5/27/75

Marc Raskin and Richard Barnet,

Political opportunism is understandable, especially when there are apparent questions of sincere principle.

Opportunism also can be understood. So can it be that people are busy. Beginning the day the New Party was announced I tried to get help from you on the real work I was doing, not propagandizing. You were and remained busy. Until now, when there appears to be a bandwagon.

There is a long history like this and it has been hurtful. For example, before the FOIA law became effective I tried to get help from the ACLU in suing. I took the time to take one of the most prestigeous Washington members to the Archives, shook him up a bit, wrote the memo that was requested, and in the nine years since got no answer. Do I have to tell anyone who knows this law and its history what the difference could have been with precedents set under the judges who sat then?

If you don't want to heed Santayana's wisdom about history that is your affair. I did caution you. You were silent, as you have every right to be. But both of you know me and my work as well as the things that are said behind my back well enough to have made a least a perfunctory inquiry before you became part of the risking of many reputations and seriously jeopardizing what can be accomplished.

When I received Mark Lane's enclosed snide letter I made immediate response my wife is retyping. I doubt you will want to ask question or see proofs, but if you have forgotten my phone it is 301/473-8186. If you want to read the NYU speech, you can. It is a rough draft sickness prevented editing. (I had pneumonia and pleurisy or I'd have delivered it for confrontation purposes. I ended 10 years of silence on these things only because the possibilities of accomplishment are now in jeopardy.)

It is quite literally true that I did abandon my second book to save us all from Mark's folly, sick ego and habitual error. One story from that costly affair, which made him hate me more rather than feel thankful, is currently appropriate. I do call Mark a crook and he will do nothing except behind my back, his experise.

This was in December 1966. In the course of the belaboring of Liebeler I did a show with Mark's then friend Mort ~~Sahl~~ Sahl. I answered most of the questions, for three hours, always finding it possible not to say anything bad about Mark. But there came a call from a man who represented himself as having owned a clothing store in New York City. He said he knew Mark and that every time Mark came into his story he knew he'd lose a suit. If this was only an unseen voice, it spoke in considerable detail. I passed that question to Sahl, whose answer was invective.

There is no point in ticking off all the hurtful things Mark has done in his career of self-promotion and what I wrote off the top of the head is certainly only a minor part. You show no interest in any event.

I write because I presume your sincerity in this and because I do not regard either of you as the kind who want others to be hurt. I do believe there is the very real possibility of hurt to those who are or will be associated in this sudden effort of Mark's to stake a property right out again. Especially in Congress.

It is also literally true that there were several times when it seemed wise to prepare for what Mark's self-interest activities might bring to pass. I had no other interest in him, aside from personal dislike of a professional plagiarizer. In making preparations I did not use and have not let others see I did accumulate a considerable file.

What I have can't be much of a percentage of what the federal agencies have. (Remember long ago I asked you to help me in suit based on this, long before any of the current exposures made it popular? It was only suspected then, I had copies thus proofs, but you were not interested. I had live witnesses, too. And transcripts. In a few cases this included Mark because his excesses then were of potential value to these ganecies. For a long time there had been no interest in him.) But what I have is more than enough to ruin most reputations.

Do you suppose for a minute that if the current efforts in which you all are Johnny-come-latelies show any signs of real success there will be federal silence? With that stuff fed to the friends of these agencies - and today Ford has an enormous interest in this, if you have seen Whitewash IV: Top Secret JFK Assassination transcript which has special proofs - can you not visualize the consequences? Not only to if especially to Congresspeople?

It was only when my private efforts to end the insanities of which Mark was part in Boston failed that I felt I had to make the NYU speech. It is accurate, it is understated, and now Mark (without xxxresentment) has changed his line to be in accord with it. The reason you will see soon enough in the Rockefeller Report. The only real questions I can see have to do with what this Report will not find it necessary to use. Or who among you.

I do hope there is not the disaster I can see. It is possible and only the uninformed & blind can't see it. In my own way I will be doing what can be done to deter it, but when people like you - and I mean more than you two - sat on your hands for years and thus helped keep what I'd brought to light unknown, what I can do is more limited and at each step I am confronted with a conflict of interest, often having to sacrifice my rights to much costly work for no return. This is not easy for one without income.

I am, for example, again in court. The suit had real possibilities despite the danger from many ripoff artists who are misusing what I shake loose as they can with no more than a letter. One measure of the genuineness of your group is in its total abstinence when if it were sincere it would have at least offered to help. But it can't without sickening Mark, whose ego eats him up. No, I'm not asking for help and now I would not accept it.

Only time will bring us answers, on the potential of this suit and on what your group will or will not do or mean.

Do your thing. In ignorance if you chose.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg