5/11/69

Dear Mr. Olsen,

Many thanks for the Esquire article. I return it herewith.

In addition to what you called to my attention, I found interest in Rockwell's statement on page 141, where he seems to have adopted the NSRP beliefs, that the Jews are responsible for the Negroes.

Do you know of any other instancexwhere he or his followers so expressed themselves, or where other extremist groups expressed the same or similar philosophy?

I am not certain, but I believe this originates with the NSRP or its firerunners. Do you know whether I am correct?

This does interest me.

My major personal interest remains the NSRP, but I am also interested in the others.

Again my thanks.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Esquire 2/67 p104

Rockwell is said to have tripled the gross sales of a firm manufacturing ball-point pens), but this wasn't the job Rockwell wanted, and in late 1957, he loaded his second family into a trailer and drove South to work for the United White Party, later the National States Rights Party. Concurrently he found himself working for Wallace H. Allen in Atlanta, as he told me, "in the printing and advertising line." The recession cut both his and the party's income, so the Rockwells moved again, this time to Newport News, Virginia, site of the anti-Semitic publication, *The Virginian*. And it was in Newport News, after yet another disagreement, this time with *Virginian* publisher William Stephenson, that Rockwell was recruited by Arrowsmith, the pudgy Baltimorean. Under the aegis of Arrowsmith and his hapless National Committee to Free America From Jewish Domination, Rockwell moved to the modest Arlington home to which he later invited me. Arrowsmith told me he put up a $15,200 down payment on the $23,500 home, and that he also had paid for the press which was installed in the basement. It was this prodigality that inspired Rockwell to write Wallace Allen the "fat cat" letter. The relevant portion of the letter, which was to give Rockwell publicity coming almost up to his dreams, and Arrowsmith publicity beyond his nightmares, read: "Suffice it to say that we are finally beginning to do what we have all so long talked about, mostly thanks

This is credible. Even at forty-eight, the six-foot-one-inch shouldered Rockwell is an imposing figure.

When the excitement caused by his public embrace of the cause began to die down, newspaper space again became hard come by, and Rockwell discovered the publicity value of libel su He drew them up himself, filed them with noticeable fanfare, rarely bothered to prosecute them. In addition to a $500,000 ac against Arrowsmith, newspapers reported suits by Rockwell aga Drew Pearson, The Washington *Post*, Arlington Cardozo Lodg B'nai B'rith and Arlington Commonwealth Attorney Williar Hassan. Lawsuits, too, may have been a tactic taught Rockwe Arrowsmith who sued unsuccessfully the defunct New York *M* and The Providence *Journal*. He won small settlements from Atlanta *Constitution* and the New York *Daily News*. His only stantial legal victory, however, came over Rockwell. After a he was finally able to evict the Nazi Party and its commander the Arlington house, to the relief of the immediate neighbors.

For months Rockwell made his headquarters in a shack in fax County, Virginia, but by the end of 1959 he had found an home. Floyd Fleming, a supporter Rockwell had inherited John Kasper, purchased a house for the party at 928 North dolph Street, Arlington, and it was here that Rockwell beg

Rockwell hoped

was already on his feet, his hand extended. I tried to ignore it. "No, sir," the commander said. "If that's the way you feel about it, you go right back out of here."

"Isn't that a little ridiculous," I asked him. "You want to exterminate me, yet you want me to shake hands." Rockwell was adamant. "By shaking your hand, I am not trying to be your friend. It's merely a custom that symbolizes that you come here in peace, and, for my part, that you're welcome in peace." We shook hands.

Rockwell motioned toward a chair, and, after I sat down, so did Welch, in a chair slightly behind mine. His hand rested on his holster. I was surprised to see the room so clear and uncluttered. Gone were the swastikas, banners and eagles that Rockwell had favored in the first headquarters I had visited seven years before. There was a neatly made bed in this room and several filing cabinets, as well as a desk on which an electric typewriter rested. There were also two bookcases, one partially filled with an *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the other containing dozens of reels of recording tapes. I also noticed a small table which bore a board and chessmen. White had won the last game. There was only one picture in the room, identified by Rockwell as that of his oldest daughter Judith. The only two items I could find that indicated the political nature of the occupant were a small bust of Hitler over the desk, and a flag which, at first, I could not identify. "Vietcong," Rockwell enlightened me. "We took it away from some peaceniks in Washington. Now, I suppose you'll go ahead and write that Rockwell is flying a Vietcong flag in his room." I assured him that if I mentioned the flag, I would put it in the proper context. Where was his tape recorder, I asked? In recent years Rockwell has been taping his interviews. He even appeared with a recorder (which he was forbidden to turn on) at a New York State legislative committee hearing to which he was subpoenaed after his arrest in February, 1966. "I gave up," he said. "You guys never print what I say anyway."

Rockwell and I discussed old associates. He and Arrowsmith "have more or less made up," he said (this was later to come as a surprise to Arrowsmith). "Not that I mean to imply he has contributed a penny, which he has not." Weston Weed, a would-be trooper who came to Arlington only to be arrested for a bank robbery in New Jersey, went to jail and has not been heard from since. Ralph Forbes "is now the captain in charge of our Los Angeles operation." Robert Lloyd, who was named party security officer after his blackface demonstration on the floor of the House of Representatives, is on "leave of absence." He was snatched from the party "by a beautiful Texas woman." Seth Ryan, the "captain" who spoke for Rockwell at Hunter College, "joined a mutinous group that tried to take over the party." Matt Koehl "is the third man in the party now, a major." (Koehl as of December, 1966, has moved up to second.) George Lincoln, once of the New York group, "is no longer associated with the party. We have nobody officially in New York now. I will not allow a unit there because we have no leadership." Floyd Fleming, who donated the headquarters later padlocked by the I.R.S., "never was a regular party member. He was a friend and supporter, and still is."

The day of my visit happened to be the day after the shooting, in Mississippi, of James Meredith, and, in that perspective, I asked Rockwell if he still believed, as he had once told me, that "arrogance and defiance" would protect him against assassination. "That's true," he said. "You notice Meredith didn't get killed. Much as I despise the S.O.B., he had the balls to go into Mississippi as he did. I think when the man came to shoot him—it is a hell of a thing to get yourself to do—I don't think he could do a good job in view of the arrogance of Mr. Meredith."

In the seven years since we had last talked I told Rockwell I had noticed two variations in the stated policies of the American Nazi Party. The first seemed to be a shift in primary targets. No longer ranting exclusively about Jews, Rockwell now appears to be devoting most of his hate-mongering hours to Negroes. "We still say the Jews are behind the ferment of social decomposition," the commander explained, "but the masses of people can't see Jews. They can see Niggers, who are the ulcers caused by the Jewish virus. Where the patient can't understand medical terms, we talk about the ulcers, which is Niggers."

The other point I asked Rockwell about was the puritanism that seemed to have found its way into party doctrines. I asked if it were true that drinking, smoking and cursing were now discouraged among the troopers. "That's correct," he said. "None of us smoke cigarettes. I still smoke my pipe because my boys felt it was a good public-relations proposition, but I don't drink anymore. I haven't touched a drop in four years. One Hitler's birthday party I got gassed and did something I didn't want to do." I asked what that had been, but it was apparent that Rockwell neither wanted to answer the question nor to offend me by refusing. Several years before, the man I was now interviewing had not, on occasion, hesitated to tell me to keep my "Jewish nose" out of his personal business. Now he appeared to be trying to turn my question away softly. He also seemed anxious for me to leave. He hinted that he had to get back to work, that his article for *Stormtrooper* had to be finished that morning. Yet he did not come out directly and ask me to leave. Somehow, this new, moral Rockwell had, like his corncob pipe, become a "public-relations proposition."

I had had enough, but, rising to leave, I accidentally knocked over a chessman on the table beside my chair. As I replaced it, I asked Rockwell if he were good at the game. "I think I am an unconventional player," he said. "Everywhere I tackle players around the country I am called a bloody chess player. I play chess like I fight the Jews. I think a man reveals a lot about his nature in a chess game."

I wondered if he had time for a game, and, *Stormtrooper* deadline apparently forgotten, he had. "You'll have to take black, though," he said. "You can have first move, but I have to play with white." I gave him white and first move both.

"Boy, if only some people could see this," Welch said. He had spoken so infrequently I had almost forgotten he was in the room. "You playing chess with a Jew."

Rockwell played a slashing, offensive game for which I had, unfortunately, little defense. When, at last, I tipped over my king to resign, he leaped up, laughing, and abruptly there was a flash of the old Rockwell. "A portent of what is to come," he