

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

10/1/86

Dear Mr. Navasky,

When I saw Maurice Isserman's name on the cover I thought immediately of a dear friend and fine person and labor lawyer of the pre-HUAC era, Abe Isserman, one of the victims. Then, suddenly, I could not remember where Smith College is, one of the consequences of age. When I saw that he is doing a book on the old left I thought that others also might be doing books on subjects of which I do have knowledge, like his and what relates to it, and I decided to write him through you on the chance that you might know such authors and that I might be able to help them some.

I am 73, was the youngest member of the staff of the Senate Civil Liberties Committee of the 1930s and I had wide acquaintanceships and close friends in the labor movement and in the New Deal government. Aside from factual knowledge I am certain that with regard to some of those people there is a good chance that I'll have humanizing and insightful recollections. My personal relationships with them ranged from boozing to fighting, the latter with and against. Later I returned to writing and for some years was a magazine correspondent in Washington. I had many acquaintanceships and close friendship on the Hill for some years, until World War II. I was also twice a "victim," before McCarthy, and won both fights. If Mr. Isserman's interest extends to the Hollywood Ten I had some relatively recent correspondents with a few of them including the fink who "borrowed" some of my rather worthwhile records on HUAC, never returned them, and, I suspect, turned them over to the FBI. This included a copy of all of HUAC's expenditures, which I'd gotten not improperly.

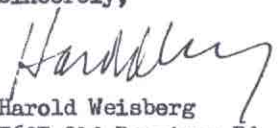
I was a bit disappointed by Mr. Isserman's misuse of the word "radical." Most of those I knew were believing and practising democrats.

Perhaps some day someone will carry Ms. Schrecker's work forward with a study of the consequences of the purging of the teachers in terms of what this meant to their students and, in turn, that meant to our nation. What and the purges, for example, eliminated other than orthodox input to policy makers. I have a few such records as they relate to me and others at State. Where I was purged, fought back, was rehired with an apology, and quit. And which the FBI has never forgotten or forgiven.

Before McCarthy it was possible to fight and win. I got a HUAC agent indicted when they came after me. Depended on how one fought. The Hollywood Ten assured martyrdom by the idealistic decision not to plead the Fifth Amendment, to take only the first. They could have used both without sacrifice of principle.

Please do forward this to Mr. Isserman, on the chance he may be related to Abe and may have some knowledge of him and his law partner, Sol Kapelsohn, also a fine person. Thanks.

Sincerely,

  
Harold Weisberg  
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Frederick, Md. 21701