Gellhorn, Martha
C. 1945-52
I was deeply disappointed not to see you but I heard
from a real friend about you.
I am so glad you and your mother
are having such a
good holiday.
Your reporting does
a great deal of good.
So I'm glad of your
assignment.
Please give my
Dearest Mrs. R;

What a schemozzle I got things into. Will you please forgive me? It seems to me I had you sending as many telegrams as if I were a congressman on the verge of voting for something, and then I got into such superb knots I couldn't get out. Please please forgive me; I'll never be such a nuisance again.

Are you taking some vacation this summer? I hope so. You know I always think it unfair for you to work steadily for everyone else in the world, and never look after yourself. And I remember the vacation you took with Tommy and the two gents near Miami and that you looked so well and rested and loved it. Is Tommy going to kidnap you? Please tell her I hope so.

Mother and I are off on a grand wild outing. We have her car which is seven years old, a small Plymouth. We both love it because it is like a steady old horse, and neither of us has any idea what goes on inside a car, what its hopes and fears might be. In this charming antique, we are driving to Mexico. Every once in a while we look at the Atlas and add up the mileage and having now discovered that it is farther than crossing the Atlantic we are very impressed. At the same time, we are not especially go-getting about driving, and have a tendency to settle down as soon as we see a nice place. This is not to happen every three days, for after three days at the wheel (and it's an enormous day if we do 500 miles) we feel we have already crossed the country in a covered wagon.

At present, we are taking up the squatters life at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and adoring it. There's a huge white sand beach, and a huge grey-to-blue sea and we found a hotel which seems to us divine, being clean, comfortable, quiet and cheap. So here we camp; I have been writing an article, Mother has been reading, in between times we walk along the beach collecting shells for grandchildren, attend the local movies, and gossip together. We have a portable travelling cocktail shaker, and every night sit cheerfully on Mother's bed and have our evening drinks, and launch forth to dinner giggling like a pair of Peter Arno charladies. It is a very good
life and I will be astounded if we get to Mexico before June. Mother, to the delight of her children, is at last taking a sabbatical year and high time too. She is going to be with me until late September and then with the brothers in Englewood and she is apparently enjoying it. I am the enemy of the consciences of you and Mother, because I think you have too much of same, and just because you are both the noblest animals the Lord ever created is no reason for you to carry the white man’s burden all the time. None of this sounds new to you, does it?

In a moment of madness, I seem to have bitten off the most godawful assignment for next winter and I am already dreading it. I told Collier’s I wanted to go from Finland to Greece — Poland, Czechoslovakia, as way stations — and report on how people really live behind what the press is pleased to call “the fringes of the iron curtain.” As I am thoroughly and heartily sick of the idea that people necessarily eat babies just because they don’t operate on a basis of free enterprise. Maybe they do eat babies, but I want to see it for myself before I’ll believe it.

And it occurred to me that all we ever hear is the solemn badinage of statesmen and I want to know what ordinary humans are saying and feeling, shop clerks and college professors and plumbers and truck drivers and farmers. Not that I believe such as they, the majority of the earth, control the policies that make war and peace.

But for my own hope and sanity, I prefer to keep in touch with them, for on the whole I have found them good. It always beats me that there is such a difference between life and politics, and between people and those who represent them. On the other hand, the thought of plowing through snow up to my neck, all winter long, gives me the horrors: and also, unluckily, I never really believe that my reporting does the slightest good or informs or educates anyone. So in a way, I am not sure why I do this: there are easier ways to make the necessary money. However, there it is, and that’s the next plan.

And I’ve got a novel, written once but badly, which has to be done over and finished this summer. This is the only work I really care about, so I’m delighted. I’ve been panic-stricken about it several times, and decided to abandon it, because
whereas men apparently have no nerves in writing about woman (from Madame Bovary to
Kitty Foyle), the reverse is rare, and I found myself launched on writing about men
as if I were one. Suddenly I said to myself, some, some, you might as well admit
you aren't; and then the panics set in. But Max Perkins, of Scribner's, who seems
to have a sort of literary divining rod, tells me I better do it, that it's okay, and
as the highest compliment "I wouldn't have thought a woman had written it." Now
why that should please a female writer, I don't know: in a way, it shocks me that I am
pleased, for it's so unrealistic. Perhaps it's because I've never lived in a proper
woman's world, nor had a proper woman's life, and so — feeling myself personally to
be floating uncertainly somewhere between the sexes. — I opt for what seems to me
the more interesting of the two. Or is that right? Women are just as interesting as
with men, often more so; but their lives seem to me either too hard, as an unendurable
daily exhausting drab hardness, or too soft and whipped cream. The home, in short,
does not look as jolly as the great wide world. Anyhow, I am going to try to get it
the novel right, and if I don't there are always matches available wherever one is, and
a manuscript burns very nicely.

I find that the story of my life fits easily into two paragraphs and does not
make absorbing reading. So will stop.

Darling, please take a rest, please have fun. Perhaps, in the fall, you'd
get into a car and come off on a weekend with me. I was astounded by New Jersey,
Penna., and Maryland, as we drove through them, with everything bursting into flower
and the little towns so clean and sound and gentle; and I thought, if this is what
they mean by the American Way of Life, they have something to talk about. (Then of
course we hit the coastal part of the Great States, a garbage country if there
ever was one, and doubt set it.) But if you could spare the time, what fun to set
out and find a pretty place for a couple of days. However, that sounds like a dream
as I write it. Anyhow, will find you the moment we return and come and gratefully
grab whatever minutes you can afford. I love you enormously as you know, and
think you are an absolute blooming wonder, as you also know. Always,

Nov. 16
My present permanent address is: 118 East Hamilton Ave, Englewood, New Jersey.

It's the house of a reliable mail-forwarding brother. If there's anything you want done—perhaps a Quicksilver tin origin or saddle blanket? Love,

[Signature]
Dearest Mrs. R; Thank you for your good letter. Don't bother to answer this one; I can't write you if it's going to take up your time making replies. Enclose herewith a couple of pages of rage; it made me feel better to write it though it's quite futile. Yes, I do want to come up the U.N. and will perhaps in a week or two and will call you and maybe we could meet for a few minutes. Much love as always. Don't let them work you to the bone.
Cry Shame . . . .!

T he fierce lights of the newsmen's cameras beat on a bald head and a toolbox of the most expressive features. One would imagine how America was written on that blank page.

By MARTHA GELHORN

A few years ago, Eisenhower had applied for membership in the German Communist Party. He said he had paid his dues (maybe he forgot or didn't have the money), nor gone to meetings (how boring a musician would find political gatherings with nothing to listen to but voices), and had, in effect, never been a "real member" of the party. Stripling clearly did not believe that he would have no possible way of understanding the emotions and actions and spontaneities and caretakers of a man who loves music. Nor would Stripling know how to imagine, what Germany was like in 1926. Stripling was obviously enjoying himself with this dump, perspiring freely who speaks such accented English.

Stripling, like all the Un-Americans, is a devoted and exclusive reader of the Daily Worker. (No other newspaper is seemingly credible enough to quote.) He produced an antique prewar clipping from his favorite paper; a picture of Eisenhower being greeted by a band of people—students, musicians, or someone—all giving the clenched-fist salute, and Eisenhower affably and momentarily accepting. That was the whole story, for it contained nothing more. Eisenhower really was the salute of all kinds of European workers and always has been, but Stripling, unsurpassed in his bolderdash, told Eisenhower curiously to identify himself in the picture. Then Stripling said, show the committee what you were doing, and innocently Eisenhower raised his arm with the fist clenched. The camera clicked like teeth snapping shut, there was a ripple of triumphant amusement in the Caucus Room, and Stripling turned away with a sly and satisfied smile . . . .

I had then seen as much of the show as I could stand, and I left. Besides, I had seen this show done before, but by real professionals; here in the Caucus Room it was after all a little people's court for beginners.

Shame: The gossips

This legal accusation against Hanns Eisler is that in 1940, he evaded the law which excludes from permanent entry into the United States such aliens as advocates, or belong to organizations which advocate, the overthrow of the United States Government by force or violence. This statute has been construed by the State Department and the Un-Americans to embrace Communists and the Communist Party. But no one has proved that Hanns Eisler was a Communist in 1940, or at any time subsequent to the war. They have not furnished application for membership in the German Communist Party in 1942.

However, the committee apparently feels it can discern what goes on inside a man's heart, despite what the man may say to the contrary. To prove their divining, divine theory that the man has "communistic beliefs," they submit as sole evidence some flitting extercepts from the Communist press, the fact that Eisenhower has written "Red songs" (not titled by him; he is a musician only) which were sung by many Communists, as well as Clement Attlee and the undeniable existence of his, shall we say, awkward brother. This is all, this pitiful and ignorant gossiping.

When Eisenhower said he had never been a "real member" of the Communist Party, that is exactly what he meant. His reply is to the contrary (Eisenhower 1926 application for membership) will perhaps fix Eisenhower in the end. Yet those of us who are only human beings and not aliens in this country, who want to be free, want to be free, with the freedom that has always been an American right.

New Republic

Shame: Court above law

However, as Norman M. Littell, lawyer for George Messermith, stated, if the committee thought Eisenhower was a Communist, the evidence should be turned over to the Justice Department for prosecution. For there are laws and courts of law, and an accused man has the right to a fair and free trial; at least as long as this country stands on rock. But the Un-Americans are not a law court, and do not have to prove anything. They can say what they like, armed with subpoenaes and safe behind their extraterritoriality which spares them suits for slander. So it was possible for Stripling to announce that Eisenhower is the Karl Marx of the music world, a remark of such grotesque and childish silliness that anywhere else it would make people yawn or laugh their heads off. It was also possible for Representative John E. Rankin (D., Miss.) to say that testimony indicated that "Mr. Eisenhower is certainly following the Communist line and serving the Comintern just as effectively as if he were a member of the Comintern.

We the People must be a bunch of fools or cowards, for we are seriously asked to believe. If you do not believe our nation and system of government to be more secure than
that, we ought to migrate like the
lemmings, plunging solemnly into the
sea.

Supposedly, an agent of the Com
intern does something; he can't just sit
around telling himself in a sinister
fashion that he is an agent. But no one
knows, he says; let alone prove, what
Eisler, the alleged servant, has been
doing in this country since 1940 to
undermine us all. Eisler had visited
Russia long before the war; the com-
mittee forgets that in the almost un-
imaginable past a lot of people went
everywhere and it was not regarded as
criminal. There even used to be, if you
could believe it, plain commercial tours
to the Soviet Union and anyone who had
the fare could go; provided they
wouldn't much rather have a hang-up
time rolicking around Paris, France, and
Rome, Italy, and other places which
were a lot easier to reach. The com-
mittee says that Eisler was one
who planned the International Music
Bureau, apparently a dream on paper,
which got its letterhead (and never
went farther) in Moscow when Eisler
was not there to consent or advise. But
oddly enough, in those distant days
before the war, music and books and
painting flowed around quite freely
between all except the fascist nations
and this used to be considered a good
thing.

Furthermore, as the committee
regards it, we have only recently been
at cold war with Russia: in the years
between 1935 and 1939, a Ger-
man anti-Nazi could conceivably have
been grateful to the Russians for keep-
ing him outspoken company in his
hatred of Hitler. Since the committee's
evidence seems principally to concern
the period between 1929 and 1939, it
is only proper to remind them of
history.

Shame: The tragedy

But this is beside the point: if Eisler
broke a law, if Eisler is a servant of
the Comintern masquerading as a
sincere composer of music, these facts
can be proved by established courts of
law and handled by the fixed penalties
of law. What is intolerable is the free
and easy process of defamation, re-
placing the careful and weighty proc-
ess of justice.

There was an extraordinary feature
of this case, which seems to have
passed unnoticed. The State Depart-
ment had a dossier on Eisler, saying
that Eisler was "communistic" but not
a member of the party. Which leads
one to brood, in sorrow of spirit, on
the making of dossiers, and to ask
oneself whether intuitive and arbitrary
deduction is adequate evidence for
governmental bodies.

The Un-Americans, after three days
of scandal and pointless baying over
Eisler, decided to turn his case over
to the Justice Department, and ulti-
mately to a court of law, which is
where it always belonged and the only
place it belonged. If Eisler in fact did
break the law, it must be proved be-
yond a reasonable doubt, and if proved
he will stand the penalty, and that is
exactly how it should be. But as it is
now, the Un-Americans have termi-
nated another of their travesties of
justice; nothing is proved though any-
ting is stated; and Eisler departs, free
as air, and at liberty to be boycotted
in his profession and starve at will.
This is not the great terror which we
watched during the long hateful years;
this is not the secret arrest, the ques-
tioning with torture, the returned box
of ashes. This is just a little terror,
calculated to frighten little people. It
works. Without recourse to law, a man
can be well and truly destroyed.

Shame: How they threaten

One asks oneself, finally, what these
people wanted with Hans Eis-
ler. They proved nothing; they learned
nothing. One can recognize the Un-
Americans to be evil, but surely not
half-witted; and they cannot expect
anyone to believe that
Eisler, writing back-
ground music in Holly-
wood for a living, is at
the head of some large
fervent movement of
music-lovers, vowed to
plunge us all into com-
munism. There is a limit
to possible public guilt-
lessness. Of course, to paw-
ing over Eisler, they had
the joyful chance of try-
ing to beamish what is
absolutely and finally
unassailable: the charac-
ter of Eleanor Roose-
velt. And there was also
the pleasure of being
able subtly to scold and
condescend to very im-
portant public figures.
This must be a deep sat-
isfaction, but it is amaz-
ing that the public fig-
ures do not rise, with
dignity and good sense,
to condemn these dingy
tactics.

Still, none of this is
enough, and one must
wonder whether there is a plan in
this shabbiness, and whether Eisler,
who is not himself important to
them, has importance as a test
of strength. For perhaps these men in
the House Caucus Room are determined
to spread silence: to frighten those
voices which will shout no, and ask
questions, defend the few, attack cru-
elty and proclaim the rights and dig-
nity of man.

Shame: How they threaten

A man with a family will think
many times before speaking his
mind fearlessly and critically when
there lies ahead the threat of an Un-
Americans' investigation, a publicized
branding, and his job gone. It is small
consolation to know that you cannot
be put in jail for your opinions if your
opinions, freely expressed, end by
starving your dependents. And if you
can ruin a musician's livelihood,
before a court has determined whether
he is indeed a law-breaker or not,
pretty soon you can ruin a painter and
a teacher and a writer and a lawyer
and an actor and a scientist; and pren-
tably you have made a silent place.

If these things should come to
pass, America is going to look very
strange to Americans and they will
not be at home here, for the air
will slowly become unbearable to all
forms of life except sheep.