

Mr. Victor Navasky
The Nation
72 Fifth Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10011

10/29.87

Dear Mr. Navasky

Patricia Bosworth's "memories" of HUAC brought back my own. Unlike the Hollywood Ten, I fought them, beat them, and took no amendment. To the best of my knowledge they never published my testimony.

History and I were also victims of one of the Ten, one of whom she apparently thinks well, and this is part of the reason I write, on the chance it may interest her. I do it through you for the same reason.

Toward the end of 1939 I began research for a book on the HUAC. The need to make a living, World War II and at one point that committee and J. Parnell Thomas interfered. Thomas, by the way, changed his name from Keeney and was at one of the larger brokerage or bond houses before he ran for Congress. I think he also wound up in jail.

If not the night before the Ten's testimony one night just before it Edward Dmytryk came to see me, brought by Charles Kramer, whom I'd know when we both worked for the Senate Civil Liberties Committee. They asked for my help, I gave them unsupervised access to everything, they left with what they wanted, and I never heard from either again or got anything back until in recent years I tried to track it down. I've had some correspondence with Dmytryk, who claims no recollection at all, with Alvah Bessie, whose name is missing in this recollection, Dalton Trumbo (who I tried unsuccessfully to have "The Remarkable Andrew" reprinted) and one other whose name now escapes me and is also missing from this listing.

Unless my recollection is incorrect, Ms. Bosworth ought know that Dmytryk was the informer, the stoolpigeon, and I think this is what saved his career for him.

Among the research materials that today could be so valuable that Dmytryk turned over to the HUAC or the FBI was a complete set of bound clippings from the major papers and some of the left wing press. This included the N.Y. Times, Wx Post, Wall Street Journal, etc.

Thomas and HUAC tried to frame me and I fought back my way, which led to other invaluable records Dmytryk made off with.

The Thomas method was entrapment. He and his used the then Washington representative of the Silver Shirts, a native fascist gang of nazis. When they served a forthwith subpoena I told their agent to get lost and didn't appear until I got counsel. I also went to work and soon had three women with typewriters (this was long before the days of xeroxes) in the office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives. As I recall his name it is Shanks. The fine women typed copies of each and every expense account filed by HUAC - and what a literary and historical treasure that was! That also is how I learned and got the proof that the Silver Shirts, David DuBois Mayne, was on the HUAC payroll at the time he swore, before a notary, to the authenticity of what I got from him.

I spent days on end before the grand jury, fighting and taking no amendment. In the end the grand jury refused to indict me and my associate, the late Gardner (Pat) Jackson, and indicted Mayne, the Silver Shirts. Martin Dies had to cop a plea for him and he got only two years for uttering and forging and false pretense.

Jackson, who, like me, knew some of the lawyers and others in Ms. Bosworth's piece, then was a lobbyist for John L. Lewis and earlier had been information officer of the Sacco-Vanzetti committee.

The Dies gang and the other reactionaries actually got a law passed in an effort

to attribute some crime ~~to~~ to us. This is the same law Senator Weicher cited when he threw Charles Colson out of his office during Watergate.

It wasn't much fun trying to take the grand jury away from the United States Attorney but it was possible and although I then was little more than a boy I was able to do it. I do not intend this as a boast but as commentary on the Ten decision "s. Bosworth appears to refer to incompletely. I have correspondence with Alvah Bessie on this if it interests her. He told me that the Ten met and decided to take a principled stand, to use the First Amendment and not to use the Fifth. It was, I believe, very principled but as I think I told Bessie it would not have been any less principled to take at least the Fifth in addition and to win rather than to lose.

I didn't let up on those ^{HUAC} native fascists once they came after me. I also exposed their plagiarism, complete with misspellings, grammatical errors and other faults, of a Japanese source they used verbatim as their own report. Among other things.

I refer to what Dmytryk and those he served stole from me as precious and I think you can see that a complete accounting of how they spent their money, which was taxpayer money, could be valuable. Aside from how I used this to defend myself and whip them, I still recall that it held proof that the committee phoned up its alleged hearing on Consumers Union, which it went after hard. Its then research director, by the way, was a renegade from CU, J.B. Mathews.

Some copies of those retyped expense accounts, duplicates, I'm sure, or those of no interest to Dmytryk and Kramer, remained. They are on deposit at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. If anyone wants to see them the person to write to is Prof. David Wrono, History Department.

Among the others Ms. Bosworth mentioned that I knew is Harry Bridges. ^{She} If ~~he~~ wants a few anecdotes or referral to information about the battles he was in I can help. I may still have the Senate committee hearing ^{info} going into some of that. I edited them.

Bartley Crum, truly an eminence of his time, was a Catholic. HUAC was very anti-Catholic.

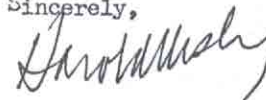
I have many recollections of HUAC and the early fights against it, if you know any writer who is interested.

Another member of the committee of that time was Joe Starnes, of Alabama. I remember quite well what may amuse you, the night of the day the grand jury reported, I was vindicated and the HUAC agent indicted. A number of Congressmen had a party for me at the Madrillon, then a fine restaurant. Congressman Frank Hook, of Michigan, half Indian, half Finn and a New Dealer, sang two songs to me, "The Dies of Texas Are Upon You" and Starnes Fell on Alabama." The puns are on two songs of that era, The Eyes Of Texas Are Upon You and Stars Fell On Alabama.

Wasn't Humphrey Bogard one of the supporters of the Ten? I think so.

I'd appreciate your forwarding this to "s. Bosworth. Thanks.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg