

6 February 1970

Dear Tink,

We are in the opening phase of what promises to be a year-long or two-year "flap" here at the office, with the result that I am not as organized as usual and will have to try to reply to your recent letter without having it before me. I just went to the newsstand but the NY Review of Books issue that you mentioned in your letter is no longer available. I have a vague recollection of having read a review not too long ago of a new book charging that the Gulf of Tonkin crisis was at least partly fraudulent, a manufacture and pretext to extract the Tonkin resolution and obtain some pseudo-legalistic justification for what followed.

I hesitate to express any opinion on whether or not you should take the opportunity you mentioned, because I think that my knowledge and judgment are rather superficial in this particular area. If you could obtain, and if you could publish, the facts as on record in NVN, it would at least give a basis for comparing the two versions of what occurred and reaching a more informed judgment, for those who still hesitate. Personally, I am influenced largely by intuition and the past record for veracity of LBJ, the joint chiefs, and the hawks in general and have long ago decided the issue in favor of NVN, in the Tonkin affair. Be sure to let me know what you decide.

The office "flap" is really rather an interesting one, involving a radical reorganization of the UN family's programme of economic and technical assistance to the underdeveloped world. At present, there is a kind of mutual effort by the UN itself and the agencies like WHO and UNESCO and some nine or so others, working as more or less equal autonomous participants in co-operation with something called "UNDP," which co-ordinates the inflow and outflow of money and does project approval, especially for "pre-investment" projects. UNDP is headed by Paul Hoffman, a nice, ambivalent and not yet quite senile paragon of the capitalist class.

Apparently the USA and a few other affluent Western countries are not satisfied with the amount of influence they can exert, via Hoffman and by virtue of being the main donors of voluntary funds. So a "capacity study" was undertaken, by an Australian (husband of Barbara Ward) whose background is in naval supplies and logistics and who is distinctly limited in his own capacities and quite conservative in bent. He came up with a two-volume work running to some 1000 pages the size of this page and a "package" proposal. While on its face the package seems merely to rationalize and expedite the machinery through which this multilateral aid is delivered (in the form of health projects, education projects, water control and supply, waste disposal systems, agriculture, technical training, and purely economic development projects, by the UN itself and/or WHO, ILO, UNESCO, etc.), its real effect would be something quite different. It would, in fact, place the underdeveloped countries under a new form of colonialism, primarily economic, by the USA and its Western allies, covered by the UN flag. A secondary but much less important consequence would be a fundamental diminution of the autonomy and resources and scope of WHO and its sister-agencies.

The underdeveloped countries or some of them (India, Pakistan, Chile, Tanzania) see through the game and have begun to form a bloc to resist the reorganization or at least to get the most out of eventually going along with a modified package deal. And the agencies had their first get-together on the question this week, with all our executive heads converging here for a 3-day meeting and producing a surprisingly good report setting forth their common position and rejecting a substantial part of the package. Although it has given me a great deal of extra work, I find the whole thing so interesting that I really don't mind--watching the marshalling of forces, the formation of strategy, the play of opposing interests, and the inevitable duplicity and one-upsmanship.

Even so, I have found time to attend the ballet quite frequently and some weeks every night. Last night was quite a gala, with Lindsay taking the stage briefly during intermission to award Balanchine some high City honor, and Mr. B. accepting

in an almost incoherent but highly facetious speech, some of which was really witty and delightful, and at the end thanking the devotees for their "patronaaage" (I am sure that he did not intend to seem to sneer or condescend, but unfortunately it did strike me that way). After the ceremony, the house darkened and we saw the world premiere of Balanchine's new ballet "Who Cares?" with Gershwin songs by the dozen, but without their indispensable lyrics.

I am a fanatic about ballet and Balanchine's company but not blind or idiotic and I was therefore dismayed by his creation. I thought it verged on vulgarity, and banality, and full of self-plagiarism from his earlier and master works. When I got home, I wrote out my own critique, before I could be influenced by the reviews this morning. Clive Barnes in the Times was gentler than my jettings but he did use the word "cheap" and gave Balanchine as many digs ~~and~~ bouquets; and the NY Post critic was even kinder, but called the ballet only a partial success.

Perhaps I found it so distasteful because I have been so transported by Jerome Robbins' "Dances at a Gathering," which I have now seen some dozen or more times, and which is ~~surely~~ the superlative masterpiece in the dance genre in at least a decade. (His even newer postscript to "Dances," called "In the Night," is also lovely, but doesn't approach the miracle to which it is appended.)

I met Robbins, ironically enough, at one of these Trent Gough public meetings on Second Avenue—perhaps even the one in which you appeared with Vince et al. He was deeply interested in the case and seemed to remain interested, for when I ran into him last year at the ballet he made me devote the whole intermission to an account of the Shaw trial. Speaking of which: I had a letter the other day from Kerry Thornley, saying that he had heard from his bending company that Garrison wanted to schedule his trial for the 16th of this month. He is, of course, getting a continuance to a later date, and trying to get the ACLU to take up his cause. I find it disgusting but not surprising that Garrison should insist upon this vindictive pursuit of people like Thornley, Tom Bethell, and Shaw himself, after all that has taken place. Incidentally, Thornley mentioned that because of Garrison's obsession with the Shaw business, he had neglected to take action on a Supreme Court decision with respect to the death sentence of two men, reversing the sentence or remanding them for a new trial, with the result that they were left sitting on death row for almost two years after their entitlement to transfer or release.

Must end this letter now, am being paged by the boss. Much love to you, Nancy, and the children,

As always,

*P.S. 2/7/70 Did hasty check photos & Curry report
Reems resembles only those in car front seat
Also Walker bullet, but it is smaller (CEs 517
519 523)
Enclosing some clips from today's papers
re Taxlin reveal. May 1970 (page 1 LBJ
letter by Bronkita will deal with
Dallas try & give his acct of the
assassination)*