III - G

assorted

political letters

Hermann Hothin

1942-60
Mr. Roger N. Baldwin  
American Civil Liberties Union  
New York City  

Dear Mr. Baldwin:

We wanted to write to you for a long time because we gave much thought to the aims of the A.C.L.U. in wartime. For quite a while we were reluctant to renew our membership. But after having read the "Report on American Democratic Liberties in Wartime" of June 1942 we felt so positive about the activities of the union that we wish to continue with our support.

In a few points, however, we do not agree and would like to explain this to you. During the present war civil liberties are in such a deadly danger to become completely abolished by the Nazi-war machine and the German successes that, in our opinion, one has to make temporarily personal sacrifices and to renounce certain rights in order to save everything this country and the Civil Liberties Union stand for.

Therefore we feel that, at least since March 1941, when the lease-lend policy was adopted, strikes in war plants were almost like criminal actions against the millions who have to do the fighting. What seems to be "civil liberty" for the moment means often only personal liberty and selfishness which may, under the present conditions, turn just into the opposite, into slavery for the coming generations.

We cannot understand the deploring by the A.C.L.U. of "the action of Attorney-General Biddle in attempting to extend the grounds for revoking the citizenship of naturalized Americans by taking into account conduct subsequent to naturalization indicating loyalty to a foreign government." Living in Binghamton with a big group of German-born citizens we are quite familiar with their views and attitude. Even now, months after Pearl Harbor, many of them are strongly pro-Nazi in their hearts. They want to see the defeat of democracy and the establishment of Nazi-like governments. On the other hand they hide behind democratic institutions and take advantage of them waiting for the time to come to overthrow them. Incidentally, we know a case in Binghamton where it was tried to obtain help from the A.C.L.U. for a man who was dismissed from a plant taken over by the
Government because of his outspoken Nazi-sympathies. We think that this country has the obligation to revoke, after careful examination, the citizenship of persons who are loyal to enemy governments.

You might say that it is one of the aims of the A.C.L.U. to give help to people in their fight for civil rights and that in order to help in one justified case the chances have to be taken to include many doubtful cases. We agreed with this principle in normal times. However, now the rights of whole nations are endangered by paying too much attention to the rights of the individual.

Do you think it possible for the A.C.L.U. to concentrate its influence more strongly in an active and constructive way to help the war effort? We believe that under the present circumstances such activities will have the greater value and effectiveness for the future.

With the expression of our sincere respect

yours,

[Signature]
Mr. and Mrs. Herman Hoerlin
35 Vermont Avenue
Binghamton, New York

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hoerlin:

On my return from vacation I noted your letter of July 26 which Mrs. Milner answered under date of the 29. I see that she did not cover one or two specific points on which I would like to comment.

You maintain that in order to beat the Fascists we must temporarily renounce certain rights. If that were a necessity I suppose we would all agree. But we stand on the proposition that a democracy can fight a war and keep its liberties, as England has.

On the right to strike, labor's only effective weapon, one would certainly not maintain that workers must accept without striking conditions which seem to them intolerable, particularly when there are no restraints upon the profits of employers. We, like England, have adopted the wisest course of action—a voluntary agreement for arbitration to settle issues fairly.

In regard to the revocation of citizenship, does it not seem to you dangerous for the government to hold that opinions expressed years after naturalization may be a ground for cancelling it? It puts every naturalized citizen's rights in danger, for he can never know what opinions might be a cause for action. We advocate revoking citizenship only when fraud at the time can be shown, in not really giving up loyalty to a foreign country.

You speak about a constructive way to help the war effort. Do you think there is anything more constructive than backing the first of the Four Freedoms--free speech--whose blessings we are endeavoring to bring to the whole world? It would be a sorry kind of a war and a peace if we sacrificed the very principles for which we profess to be fighting.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

RNE/sa
The Editor, Burlington Press

to be delivered, not phoned.

Your failure to print the full text of Roosevelt's Chicago address is

unfair and unworthy of an American newspaper. It reminds me of the methods used by the newspapers which suppress all unfavorable news unfavorable to their party line. Many readers desire that you print the complete text of this speech before election day.

[Signature]
Dr. Hermann W. Hoerlin
35 Vermont Avenue
Binghamton, New York

Dear Dr. Hoerlin:

You are the only one to charge us with unfairness in the handling of news during this election campaign.

The black and white record during the entire campaign will be proof that we have been fair.

While we did carry texts of both nominees’ speeches over from Saturday until Monday the week previous, it so cramped us that we decided not to do it again.

I hope that you will note that Mr. Dewey’s Madison Square Garden text of Nov. 4 will not be carried in The Binghamton Press on Nov. 6.

Best wishes,

Fred W. Stein
Editor

FWS: klh
October 23, 1944

Dear Hoerlin:

It is wonderful of you to send a check to the Democratic Campaign Fund and I accept it gratefully though I realize how terribly difficult it is for you to spare the money. We have really had to wage a poor man's campaign and the President has had to carry the greatest load. It has been even more obvious this year that the election depends rather completely on him. Did you not think his speech was magnificent? He will give 2 or 3 other speeches and I am pretty sure we will win.

No further news from Joe but I am confident that he is on his way home and will arrive some time during the next 10 days. If we have any party at all I shall wire you and Kate. In any case I shall let you know exactly when and how long Joe is here and perhaps we can get together during that time.

Much love to you and Kate,

Trude
September 3, 1941

Immigration Section
Visa Division
Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Gentlemen

This is to certify that Hermann Hoerlin, of 35 Vermont Avenue, Binghamton, New York, has been personally known to me since his arrival in the United States several years ago. He is an outstanding physicist who has been steadily employed since his arrival in this country and has been a valuable contributor to the scientific researches of the company which employs him.

He has never belonged to any political party either in Europe or in the United States which advocated any form of subversive activity against the government. He is a stable, well-balanced person whose word is reliable. I therefore feel that he is a suitable individual to execute an affidavit of support and to assume the responsibility of preventing any émigrés whom he sponsors from becoming public charges after their arrival in the United States.

I am an American citizen by means of the naturalization of my father, Paul M. Warburg, in 1911. Although I was born in Germany, I have been a resident of the United States since the age of two. I am a practicing physician in the city of New York.

Yours sincerely,

Bettina Warburg

Bettina Warburg, M.D.

State of New York )
County of New York ) SS.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 3 DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1941.

[Signature]

New York County, October 9, 1941.
Commissary Judge, dated 9th day of Oct.
November 9, 1954

Mr. W. W. Spurgeon
U. S. News & World Report
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Spurgeon:

Some time ago you were kind enough to send me the September 24, 1954 U. S. News & World Report copy which contained the Shepley - Blair report on the hydrogen bomb. As you may know by now, this article did not give a true picture of the facts; and your failure to correct the wrong impression created by the book does not encourage me to subscribe to your magazine. Your very brief coverage of Dr. Bradbury's press conference - 2 pages in contrast to the 30 page coverage of the book - , the omission of any other statement by numerous competent people, also your negligence in using related and pertinent material available in the Gray Board Testimony indicate neither fair practice nor high quality of your journalistic standards.

Very truly yours,

Herman Hoerlin
Herman W. Hoerlin
Box 148
Los Alamos, New Mexico

August 30, 1960

New York Times
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

For almost 20 years I have been a subscriber to your newspaper. I was and am impressed by the quality and breadth of your news reporting. Your editorial policy while controversial was on the whole intellectually stimulating.

Much to my regret, there has been a drastic trend recently towards a near-sighted conservatism. For instance, it is hard to swallow Mr. Krock's "... Nixon and Lodge have actually conducted foreign policy, and done this brilliantly, as agents of the President"; this in full view of the continuous string of foreign policy disappointments of the last years. Mr. C. L. Sulzberger's column has become stale and full of commonplaces.

Your coverage of the test ban negotiations was extensive but several phases were reported with strongly opinionated undertones distorting significant scientific and technical facts.

I therefore regret to be unable to renew my subscription.

Very truly yours,

Herman W. Hoerlin
Mrs. Herman Hoerlin
Box 148
Los Alamos, New Mexico

The Honorable Senator
John F. Kennedy
Hyannisport, Mass.

Dear Senator Kennedy:

We are sending you herewith an example of the effort of some local scientists who are active Citizens for Kennedy.

We work and hope for your victory and for the defeat of stagnant republicanism. In the light of the increasingly vicious attacks on you by your opponents, we are especially grateful for maintaining the dignity of your campaign.

Very sincerely yours,

Mrs. Herman Hoerlin                Mrs. Stan Ulam
                              Citizens for Kennedy
Communism and Conformity

By George F. Kennan

Following are excerpts from the text of an address delivered by Mr. Kennan, former Ambassador to Russia, at a University of Notre Dame convocation on May 15.

The sense of warmth and reassurance that flows from this event means more to me because I cannot forget that there are forces at large in our society today that do not inspire me to deal with the same feeling—quite the contrary. These forces are too diffuse to be described by the association with the name of any one man or any one political concept. They have no distinct organizational form. They are as yet largely matters of the mind and the emotion in large masses of individuals. But they are marching, in one way or another, under the banners of an alarmed and exercised anti-Communism—but an anti-Communism of a quite special variety, bearing an air of excited discovery and proprietorship, as though no one had ever known before that there was a Communist danger, as though no one had ever thought about it, and taken its measure, as though it had all begun about the year 1945, and these people were the first to learn it.

I have no quarrel to pick with the ostensible purposes of these people in whom these forces are manifest. Surely, many of them are sincere. Surely, many of them are good people. Surely, many of them have come to these views under real provocation and out of real bewilderment. But I have the deepest misgivings about the direction and effects of their efforts. In general, I feel that what they are doing is wise and fortunate, and I am against it. They distort and exaggerate the dimensions of the problem with which they profess to deal. They confuse internal and external aspects of the Communists threat. They overemphasize as contemporary realities things that had their actuality years ago.

And having thus incorrectly stated the problem, it is no wonder that these people consistently find the wrong answers. They tell us to remove our eyes from the constructive and positive purposes and to pursue with fanaticism the negative and vindictive ones. They sow timidity where there should be boldness; fear where there should be serenity; suspicion where there should be confidence and generosity. In this way, they impel us—in the name of reaction against the dangers of Communism—to do many of the habits of thought and speech which, in the history of our Soviet adversaries, I am sure, would most likely lead to the success of these very forces. And what are the results we have achieved in the last sixty-five years to further the progress of Communism? I believe I can answer with some confidence that we cannot ignore.

Thanks to the vision of wise and generous people, this university is now adding one more important unit to the number of those facilities in our country in which men can cultivate their own understanding, and extend the boundaries of knowledge, in the light of arts and letters. Certainly, there could be no finer undertaking, and none more needed. But I feel that this undertaking, too, will have to deal with some forces that I have just described.

I do so because these forces are narrowly exclusive in their approach to our world position, and carry this exclusiveness into the field of international cultural exchanges. The remote pasts of foreign artists and scholars are anxiously scanned before they are permitted to enter our land, and this is done in proceedings so indefensible in concept and offensive in execution that their very existence often constitutes a disencouragement to cultural interchange.

A second reason why I think you will have to concern yourselves with the forces to which I have pointed is that within the framework of our society, as in its relations to external environment, the tenacity of these forces is exclusive and intolerant—quick to reject, slow to receive, intent on discovering what ought not to be rather than what ought to be. They claim the right to define a certain area of our national life and cultural output as beyond the bonds of rightous approval. This definition is never affected by law or by constituted authority; it is effected by vague insinuation and suggestion. And the circle, as I say, tends to grow narrower. One has the impression that if unaccounted, these people would eventually narrow the range of political and cultural receptability to a point where it included only themselves, the excited accusers, and excluded everybody and everybody not embraced in the profession of denunciation.

I recall reading recently, twice in one day, the words of individuals who proclaimed that if certain other people did not get up and join actively in the denunciation of Communists or Communism, they would thereby themselves be suspect. What sort of arrogance is this?

I have lived more than ten years of my life in totalitarian countries. I know where this sort of thing leads.

In those forces I have spoken about, it seems to me that I detect a conscious rejection and ridicule of intellectual effort and distinction. They come together here with a deep-seated weakness in the American character: a certain kind of self-consciousness that tends to deny interests other than those of business, sport, or war. There is a powerful strain of our American east of mind that has little use for the artist or the writer.

What is it that causes us to doubt together, herdlike, in tastes and enthusiasms that represent only the common denominator of popular acquiescence rather than to show ourselves receptive to the incalculable dangers of creating imagination of which the individual mind has shown itself capable? Is it that we are forgetful of the true sources of our moral strength, afraid of ourselves, afraid to look into the eyes of our own breasts, afraid of the bright, penetrating light of the great teachers?

It may not seem to many of us to be dangerous and it should all live, dress, eat, hear, and read substantially alike. But we forget how easily this uniformity, through which we can be exploited, when the will to exploit is there. We forget how easily it can slip over into the domination of our spiritual and political lives by self-appointed custodians who contrive to set themselves at the head of popular emotional currents.

There is a real and urgent danger here for any one who values the right to differ from others in any manner whatever, be it in his interests or his associations or his faith.

The purpose of political demagoguery is to feed these forces as greedy forces, and unrestrained. There is no limit to their ambitions or their impudence. They contain within themselves no mechanism of self-control.

It is for these reasons that I feel that you, in setting up at this time within this great academic community a center for liberal arts, are taking upon yourselves a great and honorable burden. You are going to have to swim against the tide of many of the things I have been talking about. You are frequently going to find arrayed against you, whether by intent or otherwise, the materialists, the anti-intellectuals, the chauvinists of all sizes and descriptions, the prophets of violence and suspicion and intolerance, the people who take it upon themselves to limit the operation of the principle of Christian charity. The people from whose memories there has passed the recollection that in their Father's house there are many mansions.

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AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

170 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.
November 5, 1960

Mrs. Herman Hoerlin
Box 148
Los Alamos, New Mexico

The Honorable Senator
John F. Kennedy
Hyannisport, Mass.

Dear Senator Kennedy:

We are sending you herewith an example of the effort of some local scientists who are active Citizens for Kennedy.

We work and hope for your victory and for the defeat of stagnant republicanism. In the light of the increasingly vicious attacks on you by your opponents, we are especially grateful for maintaining the dignity of your campaign.

Very sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Mrs. Herman Hoerlin           Mrs. Stan Ulam
A Citizens for Kennedy
If one realizes that the best control system is no better than a magnifying line and makes up for the deficiencies by an active, effective and wise foreign diplomacy, we should make for good progress. I also hope foreign policy should be well coordinated with military capability. This is nothing new to you, nevertheless, I go on talking. It is not developing too slowly a large number of systems, I feel we should...
have always felt that a few systems should be pushed hard and fast to completion. (Polaris, Atlas, Titan I). Many foreign bases would subsequently become useless and we would be in position to keep our friends. I also hope that the new administration will stimulate new ideas and help attract academic talent beyond the

 Advisory board
Mrs. Herman Hoerlin  
Box 148  
Los Alamos, New Mexico  

November 5, 1960

The Honorable Senator  
John F. Kennedy  
Hyannisport, Mass.

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Very sincerely yours,

Mrs. Herman Hoerlin  
A Citizen for Kennedy
October 1, 1960

Editor
St. Louis Post-Dispatch
St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Sir:

I have been a subscriber to your newspaper since September 1st and would like to express some of my reactions and thoughts.

First of all, I am greatly impressed by your broad coverage of the news. Their presentation and your editorials challenge the reader to use his own intelligence in matters of domestic and international politics. You point out the seriousness of the international situation; the lack of success of the current administration in this field and thus the importance of the forthcoming election for the future of our country.

I realize your desire to be impartial and fair to both candidates. However, at times I feel you are not doing full justice to the democratic candidate, as for example in your editorial "The First Debate". I agree with your statement that the magnitude of the challenge is great and that Kennedy's program may not quite match it; but you fail to say that he offers action and foresight in contrast to the dangerous, self-deceiving "you-never-had-it-so-good" attitude of the present administration.

Please continue to give us editorials such as "The U.N. Drama", "Mr. Nixon's Main Theme", "More Old Nixon", and "Behind An Imposing Facade". The reprint from Detroit on "Still that Lag in Missiles" helped to show the inability of Washington administrators and of big business to get those things done which are most important for our nation.
At times I am wondering whether the Gallup Poll should not appear in the gossip column instead of the editorial section. Isn't there a serious danger that this poll tends to form opinions among the poorly informed people and thus prevents them from doing their own thinking?

With great appreciation for your excellent work

I remain,

sincerely yours,

Herman W. Hoerlin
December 15, 1960

The Honorable
Senator Clinton Anderson
Federal Building
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dear Senator Anderson:

Remembering your spontaneous response to the campaign advertisement in The New Mexican by the Los Alamos Citizens for Kennedy and Johnson, I am taking the liberty to send you herewith another Post-Dispatch editorial, of last Saturday, December 10. I am sure that you are fully aware of the need for "Revitalizing the AEC"; nevertheless, I want to express my hope that you will utilize your wisdom and influence to bring about the quickest possible action for the long overdue rejuvenation of the Commission.

My personal observations indicate a need for greater competence and vision, reduction of red tape, and return to the dynamic spirit of the founders of the AEC.

While the business experience of retired industrialists and the organizational talents of military men must be respected, the whole AEC is desperately short of younger men of high caliber, of drive and courage. In fact, even the Commission itself is bare of members with scientific stature in the atomic field.

I believe that there must be scientists who rate service to the country higher than personal ambition or monetary return. And I am sure that your many friends at the LASL such as Norris E. Bradbury and Harold Agnew would be honored to provide any advice you may request concerning this problem.

This letter is written without solicitation.

Respectfully yours,

Herman Hoerlin
Mr. Herman Hoerlin  
Box 148  
Los Alamos, New Mexico  

Dear Mr. Hoerlin:

Thank you for your letter of December 15 and the editorial from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. I will be glad to bear this in mind as I discuss this situation with Mr. Kennedy or his advisors.

Sincerely yours,

Clinton P. Anderson

CPA: jc
Mr. & Mrs. Herman Hoerlin  
1357-B 43rd Street  
Los Alamos, New Mexico  

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Hoerlin:

Thank you very much for letting us use your names on the list of supporters which we put in the paper. The race was too close for comfort, and we needed all the help we could get.

Sincerely,

Sterling

SFB: ems
The Choice
For President

Reprinted By Permission, From Editorial Page
Of St. Louis Dispatch-October 16, 1960

The presidential election on Nov. 8 is one of the most important the people have ever been called upon to decide. The outcome will almost certainly mean the death or survival of the constitutional order as we know it. Vinson is a man of integrity; but, though he represents the forces of reaction, he is not a man of the future. He stands for the defeat of the New Deal policies, for the restoration of the old order.

President Kennedy is a man of vision, a man of the future. He stands for the fulfillment of the New Deal policies, for the creation of a new order, based on a new social contract. He stands for the preservation of the constitutional order, for the protection of the rights of all citizens.

The decision of the people is the supreme court. It is the final arbiter of the policy of the nation. It is the ultimate expression of the will of the people. The choice is clear. The choice is decisive.

The Question
Of Experience

The question is not whether Vinson is an experienced man. He is. The question is whether he is an experienced man of the future. The question is whether he is a man of vision, a man of the future, or a man of the past.

The record of President Kennedy is a record of achievement. It is a record of progress. It is a record of victory. It is a record of victory for the people. It is a record of victory for the nation.

The resources of leadership are not only in the hands of the leaders. They are in the hands of the people. The people have the resources of leadership. They have the resources of vision.

The choice is clear. The choice is decisive. The choice is for the future. The choice is for President Kennedy.
35 Vermont Avenue
Binghamton, N. Y.
January 4, 1946

The Honorable Senator Robert F. Wagner
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator:

I am sending you herewith a photostatic copy and a translation of an article on Poland published recently in the Swiss Weekly "Die Weltwoche". The conditions in Polish occupied, formerly German territories are evidently so terrifying that they must be a matter of great concern to our Congress and Government. I sincerely hope that you will be able to read this report which, I believe, is trustworthy.

I may add that "Die Weltwoche" is known in Europe as a sincere, reliable, independent and liberal newspaper which always has been outspokenly anti-fascist. It was one of the first Swiss papers to be banned in Germany after Hitler came to power.

I am convinced that you will give this the consideration which is called for.

Very sincerely yours,

H. W. Hoerlin

HHias
enclosures
Mr. Max Lerner
P M
164 Duane Street
New York 13, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Lerner:

I am sending you herewith a photostatic copy and a translation of an article on Poland published recently in the Swiss Weekly "Die Weltwoche". Die Weltwoche is a sincere, reliable, independent and liberal paper which always has been outspokenly anti-fascist. It was one of the first Swiss papers to be banned in Germany after Hitler came to power. Mr. Jungk, the author of the attached article, is now a special correspondent for the Weltwoche at the Nurnberg Trials.

The conditions in Polish occupied, formerly German territories are evidently so terrifying that they must be a matter of great concern to the American public. Unfortunately PM has not to date published reports on these happenings except insofar as the Jewish part of the population is concerned. I do know that the German people cannot escape responsibility for the crimes committed during the war in Poland and elsewhere, but believe that the blind retribution and acts of vengeance committed now by the Poles are not the kind of justice on which a better world can be built.

At the Nurnberg Trials we are attempting now not only to punish but also to establish a new basis for international justice. Do you believe that we will succeed, if for the sake of political expediency we are willing to close our eyes deliberately to inhuman cruelties committed in allied or allied-occupied countries?

Sincerely yours,

H. W. Hoerlin

HWH:as enclosures
Mr. H. W. Hoerlin  
35 Vermont Avenue  
Binghamton, New York

Dear Mr. Hoerlin:

I have your letter of January 4 together with a photostatic copy and a translation of an article on Poland which appeared in the Swiss Weekly "Die Weltwoche".

I appreciate your courtesy in sending it to me and assure you it will have my earnest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]
35 Vermont Avenue
Binghamton, N. Y.
January 4, 1946

The Honorable Senator James M. Mead
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator:

I am sending you herewith a photostatic copy and a translation of an article on Poland published recently in the Swiss Weekly "Die Weltwoche". The conditions in Polish occupied, formerly German territories are evidently so terrifying that they must be a matter of great concern to our Congress and Government. I sincerely hope that you will be able to read this report which, I believe, is trustworthy.

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I am convinced that you will give this the consideration which is called for.

Very sincerely yours,

H. W. Hoerlin

HH: as enclosures
The Editor  
New York Times  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

I am sending you herewith a photostatic copy and a translation of an article on Poland published recently in the Swiss Weekly "Die Weltwoche". The conditions in Polish occupied, formerly German territories are evidently so terrifying that they must be a matter of great concern to the American public, to our Congress and Government. Unfortunately, the New York Times has not so far paid attention to these happenings which I believe go against every principle for which this war was fought.

As you most certainly know "Die Weltwoche" is a sincere, reliable and independent newspaper which always has been outspokenly anti-fascist. It was one of the first Swiss papers to be banned in Germany after Hitler came to power. Mr. Jungk, the author of the attached article, is now a special correspondent for the Weltwoche at the Nuremberg Trials.

I am convinced that you will give this matter the consideration which is called for.

Very truly yours,

H. W. Hoerlin

HH:as  
enclosures
Mr. H. W. Hoerlin,
35 Vermont Avenue,
Binghamton, New York.

Dear Mr. Hoerlin:

Let me briefly acknowledge and thank you for your letter of January 4 and the enclosed photostatic copy and translation of an article on Poland published recently in the Swiss Weekly "Die Weltwoche".

I shall carefully study the matter.

Sincerely yours,

Jas. M. Mead
Behind the Iron Curtain
A Report from the Land of the Dead by Robert Jungk

There is not only one iron curtain in Europe now. There are two of them.
The second iron curtain separates the Russian zone of occupation in Germany from
the former German provinces which, in the Potsdam agreement, were handed over to
the Poles and which therefore are not under the jurisdiction of the Allied Military
Governments in Germany. Whoever had a chance to cross this border knows that the
border control is incomparably much stricter there than on the already strictly
controlled western border of the Russian occupation zone. There is a good reason
for that. Visitors are definitely not desired. Behind the Oder-Neisse line
starts the land without safety and security, without law, the land of the outlawed,
the land of the dead. Whereas in the Russian zone a certain order is in existence
and injustice is subject more to incidental circumstances than to plan, nothing
but cruel despotism and brutal force rule in the Polish occupied regions. When,
in the Potsdam agreement these provinces were handed to the Poles, the German
population was at first under the impression that they could get along better
with the Poles than with the Russians. But today the remaining population has
to beg the Russian detachments stationed in or passing through this zone to give
them protection against the violence of the Poles. People who have a chance to
leave the Polish areas are relieved when they arrive in the Russian zone, for
they have left behind completely razed cities, villages full of pestilence,
concentration camps, deserted unirrigated fields, streets covered with corpses
and highways ruled by robbers who take away the last property from the fugitives.

All this and what I am going to describe should not be treated lightly; it
is certainly not "propaganda". Too often during the past years people were
inclined to disbelieve reports of indescribable horror; too often they were
minimized and marked as "propaganda lies" by those who would have been embarrassed
by admission of the truth.

It is true that in the town of G. on the public square girls, young and
old women were raped by members of the Polish militia. It is true that on the
station of 8, all trains carrying refugees were ransacked completely and regularly to such a degree that the unfortunate traveler had to continue their trip to the west entirely naked. It is true that in wide areas of Silesia not a single child of the age of one or less is alive because they all starved to death or because they were slain. It is true that in Upper Silesia women infected by syphilis are "treated" by "shooting in the head". It is also true that in some towns and villages 1/10, in others 1/10 or 1/5 of the population committed suicide.

It is true that unfortunate prisoners in the so-called labor camps Somonowice and Gomoschlowitz have to stand up to their necks in ice cold water for long nights and that often they are beaten to unconsciousness.

But why did this happen? It is dreadful enough; this wave of barbarism was induced by the efforts of the Big Three to alleviate the fate of the Germans in the East. Yes, to alleviate - at the time of the Potsdam meeting the Big Powers had been forced by the published reports on the misery caused by the forced evacuation to request the Polish, Czechoslovakian Governments to discontinue the hasty deportations. The Czechs followed the appeal and the evacuation of the Germans from Czechoslovakia to Germany and Austria is taking place in an orderly, and whenever possible, humane way. But it is different with the Poles. They too discontinued the forced evacuations. But simultaneously they did everything conceivable to get the German population to the point where they would leave the new Polish territory "voluntarily". The relatively mildest way to do this is to let the people starve. For example, in the city of 8, the 15,000 German inhabitants receive only 7,000 ration cards for bread. The remaining 8,000 may have a chance to get some bread for a short while from the black market by selling whatever is left of their property -- after that they have the choice between certain death or "voluntary" emigration to the West.

In Breclaw the situation is even worse. There is no general rationing system in existence. Only Poles and those Germans who are city employees receive some food. The others have to get along somehow. Of course, the "black market" is open to them. But the German "Mark" is valueless by decree and only the Polish "Zloty" is accepted as currency. Neither meat nor fat has been available in
Breslau since the end of the hostilities. Frequently the inhabitants try to
get food from the surrounding country. But if they are so fortunate as to get
a few potatoes or turnips they are almost certainly deprived of them by the Polish
militia in the suburbs on their return. The mortality is therefore tremendous.
Polish officials who by the way, due to the indescribable maladministration of the
City of Breslau have been without pay for months, admit openly that they hope to
get the German population designated by Christams by means of starvation to the same
extent as was originally intended by deportation.

At least as bad as the hunger is the complete lack of safety and justice.
There is no authority to which a pillaged farmer could apply for help; there is
no protecting police and no judge. Everybody is exposed hourly to attack and
robbery without having the slightest chance of getting the support provided by law
and of taking countermeasures. It is particularly sad and distressing that many
of those Germans who lost their closest relatives by fighting the Nazis and those
Jews who escaped the Nazi slaughter by hiding in small country villages are now
murdered by the Poles.

Disease and pestilence are the companions of pillage and murder. The farther
we travel from Germany to the east, the more frequently we see large signs on the
entrance of villages: Typhus. The worn-out bodies of the hungry are perfect media
for bacilla and the pestilence is spreading with the velocity of a forest fire.
But it is a fire which east of the Oder is spreading unopposed by firefighters.
The reports from these areas are terrifying. "In K. 80 out of 400 inhabitants are
infected by Typhus. Not a bit of medicine is available. There is no doctor on
the right bank of the Oder. The "Caritas" in K. reports that their drugs and
medicines are almost exhausted. Nobody is supplying food because people are afraid
to enter the infected villages. We are unable to help the sick. We can isolate
them; that's all. Almost every village on the railway line - Breslau-Frankfurt is
infected by typhus".

In many cases the only "solution" is to isolate such villages completely -
just like the cities affected by the plague in the Middle Ages were isolated.
People who wish to leave the villages are being shot. Of course, a tight control
is impossible and therefore the typhus is spreading.

"But, something has to be done...." - That is the first reaction of every human being who realizes the gravity and magnitude of this catastrophe. Unfortunately it seems that nothing can be done except to subject the Polish occupied areas of Germany to a control of the four Big Powers. It is most unlikely that the situation will improve under Polish administration. Since the recognition of the territory east of the Oder and Neisse as Polish is depending on the coming peace settlement, the Poles are doing everything in their power to remove rapidly and recklessly all the Germans from their zone in order to "facilitate" the final recognition. Those who are leaving the country now, in order to escape hunger, maltreatment, pestilence and further pillage, have to sign a written declaration before crossing the border of the Polish zone confirming that they are leaving voluntarily. Nobody must have a chance later to declare that things were not handled correctly.

If something can be done for the "Land of the Dead" across the Oder, it could best be done by the Russians. It seems more and more evident that Russia does not agree with the Polish occupation policy and is considering taking away entirely the administration of Eastern Germany from the Poles. The Russians cannot tolerate endangering the functioning of their connection with the homeland by the chaotic state of affairs in the Polish zone.

Doubtlessly the situation in the east will also be of great concern to others as soon as reports like this which as far as we know is the first one to be published, will attract world public opinion. This is not "only" a matter of life and death for many millions of Germans, it is much more a test for the sincerity and strength of the anti-fascist movement in the world. It would be a shameful and hopeless sight if all those who fought Hitler and Mussolini under great sacrifices to build a better world would now permit chauvinistic elements to take away from them the fruits of victory. We are rightly blaming the German people for closing our eyes to the cruelties and horrors committed by Nazism while believing blindly in the so-called mission of their fatherland. Should the fighters for democracy now have to take a similar blame upon them? We too
will be "accessories" if we do not endeavor to reveal the crimes which are committed in the name of democracy and freedom.
Hinter dem ‚eisernen Vorhang‘

Aus einem Totenland

Ein Bericht von Robert Jungk


Der Vorhang besteht aus mehreren Teilen. Der erste Teil besteht aus der UdSSR, die von der Westzone abgerissen ist. Der zweite Teil besteht aus der Sowjetischeunion, die von der Ostzone abgerissen ist. Der dritte Teil besteht aus der Ostzone, die von der Westzone abgerissen ist.


January 15, 1946

Mr. H. W. Hoerlin
35 Vermont Avenue
Binghamton, New York

Dear Mr. Hoerlin:

Thank you for your letter and the enclosures. I am glad to have a chance to see them, and I am sending them on to the Foreign Desk in the hope that they can use them.

It was good of you to take the trouble.

Very sincerely,

Max Lerner