

6/5/70

Dear Gary,

Only the very high regard in which I know you hold your professor prompts this letter. I had intended taking a nap with this time, for I am that weary. Yesterday I almost fainted shortly after getting up and dressing. I am still dragging. And I will nap when I finish this.

I had to go into town today. Having heard a fragment about a development in the Ray case during the night, I picked up a NYTimes to see if they carry anything. And lo and behold, there on the first page, is your professor in a very public bid to totally alienate his daughter!

Like so many busy men with specialties, he has to be underinformed. This is one of the great and painful costs of modern life, especially among professionals. He cannot possibly know anything about Agnew or he'd never have said anything like what is quoted.

This is not to say that what Agnew is quoted as saying them is false. It isn't. It is true. He is not opposed to all dissent. He fosters that of the fascists- and I do not use a figure of speech. But he has an undeviating record of opposing all democratic dissent. He has fouled the length and the breadth of the country sponsoring fascist dissent, to the point that thousands of letters poured in praising speeches he had to cancel and didn't make.

His record is unrelieved. He is a devout, sincere, practising racist.

His record as governor is that of oppression against black students whose complaint was constructive and too-long sublimated. His action was so violent, so fascist, so racist in the Southern tradition it made him vice president, Thurmond's personal choice, a man whose record of race was acceptable to the South.

I feel also that aside from the destruction of his relationship with his daughter and her further separation from the realities of modern life, he will soon enough find living with this record uncomfortable if not intolerable. There certainly must be enough of you students there to tell it to him like it is. He'll suddenly be considering himself a Judenrat and may wonder if the chambers are not to be chosen instead. Especially after his recent personal experiences.

Here again you see one of the tragedies of the unpublishability of my recent work, for he could not read the government part of COUP II, the last chapter added, and the papers of and result of the suit and remain believing there is any truth that can be produced by any high person in this administration. Continuation in it is incompatible with knowing truth and holding it dear, as it is with any belief in the most fundamental decencies...You know, as I hear Nixon the other night, all I could think of is that, aside from stridency and noise, I'd heard this all before, in the 1930s. The piety, the pretense of high principles, the sickening dishonesty of the pretense any negotiation was intended (when, in fact, the minimum terms are the free delivery at the conference table of what cannot be extorted by force of arms), the bland presentation of the irrational and incredible as a ~~simple~~ completely reasonable solution - even when it is an open violation of our pledged word (like the alleged purposes of our war being to make South Vietnam free whereas we are pledged to its non-existence save as part of a unified country following elections that we prevented, knowing our finks couldn't win them, even crookedly), and most frightening of all, the solemn assurance that we had achieved great successes by this Hitlerian invasion of a country whose government we had just overthrown, the real purpose of the invasion ~~was~~ being to succor the unpopular

fascists we imposed, those who had been our mendicants for years. Success? Wherein lies success? In having the words memorialized with the loss of a town ten miles from the capital while they were being softly spewed, like a gurgling rather than an erupting vomit? In the loss of 20 correspondents? In the pretended capture of a quantity of rice that would require about 100,000 large truckloads to be transported by those having so few trucks? In the presentation of pictures as evidence when these pictures could be from any stockpile of the past? When that very night the impoverished "enemy" set a record for the bombardment of some 70 places simultaneously?

Though appropriate, it is not enough to say, "Lord, forgive them; they know not what they do". These principled men, like babes lost in an evil woods, have just done an enormous international disservice, with the best of intentions. But how many more roads to hell need paving? And need those who would be angles do Lucifer's work for him?

This kind of thing I am, as you know, used to. They hurt but get forgotten, for they are too numerous to hold.

What I cannot here ignore is what your friend has done to himself. He will, in time, come to see the horror from his naivete.

If I understand the term hippie and can properly assess the emotion lying under his quoted words, his daughter is already sufficiently detached. He also, perhaps despite it, still loves her, regards their relationship as something more than the conflict in cultures (both, to me, futilities). I take the liberty of making what I think may be a constrictive suggestion, something that may bridge the gap that, with his daughter's understanding, may widen. He will not himself take the time to research Agnew. Perhaps if he asks her to do it they may both learn from it. He may get a faint concept of what he has just done and be able to atone and she may come to learn that there is naught but futility and frustration in detachment or political non-involvement. Some of this is not in my files. But there are these key points. Agnew became a Republican government in a Democratic state because the man who captured the Democratic nomination, with reactionary, racist and ultra Democratic help, is the worst in our political life in years. My wife and I, for example, though Democrats of long standing voted for Agnew knowing nothing about him simply because of the alternative. The key points are his actions and statement at the time of black protest over the gross inadequacies of the black (Morgan State) college when the state had a budgetary surplus. His racist remarks during the campaign I believe in Hawaii, of all places, and the meaningless, self-serving non-sequitur of his "explanation"; the contemporaneous scandal when the Nixon-Thurmond conference, having been taped in Miami, was made public. His recall may not be enough to encompass Agnew's career since, but beginning with Des Moines and Birmingham (lily-white, racist audience), his speeches make impossible any interpretation other than mine of his pretense Agnew was not opposed to democratic as opposed to rightist extremist dissent. He has, in fact, fostered the dissent of the ultras and calls it good. The inherent anti-Semitism in his attacks on the Washington Post and New York Times, both basically yellow, is transparent. The formulation of his philosophical predecessors was "uptown editions of the Daily Worker".

I think you know that if I did not regard this as important to your friend, I'd not take the time for it. It makes me wonder whether those of us who fight fascism, long handicapped by the absence of those who retreated to the ivory tower, can survive their emergence. Those who are decent, I am convinced, themselves will not. And this is the history of the 30s again, for most of the intellectuals either abdicated or became, literally or through ignorance, one kind or another of Judenrat...How they could be so ignorant, without knowing Agnew but knowing what had just befallen them, stuns me. Sincerely,