

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

WLBZ Radio Station Records

Manuscripts

5-15-1952

Interview with H. V. Kaltenborn

WLBZ Radio

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/wlbz_station_records



Part of the [History Commons](#), and the [Radio Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

WLBZ Radio, (May 15 1952) "Interview with H. V. Kaltenborn". *WLBZ Radio Station Records*. MS 608. D 16.65; CD 17, Track 1. Special Collections, Raymond H. Fogler Library, University of Maine. https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/wlbz_station_records/101

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in WLBZ Radio Station Records by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library Special Collections Department

Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Irving Hunter Interviews H. V. Kaltenborn

Date: May 14, 1952

Recording number: D 16.65; CD 17, track 1

Length of recording: 15:02

[transcript begins]

HUNTER: Good evening, everyone. It's an honor to have as our guest in the studios of WLBZ the Dean of Radio News Commentators, H. V. Kaltenborn, a world traveler, author, lecturer and famous broadcaster since the early days of radio. Mr. Kaltenborn is one person who definitely needs no introduction so we'll save that time for Mr. Kaltenborn himself. H. V. Kaltenborn is in Bangor to give the first of the Ashley A. Smith Memorial Lectures tonight at 8 o'clock at Bangor City Hall. Tickets, by the way, will be on sale at the box office. Well, it's a pleasure, Mr. Kaltenborn, to welcome you back to Bangor, you were here I guess the first time in 1935, again in 1939, and now here we are again.

KALTENBORN: Looks as though I were almost a perennial.

HUNTER: Well, we'd like to have it that way. Incidentally, I presume that you're a little bit acquainted with Maine after these three visits now.

KALTENBORN: Well, it's not only these three times that I've been in Maine, but I have come here at various times, I've lectured in Portland a number of times, I have been here for the summer, and of course the world knows that this is one of God's most pleasant places, and I've just been reading a book about Maine. It brought back very happy memories of several summer vacations when I was up here.

HUNTER: And what book was that?

KALTENBORN: Well it was a book on nature written by a young chap who I think is working on one of your newspapers.

HUNTER: Oh, that's Bill Geagan and his new book, *The Nature I Love*.

KALTENBORN: That's correct.

HUNTER: A fine book.

KALTENBORN: Charming book, beautifully written and full of the feel and the smells and the sounds of the out-of-doors. I've recommended it to several of my friends and I've made presents of the book to people that I know would appreciate it.

HUNTER: Well I imagine a lot of folks would, because Bill certainly know the outdoors and seems to pack a lot of it between the covers of that book of his. Incidentally, you're an author, too, and that *Fifty Fabulous Years* of yours, I understand, is still selling, it's been a best seller for a long time, and still going very well.

KALTENBORN: Yes, that's true, and I'm particularly fortunate in that's my autobiography, so that I'm selling myself every time I sell a book.

[Both men laugh.]

HUNTER: Good enough. Incidentally, we have Bob Smith, Ashley Smith's son, who is in the studio and Bob of course is working with you on this lecture. Bob, why don't you come over here and let's get you in. Of course, Bob, you're a member of the radio pioneers, along with H. V. Kaltenborn, you both date back a long, long way. Of course, I do, too, but I don't talk about that.

SMITH: Well, Irving, I don't want to take up any of Mr. Kaltenborn's time. We are very fortunate and it gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction to have him here for the first Memorial Lecture in honor of my father. As you probably know, my father was the first minister to be made a member of Radio Pioneers. And [inaudible] that means a great deal to me to have Mr. Kaltenborn here tonight.

HUNTER: Well, that's fine Bob, and we are glad he is here, and incidentally, Mr. Kaltenborn, it seems though you were saying something about a father and son team in the...

KALTENBORN: I was just going to say. What Bob Smith failed to mention is that he and his father were the first and only father and son combination that achieved membership in this distinguished organization which I founded.

HUNTER: Well, good enough. Now, of course, the minute anyone says H. V. Kaltenborn, everybody thinks of you, and for one thing, I understand that you're recently back from the NATO Conference, you had a chance to talk with General Eisenhower. Suppose you report on that for a brief moment or two.

KALTENBORN: Well, after all, what particular part of it would you like me to report on?

HUNTER: Well, what does General Eisenhower think of the situation in Europe as it is today?

KALTENBORN: He feels that he has succeeded in putting Europe on a footing where it is going to be able to defend itself against any Russian attack, and I agree with him. I think we have emphasized too much what has been done in the way of creating divisions of which we are to have approximately 50 by the

end of this year for the defense of western Europe. But what I was interested in chiefly is in looking toward those magnificent new air fields which we have established in North Africa, at terrific expense to be sure, but they are very well built and are a very important factor in strengthening our strategic air power in that area. We have these fields, we have our farmers there, and I think we even have some atom bombs stored up in conveniently hidden places so that if we ever want to start something, we've got the planes, we've got the men, we've got the trained crews, we've got the farms, we've got the fields, and that's frankly just tremendous. Then there's the Sixth Fleet which I saw operating in the Mediterranean. I participated in the maneuvers which they had there a few weeks ago and there you get a new sense of the combined air and naval power that is now available to the Western allies in that part of the world, and that too is a tremendously straining influence on the Soviet Union. I don't think so much of this matter of divisions because in that particular field Russians have more than we have, but in the matter of air power, particularly strategic air power, in the matter of atom bombs which are available, in the matter of naval power including naval air craft carriers from which planes could be launched to strike at the readily accessible Russian oil fields and Russian industrial centers, there is the thing that is holding back the Russians from any attempt at aggressive war.

HUNTER: Well that certainly is heartening news. I know those of us who don't have opportunity to travel around often wonder about that sort of thing and hear of course various conflicting reports from all sorts of sources, and that brings up another question. We hear a great deal about the Iron Curtain and what Russia might have to fight back at us with or even strike at us here in America. Would you suppose that our intelligence service has some idea of just what Russia does have behind their Iron Curtain?

KALTENBORN: Of course, it's extremely difficult to get at the details of what any dictator country does in the way of military armament, but I think we have as much information as we need. We have of course organized an intelligence service, we have our agents within the Soviet Union, and particularly within the satellite powers, where there are great many people who are dissatisfied with the regime and I got the impression that we are now at long last making a very vigorous and intelligent effort to keep ourselves informed on what's going on behind the Iron Curtain.

HUNTER: Well, we heard that you flew around the world couple of times and you stopped at Korea. Now, of course, many people are directly involved in Korea, having sons and relatives of one sort or another over there. What can you tell us about Korea? Does it look as though it's going to go on indefinitely as it has, stalemated? And they can't seem together on sort of truce. How does it look to you?

KALTENBORN: Until we develop a more vigorous, affirmative policy in Korea, it can go on, stalemated, for as long as the American people have the patience to tolerate that kind of a policy. I have said from the beginning we wouldn't get anywhere with the truce. We've been trying to get a truce now for nearly a year, we make concession after concession and all we've done is to give the Communists the opportunity to strengthen their forces tremendously. They now have something like 900,000 Communist troops in North Korea or immediately available in the Manchurian Basin just across the lines.

They have built up an air force of some 1400 planes against at most 1000 that we have. They've brought in something like 1000 tanks. They have tremendously increased their resources in munitions and supplies in spite of everything that we were able to do because our air force is so limited in what its allowed to do. And that's all that we've gotten out of these two talks. We've lost a great deal of prestige. The man who had the right policy in Korea was General McLaughlin, he was fired because he had it.

HUNTER: Well, it seems as though we might need a change in leadership of one sort or another and that brings up another point. You had a talk with General Eisenhower personally and of course now the news is full of all these presidential primaries. Whom do you think would make the best Republican candidate, this is a Republican state as you well know.

KALTENBORN: Yes. Well, of course, if you want a nicely balanced answer, I would say that President, that Senator Taft would probably be the best president for domestic affairs because of his very large knowledge and experience in that field. He is able, he is intelligent, his is honest, he is conscientious, he is hard working, and he knows domestic affairs in greater detail than General Eisenhower, but General Eisenhower, because of this broad experience in dealing with the foreign powers that are essential to our safety in the matter of cooperation against Russia and the Satellite, because of his great tact and ability to handle the representatives of the foreign powers, because of his intimate knowledge of what is needed in the way of preparation against Russian attack, because of his one year experience in organizing the Western forces for defense, and because he has a much broader view of our responsibility, our obligations and our opportunities overseas than Senator Taft, he certainly would make the best president in handling foreign affairs. Now that...

HUNTER: ...and may be better to get us out of this Korean situation.

KALTENBORN: Well certainly, that is true. [Inaudible.] Now you can say which is more important for the next four years? Domestic affairs or foreign affairs? Well, I would say, that on the whole, the two are intertwined, but that you've got to have a man who knows foreign affairs because the president can always depend on his advisors to handle various aspects for domestic problems, but he's got to be the leader, the initiator, the director, the manipulator of foreign affairs, and there Eisenhower is so far superior to Taft that there just can't be any question.

HUNTER: Well now we have two choices here. Would you like to go out on a limb and maybe predict which might be the more successful candidate?

KALTENBORN: I have no question at all in my mind that General Eisenhower would draw the requisite number of Democratic votes, and I'm not sure that Senator Taft could. Eisenhower has shown in all these popularity polls and all these primaries that he can draw a considerable portion of Democratic votes, and since there are more Democratic voters than Republican voters in this land of ours, the Republican who can draw over the most Democrats is the man that ought to be nominated if the Republicans are intent on victory, as I hope they are.

HUNTER: Well, that's something for us here in Maine to remember, of course we're almost all Republicans here but that's...

KALTENBORN: You don't realize the number of Democrats that are to be found elsewhere.

HUNTER: That's true. Well, we've heard a great deal about the Steel Strike and of course that seems to have [inaudible] ahead with talk about the impeachment of a President Truman. Now do you suppose they will go through with that impeachment idea of his, or...

KALTENBORN: No, I never took any stock in it, the impeachment resolution. We've never impeached a president, we tried it once, and of course we failed, and should have failed in the case of President Johnson, and Truman hasn't done anything for which he needs to be impeached. After all, so long as he allows the courts to function and Congress to function, he can't get away with this [inaudible] abuse of the president's power, and that's what we're concerned with. It's now in the hands of the Supreme Court and I hope and pray that the court will decide that the Constitution is supreme, the president does not have the right to seize private property in what you might call his self-created emergency, because the emergency did not exist at the time that he seized it.

HUNTER: Well, Mr. Kaltenborn, we could go on here indefinitely, there are so many things to discuss. One thing I would like to bring out, we talked a bit before we went on the air here, and you mentioned that you would be very happy to answer questions from the floor tonight at Bangor City Hall, is that correct?

KALTENBORN: Yes, and I like the idea of answering questions. It gives me an idea of what is in the minds of my audience. It gives me a little reflection of American public opinion, because you can generally tell what's in a man's mind by the way he phrases his questions, by the subject that he's interested in, by the way in which he puts it, so I'm always anxious when I get into a fresh community like this to get a little chance to sample public opinion and I can do that in a question period, so I'm very happy that that's going to be part of proceedings tonight. I expect I'll talk about an hour, and then perhaps to answer questions for half an hour.

HUNTER: Well, I'm glad we brought that out because, the reason I was doing that, is the fact that I don't have time to ask any more questions and I know very well that the people listening are thinking up questions by the dozens and if they go to City Hall tonight they can pop those questions at you left and right after your lecture.

KALTENBORN: They may even want to answer questions about my answers to questions.

HUNTER: Well it sounds like a good time. Thank you very much Mr. Kaltenborn. It was a pleasure to have you as our guest in the studios of WLBZ, and so we conclude this broadcast with H. V. Kaltenborn, Dean of Radio News Commentators, and Mr. Kaltenborn will give the Ashley A. Smith Memorial Lecture

tonight at Bangor City Hall, speaking on the subject, "We Look at the World." Tickets will be on sale at the box office and the talk will begin at 8 p.m. This is the Maine Broadcasting Company.

[transcript ends]

For more information about this transcript, audio recording, or other materials in Special Collections at the University of Maine, contact:

Fogler Special Collections
5729 Raymond H. Fogler Library
Orono, ME 04469-5729
207.581.1686
um.library.spc @ maine.edu