

HW:

12 December 1972

The attached long story on Dr. Jacobson is a puzzler. On one hand we feel there probably is some reason for publishing it just at this time, something having to do with the JFK image, and on the other it's possible that a lengthy project on which several people have worked has only now got to the publishable stage. A still further possibility is that Jacobson may have been in the news locally in a way which we hadn't noticed.

Among the authors and researchers you will recognize the names of Martin Waldron, Felix Belair Jr, and possibly Martin Tolchin and Lawrence K. Altman. Ben Franklin is a comparative newcomer.

There's one extremely interesting other one, Will Lissner. I am virtually certain this is the same Will Lissner whom I met in Manchuria in 1938 while covering a little-known Russo-Japanese war along the Siberian, Manchurian and North Korean border confluence that lasted three weeks before it was settled by negotiation in Moscow. Lissner, then a very young man, was acting as a correspondent for Der Angriff, which was Dr. Goebbels' own newspaper. However he did not behave or talk like a Nazi and in fact I was inclined to guess that he either was Jewish or part Jewish. (This was not uncommon; there was an extremely able Frankfurter Zeitung correspondent in China for several years, Guenther Stein, who was part Jewish). Lissner was exceptionally able in English for a German, so much so that he easily could have been educated at least partly in an English-speaking country. I never fully figured him out, and never saw him again. However in 1949 when back in Shanghai I ran into a Dr. Lissner who was with UNRRA and who appeared to resemble Will. I asked him about Will, and he said he was a brother. However I did not pursue the matter further except to ask if Will had come through the war okay, and he said he had. A few years ago Will's byline began cropping up in the NY Times occasionally, and I have little doubt this is the same person. He's the type who would land on his feet, had connections all over the place, obviously, and the only real mystery is how he happened to wind up at the Times. I'd say that because of his German background he would be an excellent hand to have working on the Jacobson story.

If you sense any real purpose in this long thing about Jacobson we'd like to know what you think. And unless you need it for some particular purpose, you might return it in your next 3d class mailing. No Hurry. It's just that one feels there must be something about this effort that means it would be a mistake to throw it away.

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