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March 25, 1974

Mr. Bernard Fensterwald, Jr.  
1520 16th Street N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Bud:

I am sorry that it will be absolutely impossible for me to get to the Directors' meeting on April 9. For what it is worth, may I give you my opinions on the topic that you mention in your announcement?

I am strongly opposed to disbanding the Committee at this juncture. It seems to me that it is very likely that there will either be a break in one of the assassination cases or a growing interest on the part of people in the Establishment in re-opening one or more of the cases. In view of what has happened with the Watergate and its side revelations in seeing how the CIA <sup>and FBI</sup> operate, the point of view that the Committee has been presenting is getting more plausible to many people. The renewed interest in both the Rosenberg and Hiss cases, along with the serious presentation that each of them was faked, will probably also lead to people beyond the Committee being willing to entertain the same view about the major assassination cases.

Since the Committee has grouped together many of the best researchers on the matter, and has such a large archive, I think it would be most undesirable to disband at present. Two items I saw just this week-end could launch investigations which would suddenly make the Committee's work extremely relevant. Jane Fonda's interview in Playboy will probably get many people interested in connections between the Watergate and the assassinations; and Jesse Jackson's accusation that the FBI was involved in Martin Luther King's assassination may mobilize the Black leadership to demand a reopening of that case.

I suspect that one reason for the proposal being raised that the Committee disband is that you yourself feel that you have shouldered the burden long enough.

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I personally hope you will be able to keep it up a bit longer. I realize that you have given inordinately of your time and resources. If you feel that you can no longer do as much, is there any way that others can take on some of the burden both in terms of time and finances? I saw recently that the Ford Foundation has given several grants for Watergate research. Could we consider approaching them about the Committee's work?

I hope that you have not been influenced by the attacks on you by some of the people on the far Left. Much of whatever effect their attacks may have could probably be neutralized by some sort of statement by the Board of Directors answering their charges. There is also a serious problem that the attackers are creating a civil war among the researchers. At this stage, I don't know if it is possible to overcome this. Possibly one could build some sort of bridge by getting Peter Dale Scott and Donald Freed involved in calming down some of the hysteria.

If you think it would be worthwhile to have a discussion before the meeting, give me a call. With very best wishes.

Yours very truly

*Dick*  
Richard H. Popkin

RHP:mm