

March 19, 1964

Dear Annie and Boris,

It is very generous and thoughtful of you to write again when we have not reciprocated. It is not that we haven't thought of you almost daily, and we speak of you constantly. But Bill kept saying "don't write just yet, I'll be feeling better soon". We thought of you so often while you were at Menton, and wondered about Carola--she has never replied to my last letter. And one of the things I wonder about is just what would have developed in Bill's condition if we had staid in Europe. Now having come home, and he found that being home did not help his anxiety or depression, I begin to wonder if it wasnt--all the time--a physical deterioration that was causing the other. For now the M.D.'s here have really come to grips with his physical condition--having all these months explained his extreme fatigue, his loss of weight, his dizziness(resulting in a bad fall on the bathroom floor one night), as merely the manifestations of his anxiety and nervous tension. Then two weeks ago, while he was sitting in his big velvet chair in the living room, he had an attack of what I certainly thought was a coronary occlusion--it was exactly like the first coronary he had in 1955. Another one, lasting less long, the next day. Dr. Talpers had an ~~enzyme~~ enzyme test made, and a cardiogram, then declared his condition to be coronary insufficiency. He has been restricted to the house, though not strictly confined to bed all day, very light meals, and to have at all times pills to take the instant he feels an attack starting. He has been very, very short of breath, too and the most indescribable exhaustion, at which times he grows green and white, his pulse is very, very slow--whereas in the attack of pain his pulse races and stops alternately-- and he has difficulty in keeping from collapse before he gets back to bed. Now yesterday I drove him in to the doctor's office for a check-up and to see a dermatologist in the same office building(Bill has a small skin cancer on his face which is to be removed next Friday). Dr. Talpers after his examinations and a chest X-ray, has now given him digitalis, to be taken three times daily; he is still confined to the house. Bill and I are both so glad that the doctors dont make h'm go to hospital. Bill reacts very badly to hospitals and the doctors seem agreed that hospitals have only an adverse effect on him. His emotional state seems a great deal better. He is nervous, and has an occasional day of extreme nervous tension; he is sad rather than depressed. But he feels so discouraged because he never yet has felt strong enough to really do anything in the way of desk work, let alone anything other kind of work, of course.

This brings me to the point of saying the next thing I regret very much must be said. Namely, that there seems no prospect whatever that he will get enough better to do the book on your life and works, Boris. We know what a great disappointment this will be to Annie, if not to you also; but you have the tapes,

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Bill wants you to go ahead with some/else, and ~~forget~~ to forget all about any informal or formal agreement or any verbal understanding there may have been between you two. He does indeed think there should be a biography of you, as Annie will agree I am sure; and the existence of the tapes with the "know-how" brought forth in those interviews between you two, should be of great assistance in preparation of a "life and works of Boris Hagelin". No dont put it off--that's my admonition to you. I mean it--DONT LET TIME GET AWAY FROM YOU. DO IT NOW!

As for the books--the library, I mean, he feels that can slide for a while. Particularly since you say it will be perhaps two years before the new plan is finished, and secondly because his doctors do not wish him to make any decisions while in this condition. I realize the two things, the book to be written and the books of his collection were tied up together; so ~~that~~ that now he has relinquished the making of the LIFE, the other is without its counterpart in the agreement, and therefore the whole thing is out. At any rate, the selling of the books is just one more of the things that his doctors tell him he must ~~let~~ let at least now.

Our house needs so much work done on it--the inside has not been decorated for 11 years. But he is in no condition to stand the mess of a complete tear-up while the work is being done. We shall have the exterior painted this spring--even re-doing the OUTside brings a certain amount of mess.

We are so delighted that the family news is good, as you say, and how wonderful that all your American connections will be with you next summer. . . We are so sorry to hear of your long bout with bronchitis. It is such a nasty thing to get over. We hope you will be in the heart of spring soon. We have had a long and nasty winter with horrible winds, and only ONE warm sunny day so far. We notice it more than most persons, although EVERYbody complains--because the winds are so hard on Bill (even though he does not go out of the house) because they bring on shortness of breath.

Please thank Gunnar and Kirsten again for looking after our mail which got sent up to Sweden. Just yesterday a letter came which had gone to Menton, then Sweden. (This one puzzles us because it is from the British Internal Revenue about some foreign dividends--and we have no such investments or income. It must be our book royalties which are meant. But how odd that they traced us and got our address in Menton! The thinking back of it, I suppose: that if we are living in Europe we are taxable for the royalties, and we are not taxed on them as U.S. citizens. Well, the intricate ways of the "revenueurs" are beyond understanding, anyway.

What do you think is facing us in World Affairs, Boris? Bill thinks the world has gone to the dogs, and I must confess I agree with him, when I see the runnings-around and the carryings-on of the Mao Tse Tungs, the De Gaulles, and the Krushchevs, not to mention the Castros.

We are so disgusted with ourselves that in our own state of health forgot Annie's birthday. Please forgive us.