

B-II-121 c.5

"WHO AM I?....an international agent?  
a spy?  
a man who wants to boss  
all  
the Reds in this country?"

...A reply to the Rankin Men



# EISLER HITS BACK

## *About This Pamphlet*

*The speech contained in this pamphlet was delivered by Gerbart Eisler, German anti-fascist author and journalist, at a public meeting organized by "The German American, Inc." on December 11, 1946 at the Fraternal Clubhouse in New York.*

*The meeting was held to give Eisler a chance to state his case, an opportunity denied to him by the Wood-Rankin Committee before which he was called after his exit visa was cancelled two days before the ship on which he was to return to Germany left.*

*We are publishing this speech to inform the greatest possible number of people of the true facts in the "Eisler Case" and thus help compensate for the unfair treatment accorded to Eisler by American officialdom and the American press.*

*We sincerely hope that this pamphlet will help arouse public opinion to bring pressure on the State Department to grant Eisler a simple right — the right to return to his homeland Germany and to help re-educate the German people, a task which he is well suited for, and in pursuance of which he will secure the things we fought for during the war.*

GUSTAV FABER, PRESIDENT  
*The German American, Inc.*

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..... *My* **REPLY TO BUDENZ**

**M**R. CHAIRMAN, Ladies and Gentlemen and dear colleagues of the Press:

Unfortunately, I have mastered only one language well enough — the German language — to really express the contempt I feel for certain happenings of the last weeks. But when in Rome, do as the Romans do, and so I shall try to say it in English and without flowers. You want me to be frank, and frank I shall be.

During my long wanderings as a German anti-fascist refugee, I found out that the attitude towards genuine anti-fascist refugees is a kind of barometer for the political climate of a country. Whenever the party line of the rulers of a particular country changes to the direction of reaction and warmongering, whenever more reactionary and fascist-minded groups are fighting for more influence and power and for the political atomization of the working class and of all progressive forces, we anti-fascist exiles have always had to go through a lot of trouble. All too often our existence was used to mask the true intentions of reaction, and to divert the attention of the people from their main and real problems.

This is nothing new. Nearly one hundred years ago the great German poet, Heinrich Heine, wrote in a biting satirical poem — directed against the Prussian police — about foreigners who are always the bad boys, sowing the bad seeds of rebellion, while the pious natives are never disrespectful sinners towards their authorities and their ideas. At that time, however, the Prussian police and their spies and “agent provocateurs” could not yet use clichés like “Stalin Agent,” or “Soviet Agent” against progressives and especially against the Communists. Because, after all, the founders of scientific Communism and Socialism were Germans themselves, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

By the way — I want to inform the Rankin Committee that both are dead. No use investigating them.

I do not think Rankin knows more about Marxism, Marxists and about me than what he has learned by his own ignorance and intolerance, by provocateurs, police records, and other “scientific documents” like that. However, all this was enough to prevent my return home.

At this time I could already be in Berlin or Leipzig or in some other German city or village. I would already have applied for membership in the Socialist Unity Party, the great hope of the German workers and German democracy, so bitterly fought by the official policy of the Western powers and by their German stooges. I could already write, teach or do whatever work would be asked of me. I may even already have been called "Kraut" by a nice American soldier, a vegetable by the way, which is really innocent of the rise of German Fascism.

There really was no need for any noise and sensationalism about my person. I did not raise the prices, and I did not lower the wages. No American would have been harmed by my departure. On the contrary: Every German anti-Fascist is needed in Germany in the fight for a peaceful, anti-Fascist, democratic Germany; a Germany that will never again bring reaction, war, invasion, mass murder to other people. Every anti-Fascist is needed in Germany to fight against all those who spread hate against Jews, Negroes, Yugoslavs, Albanians, Poles, Americans, Britons, Frenchmen, and last, but not least, against the peoples of the Soviet Union.

It is true, a few provocateurs of American and foreign origin would have failed to make some Judas money for selling lies and mystery stories about me to the Hearst press, to the Life magazine, and other publications in the service of public "enlightenment." Budenz, who has apparently found only one hero in the Bible, namely, Judas Iscariot, would have to sell articles about other people to the Hearst press. The Un-American Activities Committee would have had to find other victims for its activities. But as the freedom of getting investigated by the Un-American Activities Committee seems to develop to one of the more important freedoms of this country—I do not think my person is absolutely indispensable for the introduction of a new American national postwar sport, Red-Baiting, a sport that brought Germany to her disaster. In all modesty, I say, you could do without me. Aren't there, for instance, some more astronomers, writers, actors who have not yet been investigated? After all, the United States has 140 million people, a tremendous reservoir for investigation!

If somebody thought that I am ready to play the role of the hare, to be hunted by reactionary hounds, and like it, he is mistaken. The history of any people, and especially the history of the German people, teaches too clearly the basic lesson, never to become intimidated by reaction; never get frightened, always be aware that some provocateur,

some stoolpigeon will start his dirty business. But always hit back, even if you are a liberal with a slight disposition to get frightened, as we had so many in Germany. Hit back as united as possible!

That goes for nations, classes, and for every individual. That goes for Trade Unions, progressive organizations and progressive parties. And that goes also for racial and religious minorities.

Let me, at this point, remind you that the Nazi dictatorship was the most developed Committee against so-called "Un-German Activities." It murdered and persecuted millions of decent Germans and people of all lands who were not ready to think and to act according to the Nazi standard of what is "Un-German." Can't you hear already in this country loud voices that would like to punish every people in the world that does not live up to the standards of the ideas of your Un-American Activities Committee?

They dream about the "century of the investigated man." For every-one an investigator in the garage and a subpoena in the pot!

Let certain spokesmen of the Catholic minority in this country, always in danger to be attacked by intolerant and malicious men of the Ku Klux Klan mind, be very careful when they attack other political minorities. One day Catholics may be faced with the slanderous accusations by a type like Budenz — slanders to the effect that every American Catholic is an agent of a foreign power, the Vatican State, trying to change American democracy into a Catholic Church State. I offer serious advice to certain sponsors of Budenz. Don't laugh too soon about the joke you played on the Communists through Budenz. Not only German Communists, but also German Catholics were tortured and hanged by the Nazis, because of exactly such Judas work of people like Budenz.

From all this it follows for me: As long as my forced stay in this country lasts, as long as I can use my pen, and as long as I am not kept from speaking, I shall hit back. I shall use every opportunity to hit back, and I shall be very grateful for every opportunity given me. To be frank, I think the liberal and progressive forces in this country should give me more opportunity to hit back, for the fight against reaction is indivisible. And if by some frame-up, I, a German anti-Fascist, shall land in a prison of American postwar democracy, at a time when the anti-Fascists in Germany and Europe — with the exception of Churchill-Bevin-Greece, Franco-Spain and a few other countries — are liberated, I shall forget nothing and continue somewhat later. You know the policy of frame-ups and provocations has a long

history in your country and has developed to an art. It belongs to the American way of life as sometimes a bad sickness belongs to life. I remind you only of the Haymarket trial, of Sacco and Vanzetti and of the Scottsboro boys.

I fight for the freedom of a political exile to return home. After all, the United States is not a Displaced Person's Camp. I fight against the slanderers who claim that a German anti-Fascist has used his forced stay in this country to harm the interests of the American people. I fight against the attempts to denounce every decent American as a kind of agent because he happens to know me. I fight especially against the attempt to slander eminent German musicians, writers and artists and to denounce them as foreign spies, because I know them and they know me. I want to mention, in this connection, especially, the eminent composer, Hanns Eisler, my brother, against whom a most vicious campaign by the Hearst press has been started, because he likes and defends me as a brother and as an anti-Fascist. Last, but not least, I shall not allow without protest, that the memory of the late Dr. Kurt Rosenfeld, this great German Socialist, who became a citizen of your country and who was a dear friend of mine, be smeared by reptiles in the Hearst press.

Who am I? An international agent? A spy? A man who tries to overthrow the American government? A man who wants to boss all the Reds in this country? Of course not. I could say with Mark Twain, all this is very much exaggerated.

I never have been an agent in my life, and as long as I live I had quite other worries than to trouble about overthrowing American governments. I never was in the service of any government, except as a young soldier in the First World War. I never in my life took a penny of any government — with one exception — I took \$27.58 from the Un-American Activities Committee to cover the expenses for my trip to the hearing in Washington. You know that they had time only for their beloved Budenz.

First, I was not permitted to leave in order to be heard. Now, apparently, I am not permitted to leave the country because I was not heard.

I never was a so-called agent of the former, since 1943 dissolved Communist International, which, I confess, had all my sympathies. This agent stuff of the Communist International has been thought out in the brains of provocateurs and taken over by ignoramuses.

In my lifetime, I have been in quite a few countries. Either as a German Communist journalist before Hitler came to power, or as a

political exile after Hitler came to power. But, wherever I went, all my activities were solely connected with the fight against German reaction and Fascism and its international network, and with the mobilization of all possible help and aid for the German underground struggle. I never went to a country to boss anyone, but to ask for help and sometimes even for advice in our terrible war against the Nazis which started long before 1939. Some people shout for the police, because sometimes in the fight against Hitler I did not always give my detailed biography to every stranger.

So I did, of course, not come to this country in order to boss anyone. I came to this country, from French concentration camps, as a German anti-Fascist refugee on my way to Mexico, by accident because of the war, and was forced by the American authorities to stay here against my will, intentions and plans. On the basis of a presidential proclamation of November 14, 1941, I was not allowed to proceed to Mexico for which country I had an immigration visa. This proclamation was directed against the attempts of American Bundists, German Nazis, Italian Fascists to go to Latin-American countries during the war. Red-tape did not make any distinction between German Nazis and German anti-Nazis. If this had not happened, I would have gone to Mexico; I would have been back in Germany long ago, and would not have to waste my time and yours with Budenz and people like him.

In this country I considered it my duty to do everything I could to help in the war effort of the USA and her Allies in the battle against German Fascism and Japanese Imperialism.

If I mention these activities, it is by no means because I want to boast about what I consider very little. Every American and Allied soldier did more on the battlefields. But I am forced to give an account of my activities.

I gave blood to the blood bank, and I got a citation and a ribbon for faithful service as an air raid warden. By profession a journalist, I used my pen for the cause of the Allies and for the unity of the Allies, and especially in the fight against the poisonous ideas and confusion spread by the Bundists and other American Nazi-lovers among certain sections of Americans of German descent. In this connection I shall confess I also wrote against Miss Dorothy Thompson when she started her propaganda for a negotiated peace with Hitler Germany in order to fight the Soviet Union. Well, you see, as a German anti-Fascist, I am not so hot for fighting the Soviet Union, or the

United States or any other country. You will agree that it was not so advantageous for Germany and for the Germans.

As a German anti-Fascist, belonging to a nation which has so terribly harmed so many other peoples, I am thinking about undoing this wrong and about a future of peace — but not about new wars by anyone for anybody.

I also gave to Communist journalists, for instance to my friend, Joseph Starobin, foreign editor of the excellent newspaper, the "Daily Worker," material, some of my ideas about Germany and European problems, which he used in articles, signed with the pen-name, Hans Berger, invented by him. As a conscientious journalist and publicist, my friend Starobin did not want to sign articles under his own name for which he had not done all the work himself. There are quite a few journalists who could take an example from this professional honesty.

In the "German-American," where I was a voluntary staff writer, invited by the late Dr. Kurt Rosenfeld, I wrote articles either unsigned or signed. I also wrote, with two other German friends, the book, "The Lesson of Germany," a book by the way, not so widely read as "Forever Amber," and which does not deal with the art of love making, but rather with the murderous art of German reaction and Nazism. I hope with all my heart that a similar book: "The Lesson of the United States," need never be written.

During my stay in this country, I learned to like the American people very much. I was and I am filled with great respect for the late Franklin D. Roosevelt. I consider his untimely death a great loss for all mankind. I admired the heroism of the American soldiers and sailors and the gigantic work of the American workers, farmers and scientists during the war. Of course, there were Nazi-minded Germans and Fascist-minded German-Americans who called this "Un-German" activities. You see, it is not so easy to please everyone when you are a German anti-Fascist. Everything he does is "Un."

If there is anything that the Budenzes have said, that is not false, it is their involuntary admission that I wrote for the pro-American, pro-Allied side of the war, and that I was and that I am a firm believer in the necessity of unity of the big powers. I honestly believe that this has something to do with this persecution. Didn't I write against the criminal philosophy that murdered millions of people, a philosophy by the way, that motivates Mr. Rankin in his so-called investigations, and for which I had nothing but contempt all my life — with or



without citation. The freedom of contempt for reaction and its hirelings is part of the four freedoms.

It is apparent to me, that if my writings had been pro-Nazi, I would have been treated like a very decent man by the Hearst press and other publications, and by the Rankin Committee. If I would have come out for a negotiated peace with Hitler Germany as Dorothy Thompson did, and would have shed tears about the hanging of the war criminals as Senator Taft and Miss Dorothy Thompson did, I guess I would have been treated quite differently. Miss Dorothy Thompson may even have invited me to one of her humanitarian gatherings instead of expressing her desire to have me put into the clink.

If I would see a future for China in the murder of hundreds of thousands of Chinese peasants and workers — nobody would accuse me of Un-American activities.

If I had smeared Tito, the Yugoslav and Albanian peoples, I would be considered a very respectable man.

If I would love Franco, Monsignore Sheen would perhaps like me as much as he likes Budenz.

And if I would do a little warmongering against the Soviet Union because it possesses the highest form of social organization, I would probably be permitted to re-educate the German youth in the Western zone in what is cynically called the "true democratic spirit."

And if, in addition to all this, I would have come out — the opener the better — for using Germany and the Germans as Landsknechte, as mercenaries for a new war against the Soviet Union; if I would be an agent for American trusts, cartels and bankers in their fraternization with big German business and the German Junkers, I guess I would already be back in Germany, and I would not have any troubles. You know, to like big trusts — makes one trusted.

You will not find this definition in the Webster but in the dictionary of the devil.

Well, I confess, Mr. Winchell — who has appealed by radio to the Attorney General to put me in jail — all the Jergen's lotion in the world cannot wash away my sin of being a German Communist, a consequent German anti-Fascist, for 28 years, not to be moved, not to be moved.

What are my relations to the American Communists? Did I, the German anti-Fascist refugee, give orders to American Communists, and were there such Communists who took them?

Imagine for one moment the following situation: The Germans

attack the Soviet Union. A delegation of American Communists come to my apartment in Queens and ask me: "What shall we do, whom shall we support? Hitler Germany or the Soviet Union?" And then I answer: "I don't know, I have to ask Moscow." I pull down the window shades and — as it was very easy to communicate with other countries during the war — I go to the telephone and call Moscow. Then I go back to the American Communists and tell them: "Change the party line. The order is to be in favor of the victory of the Soviet Union. I am sorry you will have to be against the Nazis."

Apparently, the FBI made a big mistake during the war. They should not have watched "the house on 92nd Street," but the house on 47th Street in Queens. Hollywood should remake the picture. I know everything is big in your country, apparently also the stupidity of your agent-provocateurs and of people who believe them. Idiots' delights do not know any limitations.

But to be serious again. So much has been invented about my relations with American Communists that I have to clarify these relations once and for all. I shall be absolutely frank. I respect the American Communists because of their fight against reaction and for peace and for the unity in this fight. I am very grateful to the American Communists, because whenever in the past we German Communists asked the American Communists for material and moral help for the German underground struggle against the Nazi dictatorship, they have helped us. I only wish the governments of the Western powers would have been farsighted enough to follow the American Communist's example of helping the forces that fought Hitler. Then this terrible war might have been avoided.

I saw American Communists and progressives fight — side by side with the glorious Germans of the Thaelmann-Brigade — in the ranks of the immortal International Brigades against Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. What I knew only from books until then I learned in life, namely, how courageous Americans can fight for a good cause. Among the American heroes fighting in Spain there were no men like Rankin and his ilk.

I respect American Communists for the work they did during the war. They did everything in their power to help win the war. As workers and as soldiers they gave everything in order to win. To make you understand my feelings about the American Communists better, I shall make a comparison. A devoted American Catholic is rightfully glad when he watches his brother Catholics in other lands leading a

life according to their faith. An American devoted Catholic, living in France, would also have good friends among devoted French Catholics. Exactly in the same way did I, a devoted German Communist, see with great joy what decent Americans and anti-Fascists the American Communists are and, of course, I have also personal friends among them.

Is there in this one world a special law that Communists may not talk to each other, because they are of different nationalities? You see, I am not a liberal. I am not afraid to talk with Communists — even in the United States. The great United States is for me much more and something much higher than your Rankins and your Budenzes, and some of your temporary prejudices. I never liked Prussian reactionaries, even if they come from your South and speak English.

As a German anti-Fascist, I naturally am very glad about the position of American Communists in regard to the German problems, a position which is fortunately more or less identical with the position of numerous other far-sighted Americans. As a German anti-Fascist who tries to follow as closely as possible the developments in Germany, allow me to join those many Americans who criticize quite sharply the occupation policy of the Western powers. The paper of the Socialist Unity Party in Berlin, "Neues Deutschland," states only the truth when it writes: "The economy in the West is dead because reaction in the plants and administration lives." And have no illusions, the merger of reaction brings only more reaction. General McNarney, American military governor for Germany, has announced: "The Hate-Germany-Days are over." Excellent. But these days should not be substituted again by Love-German-Reaction-Years.

Indeed, what happens today in Germany is the systematic prevention of the destruction of the economic power of German reaction and Fascism by the official policy of the Western powers. What happens today in Germany is the systematic encouragement by the Western powers of all those forces, prejudices and ideas that systematically played Germany into the hands of Nazism after 1918. The history of the American South after the crushing of the slave holders, and after the betrayal of democracy by the establishment of a Johnsonian South is being repeated, adapted to the conditions in Germany. But the betrayal of the democratic revolution in your South, adapted to German conditions and peculiarities — means giving a new power to the eternal German imperialist warmongers. What a sacrilege against the heroes of many countries who gave their lives and their health to kill

the German imperialist beast once and for all. But to come back to that agent stuff:

I have never been a member of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. I have been a German Communist for 28 years and I can tell you something. There never was a Communist Party in the world that would allow anyone, even a foreign Communist, to run its business. Under this slogan — you remember the time of the so-called Anti-Comintern-Pact — German Fascism tortured and killed hundreds of thousands of German Communists and other progressives and attacked other countries. In the name of this same slogan, the French Fascists and collaborators hunted down French Communists and other French patriots. I ask myself seriously, are there really still any Americans left on this side of the world, which you call the New World, who are taking over at this time all the discarded lies of Hitler Germany, as one takes over old, worn out, dirty clothes?

No, ladies and gentleman, I did not boss the American Communists. They would have thought me crazy if I would have tried it.

What made Budenz run? Ideas or ideals? No, definitely no.

Budenz is nothing but an agent provocateur, or a mouton, as one says in French, a rat and a fink, as one says in English, and ein Acht-groschenjunge, as we say in German.

Why didn't the Wood-Rankin Committee ask its witness the following questions:

*First:* Did Eisler give you the order to become a spy? Did you take this order? And what did you do, Mr. Budenz, after having become a spy?

*Second:* Did Eisler give you orders to overthrow the Federal Government, or the government of one of the 48 states, or at least of one of the smaller communities? And what did you do, Mr. Budenz, in order to carry out these orders?

*Third:* Did Eisler give you the order to become an agent of a foreign power, and what did you do, Mr. Budenz, after having accepted this order?

*Fourth:* What specific orders, Mr. Budenz, did you get from Eisler in order to harm the American people, and what did you do in order to carry out these orders? Mention exactly the text and contents of at least one such order, at least a little tiny order.

And in order to encourage this witness, who is apparently easily encouraged, the Wood-Rankin Committee could have told him:

Don't be afraid, Mr. Budenz, even if on Eisler's orders you did

become a criminal, a spy, an agent, a conspirator against the government, a man that harmed the interests of the American people, don't be afraid, Mr. Budenz, nothing will happen to you. You will remain a professor, you will continue to educate American youth, and teach them not to give false witness against their neighbors. You will remain a model American in the eyes of the Un-American Activities Committee, and last, but not least, all your expenses will be paid.

I may say at this point: For God's sake, don't send such a model American to Germany for the re-education of the Germans. There is really nothing that he could teach the Nazis. They know it all.

Well, Budenz may have been a spy, or an agent, or anything else, but not because of me. I never talked with him, and I never gave him orders. The only thing he apparently knows about me is that I cooperated with Starobin and what he read in a little gutter sheet, published in this country during the war by a European rattlesnake.

If Budenz would have changed his political opinions, if he would have become a convinced anti-Socialist, a convinced anti-Marxist, I would not waste one word against him. He would be none of my business. Let American Marxists worry about their political adversaries. After all, one can change one's political opinions and remain decent. For example: Millions of people, among them hundreds of thousands of Catholics have changed or are changing their opinions in Europe and in the whole world. They have become or are becoming Communists, or their allies and friends. To change one's opinion is one thing. But to spread lies about and slander former political friends in order to open the doors for persecution, that is quite another story. That is the reason why the case of Budenz and his cooperators has nothing to do with truth, politics, religion or ideals. It belongs in a textbook about the different methods of provocation.

There is an old German fairy tale. The good citizens of the town of Hameln were plagued terribly by rats. So they hired the service of a man who promised them to clean the town of all the rats. This man played the flute so abominably and disgustingly that all rats liked it very much and followed him wherever he went. One day he led all the rats into a nearby river and drowned them.

The United States is not the small town of Hameln. Apparently, here the rats play the flute and behind them march such respectable and such serious citizens like the members of the Un-American Activities Committee, Dorothy Thompson, Walter Winchell, and the publishers of certain publications.

I will make you a proposal. Since May 25, 1945, I tried in vain to return to Germany. If you help me now to return I promise you to go to Hameln and try to find this rat catcher. If I find him I will try to persuade him to go to the United States. It seems to me he could be of very great use in this country. I shall advise him to establish his headquarters near the Hearst press, the World-Telegram, and similar places.

Let the Budenzes and all the other members of his profession beware when the "Rat-man of Hameln cometh."

For myself, I have only one wish: To return home, to share the misery of my people, and to work in the ranks of those Germans who try to find a decent way and a happier life for the German people.

I ask you: Do I demand too much? Don't you think my wish should be granted despite my being a German Communist?

## Organizations participating in Eisler's defense:

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF FOREIGN BORN  
CIVIL RIGHTS CONGRESS  
FRIENDS OF THE GERMAN AMERICAN  
GERMAN AMERICAN LABOR COUNCIL



### Eisler Defense Committee

(Committee in formation)

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Send your contribution to "The German American, Inc." to help spread the truth about the Eisler Case.

THE GERMAN AMERICAN, Inc.

305 Broadway, Room 207, New York 7, N. Y.

Enclosed please find \$..... as my contribution to spread the truth about the detention of Gerhart Eisler in this country.

Name .....

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~~~~~  
**You can help Gerhart Eisler to return to Germany. Send the attached slip to:**

HON. JAMES F. BYRNES

State Department

Washington, D. C.

I wish to protest the enforced detention in the U. S. of the outstanding German anti-fascist refugee, Gerhart Eisler. A man of Eisler's knowledge and experience in the struggle against fascism is urgently needed to help in the denazification, demilitarization and democratization of Germany. It is in the best interest of the preservation of peace if he is permitted to return to Germany at once.

Name .....

Address .....

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