

Marxism. Karl Marx in 1868 wrote approvingly of the American Labor Union Congress "in that it treated working women with complete equality," and he added, "anybody who knows anything of history knows that great social changes are impossible without the feminine ferment. Social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of the fair sex."

THIS American tradition referred to by Marx is worth remembering. William Sylvis in 1868 appointed Kate Mullaney the first woman labor organizer in America. He successfully fought to seat Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton as delegates from the Woman's Suffrage Association to the ALU Congress. Frederick Douglass, the great Negro leader, attended the first Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, N. Y. in 1846, and seconded the motion of Mrs. Stanton that "it was the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right of the elective franchise." It was greeted with a storm of ridicule and abuse in the press of that day.

Lenin and Marx understood the importance of reaching the women. The GOP understands it and will try to hand the women a gold brick wrapped up like a box of candy in this session of Congress — the so-called Equal Rights Amendment. In the battle against anti-labor legislation, let us not forget that this bill as it now stands will cut the heart out of all progressive labor legislation for women workers. Sylvis, Douglass, Debs and other great American men were allies of the women and understood the importance of their needs. The NAM is planning to channelize women's activities along anti-labor lines. If we do not want to see such efforts successful, then all pro-labor forces must do a bigger and better job in reaching the women than they have done thus far. If we want to stop fascism in this country, we must arouse the women. Progressive political action for 1948 must include the education and organization of women voters, who can swing any election. Women will be a dynamic force when aroused to fight for peace, security, democracy, for themselves and for their families.

Not to reach them immediately in today's life and death struggle is criminal negligence.

MEET HANNS EISLER

"I would be delighted to testify," said Hanns Eisler proudly. An interview with the composer.

By ALVAH BESSIE

I'M VERY much afraid that when the rampaging inquisitors of the House Un-American Committee visit this coast to carry out (among other announced objectives) their "investigation" of Gerhart Eisler's brother Hanns, their findings will not furnish the Hearst press with the sort of headlines it would like to write. So after talking to Hanns Eisler for an hour and a half in his home on the beach out here, I decided to write some headlines for it. Being honest headlines they would run like this:

COMPOSER WRITES MUSIC!

AUSTRIAN COMPOSER CONFESSES HE ALWAYS HATED HITLER!!

MODERN COMPOSER ADMITS HE LOVES HIS OWN BROTHER!!!!

HANNS EISLER INSISTS GERHART EISLER "SINCERE"!!!!

They're not very good headlines, are they? Well, I will have to be resigned, in such a case, to not being hired by the Hearst press until I can do better.

Hanns Eisler, whose brother Gerhart has been accused of "perjury, passport fraud, income tax evasion and plotting to overthrow the United States government," is a world-famous composer. His music has been published and performed in practically every civilized country in the world, and while he has written symphonic music, chamber music and orchestral scores of all kinds, he is perhaps most famous for his songs.

Since 1938 Hanns Eisler (the double "n" comes from his real name, Johannes — Un-American Committee please note the deception!) has lived in the United States. Here, on the outskirts of Los Angeles, he lives quietly with his charming dark-haired wife, Lou, and composes. He is also reading the galley-proofs of a book he has written in collaboration with Dr. T. W. Adorno, titled *Composing for the Movies*, which Oxford University Press

will shortly publish. "It is a study," says Eisler, "of the new phenomenon of industrial culture—from the point of view of a composer."

Then he made a significant confession. "Since my other music does not bring me an adequate living, I also write musical scores for the motion picture studios." The reader may recall his scores for John Steinbeck's *The Forgotten Village*, for *None But the Lonely Heart*, *Hangmen Also Die*, *Deadline at Dawn* and *The Spanish Main*. Currently he is completing a score for the new RKO film *So Well Remembered*, from the James Hilton novel, which he says is a magnificent film. He advised me not to miss it.

At this point in the interview Mrs. Eisler appeared with coffee and an excellent cake and we dropped the interview for an entertaining discussion of how a composer goes about writing music for a film. I would like to transcribe all of it, for it is very interesting and Eisler was very witty about it, but for the benefit of the House Committee I must continue the interview. It may save them some time—and the taxpayer some money.

Hanns Eisler, who is short, almost completely bald and inclined to be stout, walked up and down in the pleasant room facing the Pacific and emphasized what he had to say by flourishing a cigarette holder. (The burning tip of the cigarette was red!)

"You ask about my brother Gerhart," he said. (He has a formal way of speaking.) "I can tell you this," and he went on slowly, carefully and with considerable emphasis: "I love and admire my brother. He is a sincere man. He is a gentle and courageous man. I think that the campaign against him is the beginning of a campaign against the liberal and progressive forces in this country. It does not surprise me. I have seen such campaigns before—in Germany. Before 1933.

"It was the same in Germany. The campaign against the liberals, progres-

sives, the Communists. There—and here—it was designed to convince the people that liberal ideas, progressive ideas are of foreign origin; that liberals, progressives, Communists are agents of foreign powers. Reactionaries always think in such terms. If a hungry man says he is hungry it couldn't be his *own* idea—somebody must have told him! It succeeded in Austria and Germany. I hope it will not succeed here."

Hanns Eisler sat down and sipped his coffee. "I can say this about my brother Gerhart. I *know* that when he came to the United States he came not as an agent for anybody. He came as a very sick man from a concentration camp. He went immediately into a hospital, where he had a serious operation for a gall-bladder condition. It is ridiculous to make of him an agent—a sick man out of a concentration camp. I *know* he wanted to go to Mexico and against his wishes he was held here. It was because of a wartime law that did not permit aliens to leave the country. I know that he lived modestly, interested mostly in what was happening in Germany, looking forward always to the time he could return. When, a few months ago, he thought

he was about to return, he came to visit us here, to say goodbye."

EISLER looked up at me, lit another cigarette. "I am not myself a politician," he said. "I am a composer, interested primarily in my music. Naturally, I am not uninterested in what is going on in the world and therefore I have opinions about it. I hope that is permissible, no?"

"Not to the Un-American Committee," I said. "They have announced in the papers that they are going to investigate you. You are expected to be frightened."

"I am not frightened," said Hanns Eisler with a smile. "I would like—no, say I would be delighted to testify. To give the committee my opinions. They are the opinions of an artist. I have never engaged, in this country, in political activity of any kind. That would be very foolish, don't you think, for an alien?"

"But you are an anti-Nazi," I said.

"Who is not?" he asked. (I didn't answer that one.)

"In Germany," he continued, "my music was devoted to the struggle of the people against oppression, against

fascism. Music is very closely related to the aspirations of the people. Could it be otherwise?"

"I don't think so," I said. "But there are those who do."

"What do they know about music?" Eisler asked. (I didn't answer that one either.)

"Now," he said suddenly, "about my brother Gerhart. It would perhaps be best to ask the anti-Nazi underground in Europe for information. They would have more and better information about his activities."

"What about you?" I said. "Would you like to go back to Europe?"

"Very much," he said. "I have been invited to conduct my music in Berlin, in Paris. I have an invitation from the city of Vienna. In Berlin I am offered a professorship of music; in Paris I am invited to make a moving picture and I am asked to conduct concerts of my work in Brussels, Amsterdam and Munich. In Vienna they are again publishing my work, also in France; and it is being performed again in all of Europe."

He shrugged and smiled. "But do you think I would be allowed to go there now?"

I didn't know. After all, the man has such a subversive background. He had to flee Germany in 1933 after the Reichstag fire illuminated the true nature of Hitlerism. It seems that in addition to the music he had written which he said was "devoted to the struggle of the people against oppression," he had also published an anti-Hitler song only two weeks before Hitler came to power. It was called, "It's a Long Way to the Third Reich."

"The Nazis could not find me," he said, "but they burned all my books and music and they arrested all my neighbors. People living in the same apartment house and whom I had never met. One of them was a ballet dancer in the opera house. I did not know her, but the Nazis felt that she must know me. She went to a concentration camp for not knowing me. It made me very happy to learn that she was later released—and is now doing very well."

Hanns Eisler looked out through the broad windows of the house that sits on the beach by the Pacific. "This is a beautiful and wonderful country," he said. "With many beautiful and wonderful people. I would hate to think that what happened in my own country—and which brought about its destruction—could happen to yours. Do you think it will?"

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

Excerpts from the anti-Soviet book of the month:

The Russians act like Russians because they have inflexible minds. Men like Dulles and Vandenberg have declared their peaceful intentions but the Russians can't stretch their imaginations that far. Many American lawmakers and diplomats are versatile enough to act like fools and political blunderers but the Russians stubbornly refuse to compromise. If any good results from our meetings with these Oriental minds it's strictly Occidental.

One is immediately aware that the Soviet standard of living is low. Economists estimate that the average Russian has to work twelve hours to make one pair of shoes. Apologists claim that this is not surprising since the average Russian is not a shoemaker. One Soviet official told me that the people are willing to eat nothing but staples until conditions improve. Imagine having to shop for food in a hardware store!

State ownership has resulted in a housing shortage. True, the Germans destroyed a few buildings here and there but in Moscow five million people

are jammed into an area no larger than New York. The socialist way of life is responsible for the tremendous crowds, especially in theaters, concert halls, opera houses and universities.

It is significant that favoritism exists in the Soviet Union. Whereas the workers are often forced to live two and three in a room Stalin has a whole room to himself. And many an official has confided to me that women and children are given preferential treatment.

Children are indoctrinated at an early age. Very often a baby's first word is "Pravda-da." Moreover they are trained in sabotage practically from birth. A Soviet baby will think nothing of sabotaging his father's suit or the best rug in the house.

The Russians are also preparing for war. The cousin of a friend of a stenographer in one of our delegations told me in an exclusive interview that the Russians are splitting hairs in the UN until they finish splitting atoms at home. Suspicious of British and American oil interests in the Middle East, the Russians have a morbid fear of being stabbed in the back.

The Rickshaw

"I thought you would like to go to a meeting tonight," the sergeant said. Mr. Eldridge learns about principles and freedom in Calcutta.

A Short Story by HOWARD FAST

IT WAS one hundred and twenty degrees in the shade, but I walked back to the Press Club because I had principles, and one of them was that I would not be drawn by a man who serves the function of a beast. I had lately come from the north, where sometimes it was one hundred and forty degrees in the shade, but it was dry there, and in an hour you could dehydrate yourself completely, yet never get a drop of moisture on your shirt. It was not dry here; it was wet, and I got wet, underwear, shirt, pants and all. So I plodded along most uncomfortably, only stopping once in a while beside the ghats, to watch the carefree natives swimming and diving. It looked cool and inviting, but I tempered my envy with the superior knowledge that these were the most carefully sponsored disease-breeders on earth. It was good to be a white man, wise and knowledgeable—an American among white men, which is even better—and to be able to shower and shave and put on clean clothes and order a Tom Collins and sit under an electric fan while I sipped it.

There, at a quarter to five, and feeling comfortably cool, I was starting on the second one when the sergeant came along and sat down next to me and asked me what I was doing that night.

"Right here," I said, "I intend to have one more drink before dinner, and then I will have my dinner, and then I will return here and have enough drinks to become pleasantly drunk, and then I will go to bed."

"It's a tough war, Mr. Eldridge," the sergeant said.

"For some it is," I agreed. I liked the sergeant, but he was bound to educate me. He was in Signal Service, and getting over something in the general hospital across the road. Now he was at the end of the cure and able to get out each evening, and he liked the food in the Press Club better than what they gave him at the hospital.

"I thought you would like to go to a meeting tonight," he said apolo-

getically, "because there are some people here who would like to see you and talk to you, because you're an American writer, I mean. I mean, there are some trade union people and some writers, and they would like to talk to you."

"That's fine," I said. "That's fine."

"I mean you don't have to go if you don't want to go, but I told them I thought you would."

"You told them that?"

"Well, I've been eating on you, so I thought something like this—"

"Look, I walked four miles to get back here, and then I took a shower, and now I feel comfortable and cool for the first time today."

"Why didn't you take a rickshaw?"

I explained carefully and slowly that I did not like to be drawn by a man as by a beast. It was a principle, a very small principle. I explained to the sergeant that I still had to have a principle—just one small principle.

"India disturbs you," the sergeant agreed sympathetically. "Some people are sensitive about the Far East, and then it disturbs them."

"Thank you."

"I mean, I'm sorry it should disturb you this way, because there's so much that's interesting about it."

"I don't doubt it," I said. "When I was in Old Delhi, I used to walk past a factory sometimes, and I noticed that the boys who came off the day shift would gather under a lamp-



Yeh Chien-Yu.

post, and one of them would try to teach the others to read. So I wrote a letter to the commissioner, pointing out how commendable such eagerness for literacy was, and didn't he think he ought to do something about it?"

"He never answered your letter," the sergeant said. "Well, neither would Mayor LaGuardia."

"He answered my letter. He said he was having a stronger bulb put in the lamp-post. I suppose you don't believe that?"

"I believe it," the sergeant nodded. "It's a funny land, but very interesting, if you're interested in human nature, I mean. If you don't come with me tonight, I got to go anyway, but you can get a jeep and I can't."

SO HE stayed to eat with me, and I went with him. The Brass who ate at the Press Club were made uncomfortable by enlisted men at the table—which was understandable—but they never said anything about it, and I knew that sooner or later the sergeant would get better, and they would send him back to putting up telephone wires. I had once asked the sergeant how it was that he seemed to know everyone in Calcutta—native people, not Americans or British—and in Bombay and Delhi, and in Rangoon, too, and even as far up North as Yenan; but he only answered that he always made acquaintances, and people were pretty much the same anyway, if you were interested in their problems. "I'm interested in the problems," he said.

After dinner, Johnny, who was a native driver, pulled out the jeep, and we got in with two wire service men and a Tenth Airforce Captain. At that time, the lights were not yet on in Calcutta, even though certain blackout restrictions were being relaxed, and there were still very few street signs; but Johnny knew the city the way you know the palm of your hand, and you just told him where to go and he took you there. We dropped off the other three and then turned into a working-