

Chapter 14

Letters to Hanna Loewy, 1950

Letter 1. Folder C37, not dated.

[The cyclotron fire was reported February 23, 1950, dating the letter between then and May 1950, from the reference to Britten's PhD.]

Dearest Hannah

I have been waiting for you to write to me, but it looks as if I'll have to write first.

I am glad that you had such a good time in San Francisco and Berkeley. These are certainly lovely places. Perhaps we can see them together sometime.

By now you are probably immersed in work. I hope you have a good job and enjoy yourself. Please write soon and let me know what is happening to you. The Pines keep on hearing about you indirectly (from the Barnets [name not clear] and from Shirley in Los Angeles). But you promised you would write me within a week or so, and didn't do it. Have you forgotten me?

I talked recently to Esther (from Roosevelt). She said she had a good cry on your shoulders, and that you promised to visit her the day after New Years, but never did. She likes you a great deal.

As for me, the news is mixed. It looks like there may be more trouble about this Weinberg business. The man Rushmore who called you up wrote an article in the Journal American asking why I had not yet been fired. About that time, Oppenheimer happened to talk to Dodds, who indicated that there would be a lot of trouble about my reappointment, and that there was no chance for it at all unless the faculty backed me very strongly.

As for the work on the theory, it is coming along. Things look a bit promising. I just got another idea on the quantum theory also. It is based on the fact that at the microscopic level, the quantum theory deals only with potentialities. For example, the quantum theory describes the probability that an electron can realise its potentiality for a given position. But to realise this potentiality, it must interact with some large scale (classical) system, such as an apparatus which measures position. It is only at

the large scale that definite and well-defined events can exist. But the quantum theory has meaning only insofar as it predicts the relation between the microscopic state of the system and large scale macroscopic events that can be observed. Thus, the quantum theory presupposes the validity of classical concepts at the classical level. This means that one does not deduce the classical theory from the quantum theory, but that the two work together to describe the whole system. This is in contrast to most theories in physics, in which we analyse all large scale phenomena in terms of the small scale components. Here, we see that at the large scale level, new (classical) phenomena appear, which are not contained logically in the small scale phenomena alone. In other words, the behaviour of the whole system cannot be reduced to a description of the relationship of all its parts, since, new properties appear in a large aggregate, not contained at all in the behaviour of the microscopic systems.

Right now I am a bit depressed by the way the US is heading for war. Also, I am lonely for someone to talk to at night (the days are still very busy).

The car is beginning to act up again. Tonight, the water began to boil for no reason at all. I guess I'll have to take it to the garage.

I should also say that Helen is beginning to get in trouble over the Weinberg business. The FBI came to the president of her University and told him that she had been a Communist, etc., etc. Now the president wants to fire her. I don't know what she will do, but it isn't certain yet that she will be fired.

Well, I guess that's enough bad news. The Brittens were finally over to dinner tonight. The Pines came over later and brought a little man, a "troll", for Erich. Erich thought that the troll looked like Panofsky.

You may have read that the cyclotron burned down here in Princeton. There was about \$200,000 damage and it will take at least six months to replace it. Roy was just ready to do his thesis on it. He is now working a deal whereby he will do his thesis in Berkeley instead starting in May. Maybe you can get together with the Brittens sometime this summer.

Well, there isn't much more news. I wish very much that you would write to me, especially about what you are doing, and how you are feeling.

Love

Dave

Letter 2. Folder C37, not dated.

[This letter and the next one seem to relate to a visit, probably in 1950, to a Radiation Research Lab in Florida. No date or further details are available].

Tuesday

Dearest Hanna,

Thanks very much for your letter – I was very glad to get it. It is very sad about Peter Ceike[not clear]. I hope that he recovers. Everything seems to be in a plot to prevent you from having some peace to get your work done. Let us hope that things will soon quiet down.

The weather down here is quite warm, but on the whole not unpleasant. There is usually a brisk wind blowing from the Gulf Stream (about a mile offshore) which is very pleasant and relaxing. I just love to sit on the beach in this fresh warm damp wind. It is so much nicer than the cold winds that blow off northern seas. The water is warm, and I bathe in it often. I like to float and to watch the waves break. One gets a feeling of unity with this warm sea, and sometimes I wish I could dissolve in it and spread out to its furthest shores. It is also very beautiful at night, especially when the moon reflects off it, outlining the sea with its palm-lined beaches and the waves breaking on the shore. It would be very nice if we could watch it together. I would like for us to sleep on the beach, listening to the water.

Except for the beach, however, Florida is not very attractive to me. The people here are wealthy but quite friendly. They want me to stay, but I just couldn't put my heart into their kind of life. It just frustrates something very fundamental in me.

I tried to get in touch with the Brittens by phone, but the man at the boatyard in Melbourne didn't know where they lived. If I stay here this weekend, I'll go out there anyway, and try to find them. I may be able to leave by Saturday, but at latest, I shall leave by next Wednesday.

I'm looking forward to seeing you and everyone else at home very much. I wish we could take a vacation together on the money I earn. Could you investigate some place in New England. Perhaps Eugene has a place. It would be no vacation if I went alone.

Love
Dave

Letter 3. Folder C37, not dated

[This letter and the previous one seem to relate to a visit, probably in 1950, to a Radiation Research Lab in Florida. No date or further details are available].

Hotel Shamrock
160 Australian Avenue
Palm Beach, Florida

Dearest Hanna

Well, here I am in Palm Beach. I have not yet been to see the Radiation Research Lab, but will go there soon. (It is now 9:30 AM and I am waiting for Coleman to pick me up). The weather is warm (about like N.Y.) and rather damp. The beach looks lovely, and I hope to swim in it soon. But it would be hell to try to live here very long, even though it will probably be relaxing for a while.

I was very lonely for you last night. I felt as if I were 1000 miles away from anyone I could really talk to on a common basis. I worried a great deal about how we're going to solve our problems of getting married and each having some creative work. I certainly hope that it is possible for us to go to Brazil.

The town here has nothing but coconut palms. They're nice for a change. But the buildings are unattractive. All of the work is done by negroes. I haven't seen a white man doing any heavy work at all – the most a white man will do is to direct some negroes. It is all very bad, both for the black man and for the white man.

Well, I'll write more later.

Love

Dave

Letter 4. Folder C97, not dated.

[Early Spring 1950 (reference to first traces of spring)]

Dearest Hannah

I was so glad to hear that you are having such an interesting time in Hollywood. You really are getting to see some of the big shots! I hope very much that you can work out something with the atom, or perhaps better yet, help Benoit Levi to start a film in France, and go to work with him. Lily read (or translated) your book (2nd instalment) and it was really fascinating. It is amazing that you met up with such nice people as the Mollenhauers. Even if nothing comes of this trip (and something probably will) you will have had a wonderful time and learned a lot.

As for me, don't worry so much. There is no immediate crisis, but there will be a long range difficulty beginning next year when the time comes for my reappointment. I spoke to Shenstone, and he was very encouraging, although he could not guarantee my reappointment, because it depends on the Regents. Even if I don't get reappointed, I'll make out somehow.

The theory is still in a tough stage, but every day, I see new aspects of it. I oscillate between being a bit tired and depressed but as soon as I stop working on it, I feel fine. It's hard to describe, but I think I have a feeling as to how to get some of the psychological causes of this tension which leads to tiredness and poor digestion. It is somehow connected with my feelings toward other people and to the world generally. But by means of an orientation that I can best describe [as in original] as "not feeling separate", I can come to a state of peculiar good feeling and intensity, a feeling of being at one with the whole world and everything in it. Yet, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to maintain this feeling at work, because deep thinking seems to require withdrawal from the world, and this leads to strain, tiredness and depression. If I can only change my way of thinking, perhaps I can improve the situation.

The weather in Princeton is cold, windy, and rainy. Yet, the first traces of spring are in the air. Perhaps they are in me, because as I walked home tonight, I felt a sort of sense of infinite possibilities which were latent in people, something that I probably haven't felt since I was a small child. Somehow these possibilities have to be unlocked and released from the vicious nightmare which now prevents their realization. Yet one feels helpless, knowing how good life could be for everyone, and unable to take the steps needed to help bring this about. Instead, one can only watch the inexorable development of this country toward dictatorship and war. Eric and I talk every night, and we always come to the same conclusion, that the American gov't has chosen a course which has meaning only if it leads to war. The people who rule the country are getting ready to take a desperate gamble on world domination, because they know that their position is already lost, if they do nothing at all.

Perhaps I can visit Calif. for a while this summer and we can have a vacation together in the mountains. It would be nice to have a car there, but I hesitate to ask the De Soto to travel 6000 miles (it is already past middle age).

Please let me hear from you, about what you are doing, how you are feeling, etc. And don't worry about me. The Pines send you their regards.

Love
Dave

Letter 5. Folder C97, not dated.

[This letter and the next 4 undated letters are presumed to be later than Letter 4, but before the response to Hanna's letter in Letter 10]

Dearest Hannah

I just thought I would write you a brief letter. You seem to have forgotten me, since you neither wrote nor even mentioned me in your letters to Lily. Perhaps you are going around with someone else. I wish that you would write me sometime.

I am very busy. I keep working on the theory and learn more and more things, but no real results. I now know that my ideas of last Fall were much too naive, but think that I can now see how the same general objectives can be accomplished by much deeper methods. But nothing is really clear yet.

I have been thinking of going to Europe the year after next. I have an offer to go to England, but it is contingent on getting a fellowship; such as a Guggenheim.

I see that you are having a wonderful time and I certainly hope that you can either get a good job or swing this deal with Benoit-Levi. Perhaps you can get a 10% commission, and thus get a real start in the business.

I often feel lonely for you and wish that you were here. It was so nice to be able to come home to you.

Please let me hear a little bit from you

Love
Dave

Letter 6. Folder C97, not dated.

[See note with Letter 5]

Dearest Hannah

Thanks for your previous letters. It is reassuring to learn that there are so many homosexuals in Hollywood. It is ironical that the principal American efforts at glorification of heterosexual relationships are carried out mainly by homosexuals, but this just goes to show the close unity between opposites.

About your getting a job, I have mixed feelings. On the one hand, I hope that you find an opportunity to use your abilities and to work hard on something that is really worth doing. On the other hand, I am afraid that I will never see you again, after you are absorbed into the distant (from me) vortex of Hollywood. It may be true, as everyone tells you that Princeton is a good place to be from, but the same probably also goes for Hollywood. Hollywood has always tended to be insincere and excessively commercialized, but now that the gov't and the FBI are entering into the picture, the pressure towards conformity must be almost irresistible. I think that the production of an honest picture is almost impossible in Hollywood, because any such picture would contain implicit criticisms of the so-called "American Way of Life", about which the gov't is very sensitive these days. The gov't would like to spread the idea that the only problems faced by Americans are difficulties arising in making romantic adjustments. Practically no one in the movies is faced with the problem of earning a living in a none-too satisfactory way, nor do people ever suffer injustices or frustration, except in that they cannot always have the mate that they would like. Because Hollywood is so hopelessly embroiled in such problems, I think it would be much better if this deal with Benoit Levi should be successful.

I hope that your job with Marshall Field will go through successfully. I think that you will be able to do very well at it.

As for me, I have been working somewhat, but tend to become depressed. The U.S. is going Fascist very rapidly, and I am afraid that it has already gone too far to be stopped. It seems to me that at least a partial destruction of "Western Civilisation" is by now unavoidable. In fact, it's hard to see how much good can develop as long as the press and radio are able to pour out floods of misleading propaganda, which prevent people even from considering some of the steps needed for a solution of the problems before us. I am afraid that there will be a great deal of suffering here before people will consent to face some of these problems realistically.

Another problem before me is that they are reviving all this trouble about the "Weinberg case". Nothing has happened yet, but there is a grand jury in San Francisco looking into this case. With the rise in hysteria since last year, the problems will be much more serious, if I am called as a witness. Because the country is coming so close to dictatorship, I feel very uneasy about everything.

I got a sort of offer to go to England in Fall of 1951, to work with a man whom I knew while in Berkeley (Massey). However, passports are becoming more difficult. Also, I wonder even whether it's wise to wait that long.

So much for my problems. Every now and then, I talk to people who are not in science about all the new developments such as the hydrogen bomb, etc. People look on scientists in a somewhat hostile way as the creators of so many horrible weapons. They don't stop to think that science can be either destructive or constructive, depending on the people who use it. It occurred to me that a good motion picture dealing with this subject, such as the one you are planning, would help create a better frame of mind in people, so that they would want to utilize science constructively, rather than just to kill people. Only I am afraid that in Hollywood, you would have to distort the picture quite a bit, so as to make sure it contained no implied criticisms of the U.S. gov't or the "American Way of Life".

I hope that my letter was not too depressing. Actually I am not always this way, but right now I just don't feel too well. It's a vicious circle, because I remain sick in the intestines as long as I am depressed and depressed as long as I am sick. When I work on something hopeful, then I can get over both the sickness and the depression, but it's hard to do that these days. Perhaps if I stopped reading the papers, I'd feel better. Anyway, I think I'll let myself be examined, as suggested by Dr. Brunn.

I have been thinking of coming out West later this summer. I would very much like to see you.

Love Dave

Letter 7. Folder C97, not dated.

[See note with Letter 5]

Dearest Hanna

I was glad to hear that you are doing so well in Hollywood. I was away when your last book came, and it has since then been sent to N.Y., but I did get a summary. It is very good that you are in a likely position to get a job soon. A person as good as you can get a job even when the rest of Hollywood is unemployed!

As for me, I fear that there will soon be trouble with the Unamerican Activities Committee. They have already cited about 30 people for contempt. These are people who refused to answer because of self incrimination. They said that they plan to cite all those who refuse to answer for any reason at all. If I am cited, then there will be much trouble. First, as soon as I am indicted, I will be suspended from my job. Then there is all the trouble with lawyers, especially the expense. Then comes the trial. Although the law is clearly on my side, one cannot predict the outcome of a trial these days, and it is not unlikely that I could be convicted of contempt. Meanwhile, there will be no possibility of a job, and even if I am acquitted, it will be very difficult to get a job. If this happens, I confess that I don't know what to do. I have a feeling of being trapped and choked, for at best, I can see little chance to work on the things that seem interesting and important to me. Even if these troubles don't materialise immediately, however, I doubt that I can work very effectively. As soon as I finished my book, I became depressed, because I feel that the problems I tried to work on are too difficult to be achieved in the time that is probably available – if at all. Anyway, I wonder whether I really have the ability to do these things.

Then I become very lonely, because in Princeton there are so few people to talk to. Perhaps I need a vacation, but to go off somewhere by myself would just depress me still more, especially now that everything is beginning to become so dangerous.

I am sorry to have nothing but bad news. There is however nothing to worry about immediately as all of these legal affairs take a long time.

I have been very lonely for you the past few weeks. It isn't entirely this latest trouble that is the cause of it, because I have felt that way before it developed. I now realise that from my point of view, I should not have let you go, although it is certainly the best thing for you. I love you would like to marry you. But it would be foolish, I suppose, to do it now that you are just getting started. Only I don't know how I can stand another year at Princeton all by myself. This is what really gets me down. These troubles with the Unamerican Committee don't bother me so much; in fact, by giving me something definite to work on and fight for, they probably raise my morale. (Ever since they started, my digestion has improved a great deal). Perhaps my temperament is not suited to working on a thing like research which is both uncertain and something that keeps you away from people. Besides I am afraid that I no longer really believe in the possibility of success in what I am doing, although on this point I think a vacation would help a lot. I want very much to see you this summer, but I don't quite know what to do. First, I wonder whether you haven't changed in the way that you feel about me. Secondly, if you would like me to visit you, is there anywhere near your place that I could stay? Several possibilities exist: (1) I could come out in the middle of July or toward the end. If you go to Aspen, I could drive with you.

(2) I could come to Aspen with Lily and Lotty. If you drive out, then perhaps I could accompany you back and return East by air.

Please let me hear soon what you think of these possibilities.

With all my love,
Dave

Letter 8. Folder C97, not dated.

[See note with Letter 5]

Dearest Hanna

I hope you will excuse me for writing you two such pessimistic letters as the last ones that I wrote you. But I'm now over this pessimism. I have the feeling that things will work out well in the end. There will be a long period of trouble and suffering which will reach its culmination in the next four or five years but if one can only survive then one will see all sorts of wonderful things develop. It seems clear to me that the forces which try to hold back humanity will soon be broken, partly because they are trying to do the impossible and partly because of the stupidity of the people who try to carry out such an insane policy. I don't know what changed me to this fundamental optimism, but it was the realization perhaps that the whole system is so shaky, as one can see in this Korea business.

Your letter to me was very important as it was the first thing that turned this tide of depression. The acceptance of one's small but non-zero role in the rest of the world is really a wonderful aid to sanity in troubled times like these. I can see how I can contribute something in the sense that my actions affect quite a few people around me. If they stick me in jail, quite a few people will be led to see the hypocrisy of the claim that the U.S. is part of the so-called "free world". Moreover, it's not only true that no man can be totally free while another is in jail, but also that no man is totally in jail while there are people outside to fight for his freedom and that of other people as well.

Meanwhile I am beginning to work again with enthusiasm because I can see a purpose in it after all. This work is part of a fight against the insanity that has taken over this nation both indirectly and directly. It is indirectly so in the sense that all efforts towards a rational understanding of nature are also directed at removing the feeling of helplessness with which man confronts his problems. But even more directly, I feel that the more I can accomplish in the time that is left, the more of a blow that I deliver to the people who may put me in jail. For such an action on the part of the government will then be seen more clearly by people everywhere and especially in other nations as an exposure of the actual nature of our system, which is now trying to deny freedom to anyone who will not give up the most elementary concepts of decency.

Well, I am hoping that I can see you this summer. I'll tell you frankly that I do need a woman very badly, and that woman is you. I think very often how wonderful it would be for me if you were still here, but then I think it's better for you where you are. Perhaps we can eventually get together permanently (or as permanently as the present world situation permits people to stay together). All kidding aside, I really do long to see you

Love
Dave

Letter 9. Folder C97, not dated.

[See note with Letter 5]

Dearest Hanna,

Thank you for your very wonderful letter. It cheered me up a great deal. It is hard to realise the wider aspects of this problem in a time when all the old way of life is collapsing. The thing that bothers me so much is that while people may be sympathetic with my troubles as an individual, they are at the same time solidly supporting general policies which will increase not only my own troubles but also those of everyone else. As I see it, the people of America have been in part captured by the false ideal of the so-called "American standard of living". Every person dreams of a pleasant home and a sleek car, forgetting that it is the decency of human relations that is needed to make such things at all enjoyable. Every time I see the millions of unnecessarily sleek cars parked in front of so many homes, I have the feeling that these cars are my enemies. In order to hold on to such a car, a person must be ready

to conform and to do anything that the government wants him to. If I had any say, cars would not be produced in large numbers until the problem of food shelter and clothing had been solved for most of the people of the world. These modern cars are really a sort of a drug, designed to lull people into forgetting how they are pushed around. While a person controls one of these tremendous engines, he momentarily feels that he really has some power, but actually to keep this powerful engine moving at his command, he must sell himself out.

As for my plans this summer, I am still indefinite, because of the possibility of an indictment at any time. However the most practicable idea seems to be that I should drive with Lili and Lotti to Aspen and meet you there. I could possibly drive back to L.A. with you and visit Berkeley later, returning by air to Princeton in September.

I am really very tired, both physically and mentally. It isn't only this trouble with the Unamerican Committee, but the whole way of life gets me down. I am very lonely and my work gets nowhere. Then there is the fact that I feel a hostility to everything that motivates our society, arising from the knowledge that the so-called "American Way of Life" is a menace to our civilisation. I don't feel that I am contributing to anything worthwhile in my work at all, because everything is sucked up these days into the preparation for war and Fascism. But worst of all is just the loneliness, which is enhanced by the fact that there are so few people with whom I can feel in sympathy these days. I feel that the cumulative impact of so many contradictions in my life and in the life around me has shattered my feelings. How to heal them up is the problem. Working on physics only makes everything worse, because it is at best a severe strain and now almost impossible. I have spent a few weeks just in the open air, with moderate physical effort and a lot of rest, or else I'll never have the strength to face the future. But it's no use going by myself, as this will probably just depress me all the more.

I had better stop writing in this vein, as it depresses me just to write such things. Your letter revived my spirits a great deal, especially the general idea that people have not all gone bad. Nevertheless I don't see how a great tragedy can be averted in America and it is difficult to see how one can hold out through the 10 to 20 years that will be needed before the present insanity runs its course. The question always is why one should as an individual go through this horrible mess, when it is clear that there is no hope until at least another generation has grown up. I have seen this coming since 1946 when that unspeakable Truman came into power, but everyone said that I was just being too gloomy. In a sense, I have been afraid of just the present madness which is taking over the country ever since I can remember. As a child, I sensed it in people, (especially in teachers) – a tendency to act without reason, just because everyone was doing it, because it was the thing to do. When people act this way, they are capable of unlimited cruelty and destructiveness.

I am very glad that you are doing so well in meeting so many interesting people, and I hope that you will soon get a job. Does Charlie Chaplin still come to your house, to eat cakes baked by you?

I hope that my letters don't give you the impression that I am always hopelessly depressed. This is not true. But I must find some new motive in life. Why should I

work and what should I try to do? Right now it seems as if everything I have done is wrong and silly, and that in any case it is futile because it is slated for destruction. But I do wish that I could be with you at this time. I often imagine that you are by my side and then it seems as if I could forget this mess for a while.

Perhaps I should explain the legal situation to you. Now to begin with, the Hollywood people were trying to establish the right of a person not to talk about his political affiliations. This right is very important because in times like these, a congressional committee can create a regular Inquisition against all opposition. My refusal to talk was based however on the 5th amendment to the Constitution which says that a person cannot be compelled to testify against himself. At present, Communism is regarded by the government as a crime. Thus, under the Smith act, 11 people are already convicted, and the Attorney General has published plans for prosecuting 12000 Communists if this is upheld by the Supreme Court. I was asked by the Committee whether I had been a Communist and whether I had gone to meetings with certain other people including Weinberg. I refused to answer on the grounds that if I did, the answer might incriminate me; i.e., might lead to prosecution, for example, under the Smith Act. Now this right against self-incrimination is an old one, and ordinarily it would be respected. The Committee is now trying to take advantage of the present hysteria to destroy this right. My legal case is good, but the present temper of the Courts is to go along with the hysteria.

Now as yet, there are several steps ahead. (1) Thus far, the Committee has only resolved to cite me for contempt. They have not yet recommended it to Congress, which they must do to make it legal. Congress will take a recess starting July 31. If nothing happens until then I am safe until Autumn, perhaps November. (2) If it goes thru Congress in July, then there will be an indictment and I'll have to be in Washington when it occurs. (3) If indicted there will be a trial. (4) If convicted an appeal, (5) Last resort is Supreme Court.

I have talked with the Executive Secretary of the Lawyer's Guild, Mr Silberstein, and he thinks he can get me a lawyer (at a reasonable cost). I have also talked with a few "liberal" lawyers, but they are afraid that if they take such a case, they will be "labelled" as "Communitistic". I can probably get a lawyer soon, but several of the suggested people are now on vacation.

I hope that this gives you an idea of the legal situation. Now to answer some more questions. The Pines are going to California this summer by way of Texas, and will arrive perhaps Aug 1. David is getting his degree soon but has no job yet.

I certainly hope that I can get to see you in California or in Aspen this summer. If not, then it's really going to be hard for me to find the strength for what is coming. Whether I come depends on what develops in the next few weeks, so I can't say what I will do yet. I hope you will forgive me for writing such a depressing letter in which I worry so much about my own fate. Perhaps next time I can do better. It was very nice of you to telephone and I was glad to hear your voice.

With all my love
Dave

Letter 10. Folder C97, not dated.

[After June 7, 1950, apparently a reply to Hanna's letter of that date. Hanna's letter, not reproduced here, is in folder C37. In it she tells Bohm she had decided she doesn't want to marry him.]

Dearest Hanna

I was terribly glad to receive your letter; you are evidently living very intensely and having a wonderful time. I would so very much like to share it with you. I know what you mean about the sun and the wind and water becoming a part of you. Here in Princeton, one grows tired. The weather is hot and sticky, and the world is so discouraging. Sometimes I wonder if I am perhaps not already too old for the kind of life you describe. I cannot get up any real enthusiasm these days and I have (for the time at least) lost belief in the possibility of success. I still work on things in a desultory way, and objectively speaking, I feel that some of my ideas are good, but I just don't seem to care about them as I used to.

I am very glad for your sake that you are having the chance to find yourself. It is ironical that just when I want to marry you, you are not interested in "losing your freedom". I hope that you can get started in something very soon. The bookselling sounds like hard work, interesting for a while, but not anything to remain in for a long time.

My plans are to apply for a Guggenheim to go to either England or Denmark in Summer 1951. I can work with Massey in England, or with Niels Bohr in Denmark. The latter work sounds more interesting as, it would involve writing a book on the philosophy of the quantum theory. As for my present book, that has finally been edited for the last time and sent to the printer. Galleys should start coming in July, and the book should be ready in September. I have an assistant who will read the galleys for me this summer, so I won't have to be tied down by this job.

This summer I am driving to California with friends. I should arrive late in July. They are going to Berkeley. I would very much like to visit you in August. Also, would it be possible to go on a trip somewhere for a week or two, in the mountains or elsewhere?

To answer the rest of your questions, the Brittons are still in Berkeley, but Barbara leaves early in July, Roy a little later.

The Weinberg case seems to have quieted down there is a fair chance that it will be dropped for quite a while, at least.

I didn't get to see your last book because I was out of town, and Lili took it to N.Y. and left it there. Nevertheless I heard you were having a wonderful time. I certainly hope that there are, as you hope, some possibilities for doing good work in movies and television. You are right in saying that it does no good just to denounce what is happening. Nevertheless, I am very discouraged because I feel that the whole system is like a web of evil, in which the people who take part tend to play the dual role of being both the creators of this web and its victims. In the past, the pressure on the individual was largely economic, and could be resisted by outstanding people of exceptional integrity. Nowadays, there is the added police pressure, which is used

to remove and terrorise those who object to the direction in which things are going. While resistance is by no means impossible under even the present conditions, it is much more difficult than it used to be. On top of this, we have an unprecedented splitting up and demoralising of all progressive forces, on the basis of the totally irrelevant issue of the so-called charges of communist penetration. Unless something unforeseen comes up, the country will drift into Fascism and war, in the course of which such terrible destruction will occur that the precise way in which the progressive forces could win is now unforeseeable. I hope that I am wrong, but I am afraid that people will start to work together for a common good only after this web of evil is shattered by the very conditions that it creates. I am sure that there are wonderful people in Hollywood, just as there are in Princeton and everywhere else. But under present conditions, even the very best of human possibilities are being twisted into bad ends. Thus, what is better than the wonderful achievements of the physical and biological sciences, which are now supported primarily because they provide effective means of killing more people? Similarly, the very wonderful tendency of parents to take care of their children is used to scare people into submission, for if people are responsible for children, they cannot afford to lose their jobs. The loyalty of people to their country is exploited so as to make them so suspicious and hysterical that they will consent to anything. I could go on like this for hours, but it's hardly necessary. What I mean to say is that the web in which we are caught uses the best that is in humanity and transforms it into the worst. As long as this web is so powerful, it's hard to see how isolated actions can do much good.

Of course, I can see that I may be painting too bad a picture. Perhaps the seeds of hope and confidence in humanity which are planted in a single good film will later sprout when the environment is more favourable. If enough of these seeds sprout, the web that traps us all will be destroyed.¹ As you say, no one can foresee the end of what he is doing. But sometime I must have an argument with you. I don't think education is the only solution. More people are being educated to learn the wrong things than the right things. I think that the most important thing is that people shall learn to trust each other and work together. Insofar as education helps this, it is good. But much of what passes for education these days leads to the opposite conclusions. To this extent, people who learn to work together and fight together for a common end by experience are perhaps more reliably trained.

I hope to be able to watch the sun set with you on "this blue glittering mass". I have seen it many times before, and I want to see it again (The same goes for you, only double).

Love
Dave

P.S. I have read your latest book last night, German edition. Very interesting. Would you like to drive from L.A. to Aspen with me?

¹This is known as a "mixed metaphor" – very bad English writing.

Letter 11. Folder C97, not dated.

[Seems to follow 10 (proofs have arrived for first quarter of book)]

Dearest Hanna,

I heard today from Lili that you are still depressed and cannot get started on your job. I am worried about you. I had hoped that maybe after you got started, you could get over this depression, but apparently, it isn't so easy. Are you able to do anything at all? I think that you should still give it a try for a month or two, and then if it doesn't work, come back East. There will surely be some job you can get back here. I want very much for you to be happy, to live in a useful and satisfying way. But things are so hard these days. One must keep up one's spirit even though one can find no real outlet, for the time, because when one person is depressed this causes all his friends or associates to lose some of their courage too, and we can get through this mess only if we all keep our courage up. Each person has a responsibility to all decent people, and that is to keep going and to live his life in the best way that is possible.

So please try to work on this job to the best of your ability, even if it is so vague. Just start to do something, and you'll find that your depression will begin to leave you. You are a wonderful person and it would be a terrible tragedy for everyone who knows you if you allow this depression to overcome you. I know that you have great potentialities which will be developed when the situation is more favourable, and many other people, in an even better position to judge these things, have expressed much confidence in you. As far as I am concerned, I love you whether you will ever accomplish anything later or not, because you are the person that you are. I hope that you will be able to do the things that you want so much to do and I believe completely that when the opportunity arises, you will ultimately do these things. After all, you are only 25 years old. As you are so fond of telling me, I am only 33 years old, which is 8 years old still. So your life is hardly at an end. Anyway, accomplishments have little to do with a time scale. Under good conditions, when your whole person can be focused on a given job, more can be accomplished in one year than in ten years of disjointed and half-hearted efforts, made necessary by the bad state the world is now in.

As for me, nothing new has happened. The man who works on my case as a prosecuting attorney just got back from his vacation, so trouble should start soon. I have just been taking it easy, but am getting interested in the problem of the electron again. Proofs have appeared for about the first quarter of the book. The Brittens will remain on the farm. They send you their love, as do the Pines.

Please try to be of good cheer (and also write me soon)

With all my love

Dave

Letter 12. Folder C97, not dated.

[Bohm was cited for contempt August 11, 1950].

Saturday

Dearest Hanna,

Well, as you may perhaps have read in the papers, I have finally been cited for contempt of Congress. Now there will be plenty of trouble. The first step is that they will indict me, perhaps in a few weeks. Then there will be a trial, and perhaps an appeal and finally the Supreme Court. I cannot afford to pay the regular lawyer's fee, so am trying to get help. Thus far I have contacted the Civil Liberties Union and they are going to talk with me on Monday or Wednesday. I also saw Mr Imbrie who is going to arrange for me to talk with the National Lawyer's Guild. I am going to ask you to do me a favour. Could you find out which lawyers defended the Hollywood Ten and try to arrange for me to contact them? I should remind you that my case is different from that of the Hollywood Ten. They based their case on the First Amendment to the Constitution whereas mine is on the Fifth, i.e., the right not to incriminate myself. In ordinary times, my case would not even be considered, but with the present hysteria the future is unpredictable. By the way, I should mention that my former lawyer, Cliff Durr has moved to Denver and therefore cannot represent me.

Even though I anticipated this trouble, it came as a shock. I am trying to hold up my courage, but I cannot help feeling that the future looks black, because of the madness which is spreading over the country. This latest Korea business makes everything much more difficult. Eric and Lili have been very wonderful to me, as at least I know I have friends. But I cannot see how a good life will be possible for me for many many years. I am not really so young and would like to get married, have children etc. I have decided that my abilities are not really so great, doubtless above average in physics but not really adequate to the problems that I have been trying. Therefore to work on them makes me unhappy. Perhaps I am too easily discouraged but that is how I feel right now. Perhaps someday better people will really understand these things.

Meanwhile I am lonely for you. Your letters really mean a lot to me. Especially the last one you wrote when you showed such optimism and courage in trying to do something about taking advantage of the media provided by movies and television. I hope that your knowing me will not cause the FBI to prevent you from doing the things that I know you can do. Sometimes I think that I may be like the carrier of a plague, but then I realise that a person who would put a career before human relationships of friendship does not deserve that I should worry about his fate. So it is just one of the unpleasant aspects of the present situation. We are all in it together. The fall of one person drags the next down and ultimately no decent person will be able to have a happy life if the present trend continues.

Although the future looks dark, I have an unshakeable feeling that in the long run we are on the verge of a most wonderful era. I only hope that I can live to see it. Even if I don't, it is of some comfort to know that it is coming. The present troubles are a reflection of the breakdown of the old order.

I wish very much that you would write me a nice letter, warm and affectionate but courageous.

Love
Dave