

Next witness.

Mr. STRIPLING. *Mr. Berthold Brecht.*

The CHAIRMAN. *Mr. Becht, 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.*

(Mr. David Baumgardt was seated beside the witness as interpreter.)

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, 1888; 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, Hangmen 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.*

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. *When did you sell the play to United Artists?*

Mr. BRECHT. *The story — I don't remember exactly, maybe around '43 or '44; I don't remember, quite.*

Mr. STRIPLING. *And what other studios have you sold material to?*

Mr. BRECHT. *No other studio. Besides the last story I spoke of I wrote for Enterprise Studios.*

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

Mr. BRECHT. *Yes.*

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.*

(Mr. Brecht hands the statement to the chairman.)

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.*

Mr. Stripling.

Mr. STRIPLING. *Mr. Brecht, before we go on with the questions, I would like to put into the record the subpoena which was served upon you on September 19, calling for your appearance before the committee. You are here in response to a subpoena, are you not?*

Mr. BRECHT. *Yes.*

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 and West*, July 1946.*

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

Mr. BAUMGARDT. *«East and West. Contributions to Cultural and Political Questions of the Time, edited by Alfred Kantorowicz, Berlin, July 1947, first year of publication enterprise.»*

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 attached there it fights.»

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.*

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.

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. 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 Sergi 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 inexact. I think it is a more or less journalistic summary of talks or discussions about many things.

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. STRINGLING. 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] —

Mr. BAUMGARDT. 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: yes. 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 of 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. STRIPLING. *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.*

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?*

(Mr. Baumgardt translates into German.)

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 land 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. Crum.*

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.)*

Testimony of Bertolt Brecht, October 30, 1947

Excerpt from:

Hearings before the Committee on Un-American Activities

United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1947

