

Rt. 7, Frederick, Md. 21701
11/23/67

Mr. Henry P. Durkin
81 Centre Ave., 3rd floor
New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801

Dear Mr. Durkin,

As you know, I have just returned from an exhausting three-week trip and face a terrible accumulation, in addition to the work in progress when I left. I have completed the fifth part of my study. Two additional parts are planned.

My wife told me of your letter and I asked her to let you know I'd reply on my return. You can read my intentions from the fact that this is Thanksgiving and I am responding. If you want additional information, please phone me. I will be in and out for the coming several weeks, but I will not be away.

I first heard of the enclosed clipping on the KCBS program to which you refer. I was rather surprised at it, for the caller was too young to have had any knowledge of the incident and was, in general, quite evasive. His entire attitude, as you can confirm from Harv Morgan, who conducted that program, was consistent with his having been put up to do something he did not really understand himself. He failed to respond in any way when I, in turn, asked appropriate questions of him.

Briefly, insofar as it refers to me, the story is not accurate. I never gave any confidential information to anyone when I was employed by the Senate, specifically not to the Daily Worker. In fact, I was not on the Senate payroll at the time of my separation. What was involved was actually something entirely different. Senator LaFollette was displeased because I insisted that the investigation continue whereas he felt he had derived all the political profit from it that he could expect. I worked actively for its continuation.

Many years have elapsed and I cannot swear that I do not know Harvey Fremming. I can assure you that I have no recollection of having known him, of having lunched with him, and, although I was strongly opposed to Mr. Dies' behavior as chairman of the Un-American Committee and was writing a book on it, was not part of any campaign, CIO or otherwise, to "get" him.

I never "admitted to the Dies Committee that" I "had paid \$105 to David D. Mayne for forged documents". Mayne was the destitute former Washington representative of the Silver Shirts. Although I didn't at the time know it, he was then in the pay of the Dies Committee. He approached me for financial help and I gave it to him. In return he gave me material on Pelley. When he gave me one or two photostats I asked him to certify their genuine character and he so did, under oath, before a notary public. When this entire matter came before a grand jury it refused to take any action against me and did indict Mayne. With the very active help of Mr. Dies he copped a plea and got, as I recall, a two year suspended sentence for false pretense and uttering and forging. However, what the story carefully avoided, is two things: that Mayne was then on the Dies payroll, which is a matter of public record, as it then was, and that while receiving pay for them he did execute a forgery which they subsequently used; and that there was a judicial determination of fact in which I was found without guilt. I was, quite obviously, the victim of a scheme financed by the Committee.

You are apparently unaware of the political beliefs of Gardner Jackson. He was as anti-Communist as any man can be.

With regard to your other questions: I was invited to speak by the Citizens' Committee of Inquiry. When I got to California, I believe on that program, I learned that the suspicions were of the Militant Forum, of which I had never before heard; I have spoken before any group that wanted to hear what I have to say. For the most part, these have been conservative in nature. They do not have to believe as I do and I do not have to subscribe to whatever beliefs they may hold. The speaker who preceded me was Edward Keating. If your informant had accepted my invitation to attend the meeting and hear what I had to say, with my assurance that he thereby would be no more corrupted than I would be, he would have been able to inform you that there were a few sparks between Mr. Keating and me and that what I did was address myself to the evidence of the assassination and the Report as they concern the integrity of our society. You know my approach from my writing.

Unfortunately, ^{KIA} nothing people are more often concerned with smears than fact and reality. This is not true of all conservatives, for people of this political spectrum understand me well and have been more helpful than any others in providing me and, I believe, Jim Garrison, with leads. To say that government has erred and to demand rectification of that error is not subversive. It is what makes government strong and earns respect for it.

I received no compensation of any character for this appearance, no fee, no repayment of hotel bills, etc. My real purpose on this trip, which began in New York December 8, as I recall, was to engage in debate with a former Commission staff member, who had been invited to debate me on four radio stations and I think two TV stations. He appeared at none. On my final appearance in Los Angeles, where he lives, the moderator of the program, taped on a Sunday afternoon, explained the impossible, that this gentleman had to be in Washington that day, working in the National Archives. Sunday is the one day of the week the Archives is not open.

Members of the John Birch Society support my work and sell my books. They and I are no more in agreement otherwise than I am with the Trotskyite philosophy. In their publication, this group has come around to my belief that Oswald was not the lone assassin. I believe it is a direct quote to say they wrote "Anyone who believes Lee Harvey Oswald was a lone assassin will believe anything".

My writing, as yours or anyone else's, must stand on its own. You have read enough of it to understand my belief. I presume you have also heard some of my extemporaneous remarks, on which I also stand. You will find they espouse or support no political belief or philosophy, neither Birchite nor Trotskyite. Although I strongly disagree with the Birch group, I refer you to the introduction to WHITEWASH, where I criticized the Commission for its unfair handling of Birch members. In this book I also described Larry Schmidt and his associates as "jockals" for their cannibalizing of the Southwestern branch of the Young Americans for Freedom, hardly the approach inferred by your informant.

You may also be interested in the total boycott of mention of my work in the left-wing press, save, I believe, for two references to the first book alone. This also is inconsistent with the inference of your informant.

What you write is your own affair. However, I see no relationship with an effort to smear me and my work.

Should you find any of these answers inadequate, please phone me. I am too busy to engage in lengthy correspondence, for without it my working day, seven days a week, averages, still, more than 18 hours.

Sincerely,
Harold Weisberg