

Hermann Deutsch

*Draft Card Burners
Using New Tactics*

THE LATEST bit of gossip, which I am told can be substantiated from any number of truly "trustworthy sources" is that the draft card burners are no longer burning their draft cards. The movement is now down to the hardcore cynics who are interested in furthering the Communist cause of sowing dissent in the United States, the supply of drug-using hippie goofs diminishing steadily.

The cynics are ostentatiously sacrificing to the flames, cards, many of which are printed a la genuine draft summons, but most of which are simply blank. Then when the FBI, whose agents keep a close track of what goes on, come around to demand of the supposed law violators "Let's see your draft card, Tiger," the presumed culprit reaches into his billfold or wherever, and produces his undeniably genuine draft card, and the FBI agents withdraw in bafflement.



HERMANN DEUTSCH

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ODDBALL EXPERIENCE NO. 835-C: Received a phone call the other day from some one who said he is Mister X— (I have no wish to expose the name he gave me). He went on to explain that he has read my column from time to time, has no criticism to make of it, in fact is impressed by its scope, etc., etc.

He just wanted to tell that he, X—, is the victim of a conspiracy to keep from the public all knowledge of his latest book, the one he has published himself in paperback, that being all he could afford, and which no newspaper or magazine of general circulation reviewed or otherwise saw fit to mention, although he called a press conference here to announce that this was a book about Oswald in New Orleans, before he went to Dallas; that the book was based on more than 400 hitherto secret and unrevealed documents to which he had been given access; and although he had given out some copies of his book to the media representatives at the press conference, not a line about the book or what he said about it had appeared in any New Orleans newspaper. Could that be explained other than by a conspiracy of silence to keep all knowledge of the book from the public?

I finally interrupted the steady flow of this revelation by saying that if any such conspiracy existed in or around the States-Item or The Times-Picayune I had never heard of it and I did not think information about such a cabal

would have been withheld from me if I was one of those to be muzzled.

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AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT I SAID I had never seen the book, which drew a sharp retort to the effect that the paper had been furnished some books, and he did not have funds enough to buy books for every one; also that no mention of the news conference had been printed in either of the papers, and would I be interested in knowing that when he had published two other statements, the New York Times had thought enough of them to print a news story a third of a page in length about each of them? This sort of conversation went on for blocks.

P.S.—My brother and I dined together at his apartment that night. We actually had not seen one another for three of four months, though we had spoken on the telephone, but more frequently via long distance than over local calls. We had decided to make sure we met at least once before the year was out, since I was to leave for New York the next day, and he was to leave for Los Angeles this Sunday, returning to New Orleans on Monday, which left precious little time for casual confrontations.

During the dinner Eberhard suddenly burst out: "Do you know anybody by the name of X—?" I replied that I had never met him, but had spoken with him at incredible length only that afternoon. "Well," continued Eberhard, "he called me up this morning and said he had been reading my newspaper columns and was impressed by them . . . and I told him he was talking to the wrong one of the Deutsch brothers, that he was Eberhard and the columnist was Hermann. He came back with something to the effect that I did write newspaper columns, didn't I? And again I told him no, that you were the columnist and I was a lawyer, and again he said he knew I was a lawyer but didn't I write newspaper columns too?"

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I CONCEDED THEN THAT MAYBE Eb's estimate of the number of my readers, which he has fixed at a total of 29, was, if anything, a bit too far on the generous side, since Mr. X— who claimed to have read a number of the columns had apparently missed the fact that in black gothic type approximately 24 points tall my name, and not his, appeared at the top of each. Perhaps it is I who should complain about Mr. X's "conspiracy of silence" concerning the authorship of my writings.

As Walter Winchell, Bob Casey and I don't know how many others have said: "One advantage of being a newspaperman is that you meet such interesting people."