

oct, 23 1953

Dear Ed, (Sullivan?)

I am again in need of your advice and friendly help; so I am writing to see if you can clear up a situation that derives from over zealousness on the part of a few people who, in order to prove what good Americans they are, behave like Gestapo Communists.

I was engaged to star in "Born Yesterday" and "The Happy Time" at the Astor theatre in Syracuse N.Y.. My name was advertised in the papers and the theatre.

Without consulting the management or me, some members of a local American Legion post, led by a Mr. Floys ~~Dung~~ Dunghee, passed a resolution calling for a boycott and picketing in protest of my appearance in Syracuse.

Frank Ellis, the producer, first heard of the matter when he read about it in the newspaper.

I was called on the phone; I was willing to go to Syracuse to meet my accusers but they refused to meet with me. They claimed they had documents that proved me a Communist and that was all they needed.

Al Wilde got to see Mr. Dunghee, and in giving him something of my background, told him that my brother was a Lt. Colonel in the U.S. army, doing very special work for our government, that my father had been a colonel in the U.S. army, and that my sister was even now a Major in the U.S. air corps, on duty in Japan and Korea.

To this Mr. Dunghee replied something to this effect; "What has that got to do with it? The army is full of Communists!"

If this last, shocking statement is true, why does Mr. Dunghee not do a job in a field he might know something about, having been a soldier, instead of robbing me of my livelihood.

Ed, I am getting a little tired of this irresponsible kind of self-appointed character who sets himself up as evidence collector, witness, jury, judge and executioner, all in one, giving no opportunity for defense.

When the lunatic fringe catches on fire the whole curtain burns, and there is then no chance for law and order to prevail and that is the danger of our time.

I understand that these good people in Syracuse also protested the showing of the Chaplin picture, but somehow or other it was allowed to play without hindrance. It has always been the technique of the smear artists to couple the names of innocent people with others to prove a point.

Under the circumstance, the management called on several officials of the American Legion, both in New York and Indianapolis and was told that officially they had nothing against me; but while they agreed Mr. Dunghee had not behaved well, that being part of an autonomous local unit, they could in no way affect him.

I have no desire to be vindictive, but I do want the right to go and come as a free and independent citizen.

I dont want or need an apology, but I do want the right to work wherever my talent might recommend me.

I f there is some amicable, dignified way to clear up this situation and the general situation, I would ever so much appreciate your help.

I have half a mind to sue this Mr. Dunghee, not only for my loss of wages, but for damage and defamation of character.

I would rather avoid legal action, because as you know it is long and costly. But if this blacklisting is to continue in all directions I'll have lots of time and I might as well use it to restore some sanity in dealing with these matters.

If this letter seems to be an impatient one, after all the effort that you and Spyros Skouras and George Sokolsky have taken in my behalf, you must understand that it is very difficult to contend with a green cloud that threatens and disappears as you approach, to reappear again, but never lets you come to terms with it.

As ever,

(A. DeKker)