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July 23, 1984

Mr. Harold Weisberg
7627 Old Receiver Rd.
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Harold:

I received your various letters of May 1984 but did not respond immediately--first because of the press of end of the semester grading responsibilities, then to prepare my testimony (of June 20) before the House Subcommittee on Government Information on proposed amendments to the FOIA, and, more importantly, to prepare a prospectus to secure a contract for the Hoover biography. A contract looks good; I shall hear this week. I now have the time to respond, if quite belatedly.


You had earlier expressed a willingness to provide copies of relevant Kennedy assassination materials at cost--and specifically the documents recording proving The Director was correct and the assistance given to Jim Bishop. Re reimbursement. Submit an itemized bill listing xerox charges and postal fees, noting that this is for costs to process FBI files on the John Kennedy assassination. The monies I have raised are usable only for FBI processing fee charges, and the University simply makes out a check to the FBI. Since, in this case, I shall be asking that a check be made out in your name, I need a record of its real purpose. There is no problem here at all, simply a matter of bookkeeping.

By the way, I found your April 19, 1984 letter to Jim Leshar filling in the blanks on the Kennedy O&C folder of real help. I had been able to identify some, but not all of the name deleted--your superior knowledge ^{was} indeed of interest (and help).

The story that you heard on WTOP radio involved the FBI's assistance to FDR involving a personal problem: a possible scandal involving Kermit Roosevelt (the father of the Kermit Roosevelt of CIA fame) one of Teddy Roosevelt's sons. The story was run by the Milwaukee Journal and was picked up by UPI and NBC radio. Thus the info you came across on Jim Bishop interests me; I intend to devote a chapter to Hoover's currying favor with the rich and powerful and another chapter to Hoover's relations with the friendly media and thus the Bishop documents are of real interest in fleshing out these aspects.

I hope to complete the biography in the next twelve months--that is my target date. Given current interest, it makes sense to strike while the fire is hot, so to speak. I fear that this means I shall become an even worse correspondent. I trust that you will understand.

As ever,


Athan Theoharis

Dear Athan,

7/29/84

Thanks for your letter of the 23rd. I'd planned to make a suggestion, not recalling whether I'd made it earlier when your letter came and I read it, but on rereading it I have some uncertainty about how much material you would like. I don't want to send you more than you want. And if you hope to complete all the work in a year I am inclined to believe that you do not want a lot.

The suggestion had to do with Hoover in New Deal days. I believe I suggested you might want to be in touch with Mike Fooner, a criminalist, re personnel matters. But I do not recall if I mentioned Hoover's writings for the press of the extreme right. He was writing for and speaking to them much in those days. I think it is possible that among the records I have already given to Wisconsin there may be some samples of this.

The Jim Bishop records present no problem, and in the King case there is an excellent illustration of another aspect of the same thing, feeding stuff to a sycophantic writer for the Washington Star for a Readers Digest article. He is Jeremiah O'Leary. The best illustration I can think of of Hoover always being correct no matter how incorrect involves something I said, but there are others. (You know about Sullivan and things like that) But there are others and I am wondering how much you want or can use. One that I think is excellent will involve a little copying, but his flunkies virtually rewrote parts of his Warren Commission testimony and told him that the court reporter, obviously, was wrong. I could select a few pages or I can copy the entire thing, which may be as much as 50 pages.

I have a separate file about two inches thick that I titled "Hoover's Notes." That is the way it began, with King assassination records, and it then was of his annotations only. Since then I added a few things that you have, a couple of items from O & C and in the front a couple of his memos. It also includes some JFK material. One of the first of these that I saw is an FBI recommendation that it say nothing at all about the assassination, which he noted is exactly his view. Only they were then leaking their heads off and even leaked the report LBJ had directed the FBI to prepare. I'd have to annotate things like that if you want them. And I don't know if he was that devious, although I do believe he and the rest mademself-serving records, or if the others really kept him in the dark in his later years. So, I don't know if you want all of these two inches or if you'd like me to make a selection.

I don't know what you've requested but I do hope it includes copies of his writings, speeches and memos. I'm inclined to believe they will be filed, among other places, as 94s. These appear to be the Nichols and DeLoach files, called "research matters."

You've not given yourself much time. Best of luck with the project.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg