

January 10, 1959

Dear Albert and Mike:

A slight change in the timing. I think it shall quite likely be set back one week, or, until the vicinity of January 21st.

The reasoning follows.

Seaton, Davies and others within the Academy are positively determined to go all out to revoke the rule. Revocation of the rule will be about as close to an official pronouncement against the blacklist as we can ever hope to achieve. There are persons within the Academy who oppose such revocation.

If I go on the air with the Rich announcement before the Academy solves the problem of the rule, it may (1) strengthen the opponents of revocation, or (2) cause the offensive rule merely to be revised rather than abolished (They could, for example, please almost everybody by accepting for nomination the world of all save those who had been convicted of contempt by the committee).

I have therefore decided to do everything I can to stall the Rich announcement (which is to be followed by the announcement of the employment of Maltz, Wilson, Trumbo) until the Academy has concluded its internal fight over the rule. If they do not revise the rule, they will be disgraced in many quarters, and I shall then use the Rich and the employment announcements (plus the Defiant Ones) to blast hell out of them. It can be done, too. If they do revise the rule, the Rich announcement will simply jovially confirm the end of the blacklist, and the new reign (we are forced to assume for publicity purposes within the ~~music~~ industry) of peace, employment, and sweet reason.

I enclose copy of a letter I'm mailing out tomorrow, which is the fruit of all these ponderous ruminations. In this way I shall be able to help Seaton in his academy fight, I shall be in the position of holding off adverse academy publicity---and at the same time I shall be warning him to get on with his meeting damned fast, since failure to do so will confront them with much more adverse publicity than just the Defiant Ones. Anyhow, right or wrong, that's where the mop presently is going to flop---if Seaton will flop along with it.

The second part of the broadcast I referred to in my last letter occurred last night, and contained all the statements I told you it would. Quite the best thing ever done. I'll have a transcript by Monday, which will go forward to both of you instanter, so you can see the shifting attitudes it reflects, and the inherent possibilities of the situation.

Now Mike, I realize that at the ~~XXXX~~ moment I write this, you haven't the faintest foggy notion there in Paris what I am cooking up for you. I received your cable asking for details today. I haven't telephoned, since the delay from circa January 15 to circa January 21 makes a call unnecessary, and they cost like hell, and it's clear from your shyness you're not going to pay for such chit-chat. Anyhow, I'm proceeding to make my plans (all private, none public, none incriminating) on the basis that you will go along with Albert and me. If, however, there are vital reasons you can't, there is time to wrangle over it. And nothing, of course, will be done in a public way without your full consent.

Love to Zelma and the kids, Mike. Love to Margaret and yours, Albert. And may God attend us all.

DT