

4 November 1971

Dear Harold:

This brief response will be about all we probably shall be able to do about your various mailings of Oct. 24, 28 and 31. We seem to be emerging from our colds, but still slowly, and we have difficulty keeping up with things.

First of all we note with pleasure your apparent optimism that JER has finally got the idea and seems to be dissuaded from trying the impossible. Your letters to him always are marvels of tact and cheer, exactly right, we should think, for someone in his position. And we read with much interest your prospective trip to Dallas and New Orleans. Let's hope the man with the moola becomes even more hospitable to ideas.

As for our friend Ned, in spite of all that you have said about him, we have difficulty figuring him out. At present it's a tossup between the all-too-typical American narcissist and the spoiled brat, perhaps a combination of both. I use the term narcissist in the sense that Erich Fromm once explained it most eloquently -- a person who is totally isolated from the rest of the world, therefore knows only himself (and that with much distortion) and is incapable of understanding how other people feel. Narcissus admired his image in the pool because he was so ignorant, inexperienced and cut off that he dared not look at other people. There was another psychiatrist who wrote most effectively on this subject, someone named Dr. Editha Friede, who had a book out 10 or more years ago on the general subject of love, (in the broadest sense) and who also saw narcissism as a common, almost universal and rapidly growing failing in this country.

I think the doctor you saw discussing China on TV was a Dr. Dimond of the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Never heard of him before, but he seems very much on the beam from the stories I've seen on what he has to say. His mention of Dr. Lin I can't recall him now. However George Hatem is another matter. I've never met him, but through Ed Snow, have been highly conscious of this remarkable man since Snow first mentioned him (though not by name at the time) in Red Star Over China in 1937.

Snow met Hatem in Sianfu when he was getting ready to enter the Red areas in 1936 for the first time. Hatem was doing the same thing, and they travelled together for some months. When Snow returned to Peking in 1960 he saw Hatem again, and devoted a couple of chapters to him in the resulting book, The Other Side of The River. Now, in the updated version of that, called Red China Today (Vintage paperback, \$3.45), he has two updated chapters on Hatem.

Hatem was born in Buffalo, N.Y. the son of an immigrant Lebanese textile worker. Because a sister's health was permanently impaired by poverty-caused illness, Hatem wanted to be a doctor and finally became on via the American University in Beirut and the University of Geneva. He wound up in Shanghai running a VD clinic in the old International Settlement, where he became so disgusted with the end products of capitalism and imperialism that when he heard about what the Reds were doing he started for the Northwest and there met Snow. He was with them

all through the Japanese and civil war, and when they took over in Peking in 1949 they turned him loose on venereal disease. As you know by now, those diseases are entirely eliminated in China. The techniques he and his Chinese associates worked out in training medical personnel and organizing and indoctrinating villagers to cooperate have made great inroads against malaria, leprosy, kala azar, ringworm, hookworm, schistosomiasis and ~~filariasis~~ filariasis. Snow says that because he has been with the Chinese Communists continuously for more than 25 years he knows more about them than any ~~other~~ other foreigner. Ed adds that he married one of the most beautiful and intelligent girls in China, and they now have two young sons. The girl was a Shanghai movie star who went over to the Reds shortly after Hatem himself did. Hatem goes by the Chinese name of Ma Hai-teh. If I went to Peking, I think he's the one person I'd insist upon meeting.

Sorry, I can't give you more than an impression of Gene Roberts -- that like many NY Times and AP men, he sometimes worked both sides of the street but always wound up on the right side. However, don't take this as final. We have not had time to dig into our early files and see just what he wrote. It will mean consulting several old files in order to cover the ground and get a comprehensive idea. I agree that he was not particularly hostile to the critics -- that's my impression -- but I have equally firmly ~~held~~ the impression that he never gave them the same weight as the official story. I actually met him for a moment here a couple of years ago and was not too favorably impressed. He appeared genuinely intelligent, but also pretty fast on his feet. Again, don't take this as more than a hasty impression. We'll try to exhume some of his stuff and see just what he said. Incidentally, Lane once told me he had no reason to trust anyone on the Times except Pete Kihss. This was very early in the game, in the winter of 1964. I've never met Kihss, but what I've seen of his writing was genuinely straight down the middle. The one man I do know slightly is Salisbury, who at least had the grace, after writing that introduction in the Times' version of the Warren Report, to do a piece for The Progressive some years later admitting he had been all wet.

We agree with Lil. You should stop trusting people who have the potential to turn out to be on the make, and, while not necessarily becoming a hermit, try to not to expose yourself so much to people who are likely to have the gall to take advantage of you. Could O&D have done a better job for certain parties if they had been on the payroll? Could Ned have? His type we apparently always have had with us, but it seems to me he's becoming considerably more omnipresent these days.

Best of luck on your trip, and all the best to you both,


jdw