

1 November 1966

Dearest Maggie,

Just a few news items and a little thinking aloud...Lifton promised to send me the L.A. Times story on Liebel, and a tape of the Lifton vs Liebel TV confrontation...whether yet received...How did he do? He, of course, assured me he was splendid... Bill Grehan, paragon of unselfish support that he is, is still trying to make arrangements to copy the tape of the September 30th "debate" (Theater for Ideas) vs Liebel and Griffin...various mechanical problems continue to plague that undertaking...The project which I set myself in a moment of utter unrealism, transcribing verbatim all the tapes, is just impossible...Horribly time-consuming and maddening and exhausting...I wonder if I can even manage selected excerpts! I do want most keenly to have a written record (verbatim) at least of the various indiscreet and self-incriminating remarks made in public by the WC lawyers...

On Saturday night I had a phonecall from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, asking if I would come and give a lecture on the WR in January or February. They had read my TMO articles, hence the invitation. I will certainly try to accept, if it can be worked out—especially as it would provide an opportunity to try to track down Ralph Simpson (of the mysterious film, see Dean Exhibit); also, I would at least try to stop briefly at Los Angeles and Dallas en route home.

The week before (and I am under strict instructions not to mention this to anyone—but you are always an exception to that rule, when it is merely an arbitrary injunction) the Mother in History called, to compliment me on my State Department article—"not a single error in it!" with patronizing approval, as if everything else published is stuffed with mistakes. Would I send autographed copies inscribed to her? Would I collaborate with her on expanding the article to a book-length work which could surely sell for \$3.98? Dear Gawd! What a monstrous and pathetic woman. She has flashes of insight and courage which compel respect—but mainly she is abominable and awful. (Just between us, please, Maggie.)

My manuscript is at Bobbs-Merrill, requested by one of their editors after he read the TMO pieces. (He is half-insane—as so many of us are—about the unspeakable atrocity of Vietnam—and (how could one not like him for it?) he obtains some relief by scrawling on subway walls "A. Hidell Lives!") He told me the other day that he considers my ms. the best of all the books on the WR—he will break his neck trying to persuade the powers he works for to publish it, but prospects are extremely dim. They are disinclined to do anything on this subject since it would come on top of the four or five books that just tumbled off the presses in the last four months and they think the market is glutted. Nevertheless, he is going to get a "reader" to study and appraise the ms., for a fee (amazing! the ways of the publishing business), in the hope that such an outside expert endorsement of his own opinion will sway his principals. I don't expect anything will come of it...but it is very warming, after the unpleasant experience with Random House, that he has so high an opinion of the ms. Its time will come, later if not sooner, I feel sure.

My review of the four major books on the WR will be out in 2 or 3 weeks in Studies on the Left; at about the same time, the Esquire piece. (You will be interested to know that the abominable Ramparts hoax was first submitted to and rejected by Esquire.) And I am now helping an associate editor of The Reporter write a major piece on the WR, which his editor will probably refuse to use—they are cold-warriors and "liberal" ass-lickers to The Establishment, and certain to remain loyal to the dirty old Earl to the end of time. Still, he is very intelligent and has been quietly interested in and carefully studying the WR, rather, the case, since 11/22/63. Worked with him until 2 a.m., foolishly, as I am just barely recovered from what turned out to be a serious attack of the old bronchial asthma. Still, I feel good today despite the fatigue and insufficient sleep, buoyed up a bit by two things—a good atmosphere with the head of

the office after long hostilities...I willingly meet him half-way, so as to minimize any risk of interference with my real work; and the approaching resolution of the family litigation on terms that represent a victory of sorts for my two nieces and myself. But a lingering cause for distress and regret is the wall of silence which Isabel still maintains, where I am concerned (although apparently she has reverted to her old self with the happily-recovered Lex and with others). If this estrangement continues much longer, there will be no basis for reconciliation. So be it: I have done what I had to do, and I don't know what steps I could take now. Certainly I will not force myself on Isabel; it is for her to take the initiative, and I will not easily cease resenting her inflicting this awful experience on me at a time when the case was going through crucial changes and I needed all my energy and peace of mind for what is surely more important than any petty piques on a personal level.

Otherwise, all goes smoothly and warmly with Vince, Arnoni, even Weisberg. All the information I get, from Harold and others, supports the impression that David Welsh has made himself ridiculous and disgraceful playing impresario to Penn—he has handicapped Penn's ability to establish a rapport with the press—I heard much sneering about his Washington press conference, at which Welsh apparently antagonized all the reporters. Fortunately, Penn is so genuine and brave a person, so truly committed and concerned about this miscarriage of justice, that even Welsh can be no more than a temporary embarrassment to him. The Ramparts issue is vulnerable in many ways and it is hard to say whether it is helping our side, or really helping the opposition more, in the long run.

Darling Maggie, do please let me hear from you. It seems ages since your last letter. Are you well? Write, please.

All my love,