

MEMORANDUMC O P Y

February 5, 1943

TO: David Ginsburg
General Counsel
Washington, D. C.

FROM: Walter Gellhorn
Regional Attorney
Region II

FEB 24 1950

My attention has been drawn to a recent address by Representative Dies, in which he denounced as Communists or otherwise undesirable a number of government employees, including me. As to me, Mr. Dies is quoted as having said: "Walter Gellhorn, Assistant General Counsel of the OPA in the New York office at a salary of \$8,000, was a lecturer this week at the Communist Party's Workers School." (Congressional Record, February 1, 1943, Page 512.) The implication is, of course, that I am in some way connected with that school, or that I have lectured there on the subject of communism. The actual fact is that I spoke at the Workers School on January 23, 1943, as a representative of the Office of Price Administration on the subject, "Price Control and Rationing." This is the first and only occasion on which I have either addressed or attended a session of the Workers School.

The circumstances may be briefly stated. On December 26, 1942, the following letter was addressed to me by Samuel Barron, Administrative Secretary of the Workers School:

WORKERS SCHOOL
35 East 12th St., N.Y.C. Algonquin 4-1199
William Weinstone, Director

December 26, 1942

Professor Walter Gellhorn
O.P.A. Office
Empire State Building

*Why
honestly
to me*

Dear Professor Gellhorn:

The Workers School is undertaking to organize a forum series on the important subject of war economy, a vital part of which is the question of consumers goods and problems. We would like an authoritative statement on this question.

The audience will be composed of trade unionists who have been bothered by the lack of clarity as well as discontent in their day to day contact with merchants, shop keepers, etc. It would be a real contribution to the war effort to bring understanding to this large section of the American people. The meeting is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, January 16th, 2:30 P.M.

We would appreciate the opportunity to have you state the case and answer what questions may come up.

Since the date of the meeting is so close, we would appreciate an immediate answer from you whether you can undertake this engagement.

Sincerely yours,

Samuel Barron
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

SB:GW

As with all routine requests for speakers, this invitation was referred by me to the head of the Information Division in the Regional Office, at that time Mr. Leston P. Faneuf. In due season Mr. Faneuf returned the invitation to me with a request that I accept it if I could fit the engagement into my existing schedule. Accordingly, on January 2, 1943, I responded to Mr. Barron as follows:

January 2, 1943

Mr. Samuel Barron
Administrative Secretary
Workers School
35 East 12th Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Barron:

Forgive my delay in responding to your letter of December 26 inviting me to address a meeting at the Workers School on January 16, subsequently changed to January 23.

I am glad to accept the invitation and shall await your further advice as to the exact time and place of the meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Walter Gellhorn
Regional Attorney

The final item in this exchange of correspondence is dated January 16, 1943, and reads as follows:

WORKERS SCHOOL
35 East 12th St., N.Y.C. Algonquin 4-1199
William Weinstone, Director

January 16, 1943

Professor Walter Gellhorn
Office of Price Administration
350 5th Avenue 43rd Floor
New York, New York

Dear Professor Gellhorn:

I have just discovered that through some accident, your letter of January 2nd, in which you accepted the invitation to address a meeting sponsored by the Workers School on January 23rd, was not answered.

I called your office on Friday, Jan. 15th, but you were unfortunately not in. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your acceptance.

The meeting will take place at Webster Hall, 119 East 11th Street, at 2:30 on January 23rd.

I am sure that you will bring some clarity to offset the confusion with regard

to the problems of the consumer, which are becoming more pressing than ever.

Sincerely yours,

Samuel Barron
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY

SB:GW

You will observe that both the occasion and the arrangements differed in no aspect from the commonplace scheduling of public meetings to discuss OPA matters. Among organizations which I have addressed on precisely the same basis as the Workers School are the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, the New York State Conference of Mayors, the Rotary Club of Bronx County, the Workmen's Circle (said to be a Socialist affiliate), the New York State Bankers Association, the Allegheny County (Pennsylvania) Bar Association, the War Conference of the American Bar Association, the New York Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, the Practicing Law Institute, the Consumers Councils of Baltimore, the Council of Trade Association Executives, and many others. I have also spoken on a number of radio programs in the same way and for the same purpose, that is, the education of the public concerning price, rationing, and rent regulations.

As for the Workers School meeting itself, my audience was unfortunately a very small one, probably no more than fifty. I have a transcript of the entire discussion, which was recorded by a stenotypist. The Chairlady introduced me as follows:

"Well, we are very luck this afternoon to have Professor Gellhorn from the OPA speak to us on the problem of consumers and the war. Professor Gellhorn is the Regional Attorney for this District, District 2, and he has taken a lead in prosecuting all rent violators, and I believe he's also been very active in the Black Market prosecutions. I am sure that what he has to tell us will be of tremendous interest."

I then proceeded to speak for some forty minutes on the problems of OPA regulations and their enforcement. The transcript is of course available if anyone should perchance be interested in it.

I forward you this information for such use as may seem to you to be proper.

R:2:WG:es