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5/21/66

Mr. Jerome Agel, Editor  
Books, 598 Madison Ave.  
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Mr. Agel,

Confirming our telephone conversation, you may use the Conclusions and what you want of the Preface and any other sections of the book normal for review and similar purposes. You understand syndication and serialization and some magazine treatment are not impossible and I want not to jeopardize them.

Adding to the biographic information, the Senate Committee was variously known as the "Civil Liberties", "Labor Spy" and "Free Speech" committee. It was a sub-committee of the Education and Labor Committee. My earliest professional writing was for the now-defunct Philadelphia Ledger Syndicate, for which I wrote by-line features, and for the Morning News, in Wilmington, Del. My OSS work was classified. Essentially, it was analysis. I was, I think I can fairly say, a trouble-shooter in an agency of trouble-shooters, with all sorts of odd jobs being bounced my way. One of the odd coincidences for which you asked now comes to mind. One of the many fine and helpful senior and executive editors I met on my 30 or more trips to New York was in the OSS headquarters. We had never before met, but he recalled the first job that was assigned, in fact, was waiting for me. Four real heroic types had volunteered for an almost certain-death behind-enemy-lines parachute drop. They were awaiting shipment at the Congressional Country Club in suburban Washington, and got into an altercation with the Military Police. With their advanced degrees in mayhem you can guess what happened. Their conviction was upheld through all the channels of military justice. Apparently General Donovan, a man who felt almost a personal responsibility for those under him, suspected a frame-up. Why the job was given me with all the genuine James Bond types and high-priced lawyers he had I never knew. I certainly am not a Bond type. Anyway, about two months later, with only the available documentation, I presented a case that got the men freed, without even leaving the office. And the man who sat next to me - we were both the swivel-chair rather than the James Bond types - was Sidney Kramer, an authentic (and the OSS's) expert on books, later to establish one of Washington's best bookstores. Do not use this editor's name without his approval, but it is Howard Cady, of McKay's. And he is a very decent guy, even among the many I was fortunate to meet in his calling.

I was, prior to US entry into World War II, what today would be called a "British Agent". Nothing illegal or flatfooty about it. I did considerable original investigation in the field of cartels and economic warfare. I took all the documentation to the easily-located British experts (not in the Embassy but in a small house off Mass. Ave in the 30's, nw). It hurt the Nazis. One story that elicited much praise in this series exposed the system by which the Nazi's were counting airplane noses by their royalties, which they were still collecting through Swiss fronts. So we cut off that nose, to pun badly.

The acceptability of the book in its unusual form is something I hoped for but I must admit, except for type size, it is still a pleasant surprise. Between the time I first considered this kind of an edition and my decision to rush through with it

costs increased so much we had to reduce from the planned 7x10 page to 6x9. As you will realize, if most purchasers will not, on a 5,000 edition in this form I cannot begin to make a profit. I have already given away about a thousand dollar's worth of press and review copies. The cost of sending one to Germany is \$2.66. I have sent 14 to England, where I have an agent, Gordon Harbord, 53 St. Martin's Lane, London WC 2.

I am hopeful that by the time you are out (I don't really know when that will be for although I had heard of your publication, we are broke and could not afford to subscribe) there will have been some press attention in the US. There are indications of some reviews. Some of the correspondents, busy people, are reading it. Some, of course, have. There are also other prospects I am not now at liberty to reveal. I am hopeful, but the next printing bill, due on the 10th., does present very much of a problem.

Those things I told you in confidence were given you so you'd understand and because of your position in your industry. In each case, there is the possibility of hurting people who I do not want to be hurt in any way, hence the restriction. If you have any doubt, please check with me. I leave home fairly early and spend a sometimes long day in Washington, but I'm home at least long enough for a little sleep.

Little sleep reminds me of something that perhaps you were asking for in your question about color. During all the time I researched and wrote this book, I do not think there was a single night I spent as much as four full hours in bed. Often I'd awaken with an idea after a brief snooze, and that was it for that night. Some nights, when it was going well, I'd work right around the clock. Strangely, I was never as tired then as I am now. It didn't really tax me. But when I finish, I just pooped right out. I was dead for a week or so.

My wife did wear out her typewriter on this. As soon as we have some money over our debts, we'll replace it. I wish I knew the Royal PR or advertising man, for we can sure give that machine and the dealer a real plug. It was a rebuilt machine, guaranteed for six months. I don't think any typewriter ever had such six-months use. Three days after the six months, a letter flew off. The dealer repaired it free, lending us a machine during the time he had ours. About a month later some little part became disengaged. He came down at night, repaired it, and never asked a cent, for either service!

Most of the research was done on tape. I sat in on an old platform rocker, surrounded by stacks of book, with the mike on my chest and the hands free. My wife typed from these tapes. I wrote the book on this machine, an Underwood that was old when I bought it second-hand before World War II. I have gotten another in case I need parts, for the machine is long off the market. I have never spent a cent on it for repairs!

The photographic work on the book was done by Double Dot, in Washington, and the printing by Merkle Press. Both, I think, did wonderfully well and have treated me beautifully. The peler typing is a combination of our ignorance and circumstances. Because things are not so good, we sometimes used typewriter ribbons too long. When the corrections were pestered in, I just didn't notice the difference until too late.

May I have your permission for the distributor to Xerox your letter, should he, as I hope, so desire? And please tell me how to get a dozen or so copies of your publication when it comes out for the larger stores in Washington. And thanks really very much for your interest and anything you can and will do.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg