

11/12/69

Toul, Gary, Russ re Ed Butler/Peace demonstrations

Ed + been thinking of the coming "robo" as much as I should have, I'd have written you earlier. The big official flop yesterday, when they got but a small crowd at the amphitheater at Arlington and at the Washington Monument, despite their massive efforts and all the media and superpatriots getting behind them, means something nasty will have to be pulled. It won't be enough to do something to the Black Panthers, though they might. Topically, the government is in trouble when it can muster at best a scant 10,000 by official estimate. Often the FBI is holding back on something cute they can pull for such occasions. They do not always have to frame it; sometimes it is ready-made, but a frame is not impossible - anything to take the headlines, shriek the peaceniks and badniks, scare the fat cats, intimidate participants, especially those on the margins, etc.

From Washington indications, despite the defection of some of the legislators when it became clear the W is willing to provoke violence (reaction to their refusal of a permit was not good), indications are that, without some major incident and really bad weather, this will be quite a thing (coming at the time of the Haynesworth debate, is also will not encourage straddlers to vote Nixon's way).

When I heard on the radio that YAF is going to have a counterdemonstration (all 27 of them), I suddenly thought of the man for whom this is as good as money in the bank and one who would spontaneously rush to federal defense: our good friend Ed Butler! He'll have to be here, with a brand new honorable peace groups made for the occasion (if he doesn't have one in his files all prepared), with his new formula, seeming to be for peace as an appeal to the kids but under conditions that make it impossible, like the government.

The bigger the success of this demonstration, the more these rightist extremist leeches will suck from their hosts. Butler has to be there. So, I am writing to ask that if you see anything in your papers relating to him and the demonstrations and his presence - anything using the word "Square", I'd like to see it. As time passes, I become more interested in him. He suddenly became a "young American" and, as he sees it, he has always been for their kind of freedom. He was very much at the YAF convention. Prior to that there were several indications of an effort to provoke violence by kids calling themselves "Squares".

Russ: when you see Craig, is he has a file I'd be interested in knowing what he has. If he doesn't, I think he might want to add one.

Harold Weisberg