p. m. of the same day.)

* Consistent with the editorial policy announced above, I have left the errors intact in the government's printing of the two Brecht-Eisler songs. Also I have preserved their printing of the verse as prose. But in case this is all too confusing here are the two translated lyrics normalized:-

IN PRAISE OF LEARNING

Learn now the simple truth.

You for whom the time has come at last

It is not too late.

Learn now the ABC

It is not enough but learn it still.

Fear not! Be not downhearted!

Begin, you must learn the lesson:

You must be ready to take over.

Learn it, men on the dole!

Learn it, men in the prisons!

Learn it, women in the kitchens!

Learn it, men of sixty five!

You must be ready to take over.

Go back to school again, homeless people!

Just learn all you can, you freezing ones!

Starving, get hold of a book!

Let that be a weapon!

You must be ready to take over.

Don't hesitate to ask questions, comrade.

Don't be persuaded, but prove for yourself:

What you don't learn yourself, you don't know.

Check up the bill, for it's you who must pay it!

Point with your finger to every item!

Say that you want it explained!

You must be ready to take over.

FORWARD, WE'VE NOT FORGOTTEN

Forward, we've not forgotten

Our strength in the fights we have won!

No matter what may threaten

Forward, not forgotten,

How strong we are as one!

Only these our hands now aching

Built the roads, the walls, the towers.

All the world is of our making.

What of it can we call ours?

Forward, march on to power

Through the city, the land, the world.

Forward, advance the hour!

Just whose city is the city?

Just whose world is the world?

Forward we've not forgotten

Our union in hunger and pain.

No matter what may threaten

Forward, not forgotten,

We have a world to gain.

We shall free the world of shadow

Every shop and every room

Every road and every meadow,

All the world will be our own.

Forward, march on to power

Through the city, the land, the world.

Forward, advance the hour!

Just whose city is the city?

Just whose world is the world?

Bentley. At that Bertolt Brecht left the room, and within a few hours had also left the United States -- forever. I personally was not present at this Hearing. But it had been broadcast, and a year or so later - in his livingroom at Feldmeilen near Zurich - Brecht played me a recording of the broadcast which some friend had put on disc for him. I can still hear him laughing his dry laugh at the many comic turns in the dialogue. Some of Brecht's friends wished he had pleaded the Fifth Amendment, but he re-iterated in private what he had said on the stand: as a visitor to America, he did not think he should claim the privileges of a citizen. He added that his chief legal adviser, Bartley Crum, advised him to state that he was a Communist. "Nothing can happen to you, since you're not a citizen, and it was the German Party you would have been a member of." "But I wasn't a member," Brecht said he protested. "It makes no difference," Crum is supposed to have argued, "if you say you weren't a member, they'll forge a party card and get you for perjury." Brecht told me he was unwilling to take this line and preferred to risk telling the truth.

Possibly the aspersion cast by Crum on the honesty of the Committee will seem unfair. On the other hand, the Committee's chairman did go to jail in 1949, and the charge, in essence, was dishonesty -- he had accepted kickbacks from employees.

Even before the final exposure of Parnell Thomas as a fraud, Brecht was embarrassed by the compliment he had received from him - "you are a good example to the witnesses of Mr. Kenny and Mr. Crum." But he gave Thomas and his colleagues credit for one thing. "They weren't as bad as the Nazis," he said, "the Nazis would never have let me smoke. In Washington, they let me have a cigar, and I used it to manufacture pauses with between their questions and my answers."

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