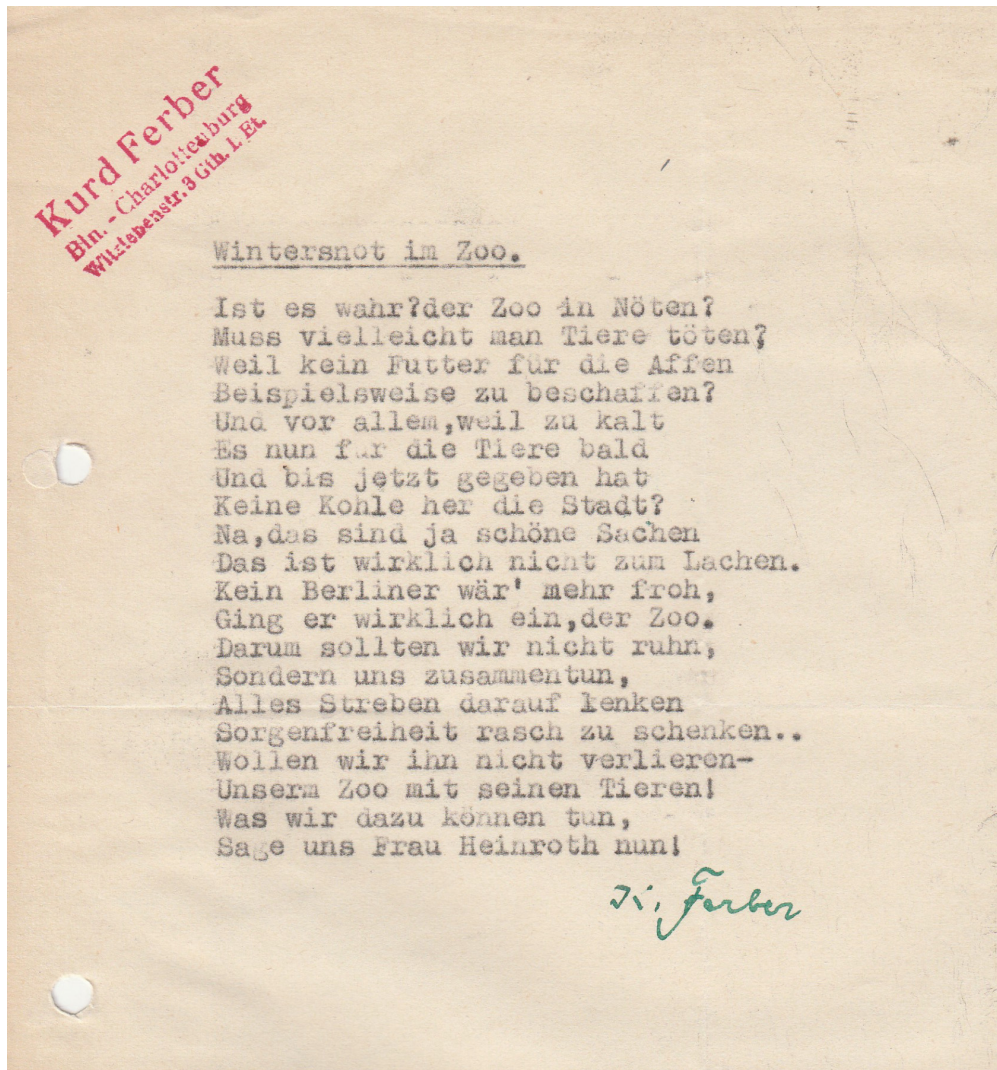


Winter Hardship at the Zoo

A poem from 1948



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Wintersnot im Zoo.

Ist es wahr? der Zoo in Nöten?
 Muss vielleicht man Tiere töten?
 Weil kein Futter für die Affen
 Beispielsweise zu beschaffen?
 Und vor allem, weil zu kalt
 Es nun für die Tiere bald
 Und bis jetzt gegeben hat
 Keine Kohle her die Stadt?
 Na, das sind ja schöne Sachen
 Das ist wirklich nicht zum Lachen.
 Kein Berliner wär' mehr froh,
 Ging er wirklich ein, der Zoo.
 Darum sollten wir nicht ruhn,
 Sondern uns zusammentun,
 Alles Streben darauf lenken
 Sorgenfreiheit rasch zu schenken..
 Wollen wir ihn nicht verlieren-
 Unsern Zoo mit seinen Tieren!
 Was wir dazu können tun,
 Sage uns Frau Heinroth nun!

K. Ferber

Poem by zoo visitor K. Ferber about "Winter Hardship at the Zoo", 06.10.1948. (AZGB. All rights reserved.)

A poem sent to director Katharina Heinroth by a visitor in autumn 1948 does not just give us an impression of the situation at the zoo back then but also relates some of the compassion that Berlin's population had for the fate of the zoo animals. At the zoo, as in Berlin, there was not enough of anything – not enough food, construction materials, or fuel. Back then, in the midst of the Berlin Blockade, Katharina Heinroth and her staff were on the verge of being forced to give the animals away to other zoos or to have them killed due to feed scarcity. The director thus issued a call to the population in the daily newspapers to support the zoo by donating food or gathering acorns and chestnuts. The poem is one of many other

pieces of writing that reveal the willingness of Berlin's residents to help and gives us an idea of the role that the zoo played for them during this time – as one of the few sites of recreation and possibly connected with the idea of a community united in times of trial.

Transcript

Winter Hardship at the Zoo.

Is it true? Is the zoo in need?

Could animals be killed?

Because no food for the monkeys

Can be procured?

And above all because it will be too cold

For the animals soon

And so far there has been

No coal from the city?

Well, that's just great.

It's not really anything to smile about.

No Berliner would be happy ever again

If it really closed down, the zoo,

Which is why we should not rest,

But band together,

Direct all our efforts

Towards freeing the zoo of its woes

If we don't want to lose it –

Our zoo and its animals!

What we can do,

Tell us now Frau Heinroth!