

30 June 1966

Dear Maggie,

I don't have any special news but I do have a spare half-hour before the afternoon meeting of the Trusteeship Council, so I thought I would ramble aloud ...Did you see or hear about the Max Lerner column? He wrote one in the NY Post about a week ago, titled "Political Truth," and opening with the admission that Inquest had shaken his confidence, for the first time, in the WR...He was one of the die-hard "liberals" who, like IF Stone, was ready to stake his life on the WR without even reading it. Well, better late than never...I suppose...and I wonder if Stone and the others will ever get around to rethinking their original position.

Vince reacted very savagely to Inquest; with the help of three co-authors (!) he wrote a highly inflammatory "review" of which he sent copies all around—to Harold Weisberg, for reasons unknown, and to Ed (through me). Vince, in private conversation, goes so far as to suspect Ed of being an agent for the FBI or worse. Yet he is not in the least offended by Fred Cook, who also wrote scornfully that it was imbecilic or nonsensical not to acknowledge that Oswald was guilty; and whose editors (there are more "liberals" for you!) so anxiously reaffirmed their complete confidence in the WC. On the contrary, Vince is planning a close working co-operation with Cook, in which he wants me to join. I am lukewarm to the whole idea—Cook has not done his homework as well as he should have done it if he was going to publish; and Vince's judgment, I am sorry to say, has been off more than it has been on, lately—i.e., the timing of the Connally hit, the near-disaster of the matching shirts, and now the incomprehensibly hostile attack on Epstein (even Arnoni found it untenable and unfortunate—as he told Vince very gently, he himself is vulnerable to exactly the same charges he has made).

Arnoni, by the way, is quite a unique person, as you have probably judged already from reading TMO. Once he got talking about his stay in, and liberation from, the various concentration camps which he experienced over something more than four years. It is hard to believe that a human being could possibly survive and recover from such unbelievable horrors, much less come out with such an uncompromising fighting spirit. Although his interest in the case is one of his many interests, and in a context different from ours, his mind is so quick that he does master the evidence—when it is presented to him—with amazing swiftness and sureness. For that reason, I am rather more encouraged about my manuscript than I might otherwise be. Arnoni asked to read it and before leaving on his vacation had read three chapters—one on Oswald and the State Department; one on Hidell; and one on Bogard and the auto demonstration. He was not as impressed by the peculiarities which mark the State Department handling of LHO as I am personally (it was while I was researching the material for that chapter that I began for the first time to suspect that there was a clandestine relationship—something I had resisted all along). Arnoni did not find the evidence quite as convincing or conclusive as I do. But he was very excited about the Hidell and Bogard chapters, which he considered entirely new ground and extremely significant in terms of conspiracy. I think Arnoni would like to publish something on the case every month from here on in—I hope you have, or will get, the July/August issue with the editorial provoked by Inquest, in which Arnoni pays a long-overdue tribute to people like you, Maggie—even though he doesn't know you, he knows about your work from me and Vince—and the other researchers. I hope also that my review of Ed's book in the same issue will neither disappoint nor offend you.

No vacation for me until August; and when it comes, I won't really know what to do with it. I am disinclined to a visit to Dallas unless I can go with you or someone who at least fills some of the specifications—expertise, and personal compatibility. Anyhow, I am dead-tired, feeling the effects of the last two years of overwork and tension. Yet the thought of a real "vacation" is almost absurd. I couldn't bear two days of being "off" the case.

The escalation of yesterday has put me in complete despair. Obviously the military and the hawks have taken complete control of events—whether the monstrous Texan is their pawn or their boss, the situation is equally black. I wonder if we could do anything to arrest this looming horror even if we had the complete goods on him—or on them. I wonder also if RFK's days aren't numbered. Let him say what he will about the WR, or keep silent, but I hope to heaven he has bodyguards somewhat more alert than the SS were on 11/22. Despite all the publicity on Ed's book, and on Weisberg's, the reporters haven't yet tried to get any statement from RFK (apparently). Yet it was interesting last Sunday on one of the TV interview programmes when RFK was asked about authorizing certain FBI wiretaps, which should not have been done without the approval of the Attorney-General, and his answers made it fairly clear that the FBI had acted arbitrarily and improperly, without his knowledge or consent.

Also interesting is the Dodd business. His ex-staff seem to be spilling beans of the most incriminating kind—but nothing about LHO. I forget who it is, maybe Vince, or that impossible Bill Crehan more likely, who always has darkly suspected LHO was a lackey of the Dodd committee, gathering evidence on mail-order guns (maybe it was Shirley Martin? or all three). I used to have a more reliable memory but in the last six months I have been reading the works of so many people, and talking to so many, that I can no longer unscramble my recollections of who wrote what, or said which.

Harold Weisberg ^{was} subjected to a frightful ordeal last Friday night. He had accepted "blind" an all-night radio discussion, like the one I was on last winter, and only when he arrived did he learn the other panelists' identities—ile., the super-reactionary Kieran O'Dougherty of the NYC conservative ~~movement~~ movement, and Victor Laski, that vicious thug. They both behaved unspeakably, and the moderator sat on the fence. It was three against one, really, and a disgusting exhibition of the fascist mentality. Bill Crehan taped the whole dismal affair and I believe that he is sending you a copy of the tape. (He is so dear and good in such ways, yet "impossible" just the same—he is an ardent supporter of USA aggression in Viet Nam? incredible as that may seem; and probably questions the WR purely because he suspects a red conspiracy was covered up. Mind you, I am not certain of the latter; but it would be consistent with the former. Bill is also maddening on a purely personal level—talks endlessly about the most elaborate and remote irrelevancies, and drinks too much in a coldly sober but compulsive way, though I no longer encourage his visits at all—yet I am fond of him, when all is said and done, and he has often been marvelously helpful with newspaper stuff and tapes and the like).

My half-hour is gone now...I hope I haven't wearied you with all this rambling. I wish I could see you! A few hours or days of conversation, just the two of us, would be a benediction. By the way, your cousin Hannah phoned last Saturday, we had a pleasant talk.

Maggie, dear, I hope this finds you very much better, and I know that you will write as soon as you feel able. Meanwhile, I send you all my love and affection.

Yours, as always,

P.S. I hope you saw Sauvage's review of Inquest in the New Leader?