

AUG 2 1972

Dear Js,

8/2/72

I've fallen into the habit of looking at the a.m.TV news, meager as it is, partly because it still provides bits and pieces not in the papers. There is about enough time before it begins for a depressing comment on What's Left of the Black Left. Thompson himself has dubious thoughts, like "...since white militants aren't being mopped up by the police and courts", no doubt because more of them suffer this by far than blacks; and that Bill Patterson "masterminded politicization of the Scottsborough" case. (He was part of it, largely figurehead, and whites did almost all, from a Canadian I knew then with the International Labor Defense to Liebowitz, who was the lawyer.)

Of all this yapping, the sensible talk, as I see it, is from the widow Patterson, whose comment is sensible. The rest merely say that having been unsuccessful the militant blanks have for the moment determined to perpetuate it, in part by duplicating the errors of their white brothers and in part by rigidity and their own kinds of racism.

I've had some limited experience with blacks, across the spectrum, through Frame-Up. Even where it was slightly productive it was depressing. The bouncing to extremes expends all the energy in the bounce, so nothing comes of it. Even very fine people.

If it is white it is bad, and despite the lip-service of a few in these interviews it remains that way. If it means a black brother is to die or suffer because help comes from the white in means other than money or a lawyer, let him die. White taints. I've been through it. It was disagreeable to realize, more painful to have certified.

From the wealthy, like Maria Cole and the Johnson Publishing company and their back-fink correspondents; the SCLC crowd; King's closer personal friends; the Black Caucus in Congress--too many. And I'm not talking about King only, either.

At the time of Attice I tried to be of help. There were things that could be done. Among those with whom I was in touch was a bright and experienced, middle-aged black lawyer who was interested personally but impotent. Attica, properly handled, could have been an enormous thing, not just a tiny prick of the tough white conscience. They blew it. Interestingly from the press end, as soon as I could see what was up, I called Pete Kihss on the Times. He has been depressed for years and I fear he has made his adjustment. Anyway, he gave me sage counsel: stay away from National. Metro is up there. Let me switch you to that desk". He did. I spoke for two hours to one of the men on that desk, and as long as they could keep National out the work was pretty good. They initially demanded at least some of what I asked them to press for, but you know "news", so it dropped and wasn't followed through.

The tragic reality, to me, is that there has been black advance in any area only as a direct consequence of abuse by the white and the little discomfort of the white. The major single advance was the result of the King assassination. And the inchoate spontaneous violence it trigger, which taught whitey he had to shift a bit.

What could have been benefit from the Chicagoland other murders became largely rhetoric, which made the young bucks feel brave, as the tribal rituals also did. And that became the end in itself.

None of these things can work. They are uttered by people who subconsciously know they can't. But they sound good and they look manly, and that for the moment suffices as it stipples and cripples. The slight encouragement is the lip-service end in some cases of the end of what is not the counterpart of Black is Beautiful, White is Ugly/Bad.

In all of recent history I know of but a single major black plus that was all black, that atavistic revolt of the black ghetto in New Orleans. And what happened with me on that? I gave "the whole thing", including concept he accepted, to a black writer in April and I've had not a word from him since. Thus, I take it, is the kind of thing that makes white bad.

Until there is more than a mild white shame only that really causes more for change that change will be gradualism at its worst and slow. I have a dim view, and it is that until more of the black young are better educated and until they, then, can escape the cliches and stereotypes of the current "leaders", all will be too slow and will continue essentially counter-productive.

They can't do a damned thing except self-destruct without whites, and it is not because they are black or have been so long denied but because the overwhelming majority is white and in power. When they are willing to and learn how to exploit this for more than Leonard Bernstein parties they will move ahead. As I said, depressed,