

24 June 1969

Dear Harold,

Thanks to the cancellation of a committee meeting which I was assigned to attend, I have the time to thank you for your letter of the 18th and your note of the 21st, both received yesterday. I do know about Ward, as my subscription to the States-Item does not expire until the day after tomorrow. I will not renew until I return from Boston in August but I trust that if anything really earth-shaking happens in New Orleans during July it will be mentioned in the Boston papers or in news broadcasts.

I have no taste for Charles Ward, as I have never proceeded on the dubious theory that the enemy of my enemy is a friend. I note that he is charging Garrison with being soft on the SDS, although Garrison is prosecuting five students for "flag desecration." You are quite right in saying that Ward has as little appeal for me, and perhaps less, than Garrison.

No, there is nothing I would like to ask of the three Dallas visitors. I had a call once from Mr. Kimbrough, who seemed a very pleasant man, and I have no inhibitions about him or his associates on grounds of their political beliefs. People on the left have not made a particularly brilliant record in this affair, on the moral level, and I doubt if anyone is more corrupt than the "leftist" Lane or the "liberal" Epstein. By the way, there is another Ed Epstein who has just published a book on Judy Garland, as I learned from a radio program last night. If ~~you~~ hear any puzzling references to "Epstein," you might keep in mind that there is a "second Epstein" (one was more than enough).

I did have a report from a recent visitor to New Orleans that Garrison felt that he had been let down by all the critics except Salandria, and I have no reason to doubt that he really said this. The explanation is quite simple, I think: Vince has a bottomless capacity to flatter and flatter extravagantly, and Garrison has a bottomless need for flattery and hero-worship. Vince has done the same thing with almost everyone, out of some basic need in his own psyche, and not very long ago sent me a rapturous letter praising my character, despite our complete estrangement for the preceding year. Unhappily, I am made uncomfortable and sceptical by exaggerated or profuse praise, and I was merely embarrassed by the letter. Do you get Joesten's "Truth Letter"? Even he has panned Garrison for his conduct of the Shaw trial, saying that he made a complete mess of it, but of course he has his fancy theories of all kinds of plots against Garrison to account for the mess--Joesten would never consider the possibility that Garrison was merely inept, disorganized, undisciplined and bluffing half the time. I guess Vince is the only one who gave complete and unconditional worship, and that is why he retains his good standing. What is so peculiar is that I hear from several different sources that I, too, am the victim of Garrison's "high esteem," which certainly cannot be explained by any flattery on my part. Maybe it is just his way of retaliating for my attacks on him, by making my position puzzling and giving the impression that I am somehow secretly on his side. That is the impression that this recent visitor to New Orleans carried away, in any case, but I soon straightened out his misunderstanding.

I have never refused to read anyone's work, and I will certainly read

Dave's, if he asks me to, and if it is ever finished. I hope that I don't have to do it from a room in the home for the aged; but it seems to be taking a long, long time. I have read so many manuscripts, for friends and for strangers, and at times with the unhappy outcome of having to express an honest but harsh opinion to someone I liked personally but whose work was poor in every way. But I have not given a dishonest opinion, and I won't start at this late date.

I guess that is about all for now, Harold. Here is my address in Boston, from July 5th to August 1st, just in case there is anything of urgency and you want to reach me: c/e The World Health Organization, P.O. Box 328, Prudential Center Station, Boston 02199 (phone 617-262-8100). I hope that you are well and not working too hard. All the best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Harold", written in a cursive style.