

May 19, 1965

Dr. Jeremiah Starnler
Chicago Board of Health
54 West Hubbard Street
Chicago 10, Illinois

Dear Jerry:

Your statement to the news media, dated May 13th, plus what little Henry Taylor could add, tells me only that the House Un-American Activities Committee proposes an inquiry about you and that this foretells much personal expense, loss of time and grief. I trust that this is simply another mistake of the Committee which, however, will be more speedily corrected than some of the shameful blunders of the past.

I shall not pre-judge questions about which I am uninformed, but I can speak up about what I knew personally. This letter, entirely unsolicited, may be used as you see fit.

I have known you for many years and we have had frequent and close contacts in many places, in our homes and offices and innumerable committee and hotel rooms. During my five years of service on the Research Committee of the American Heart Association I frequently had occasion to review your work, views and associations; this was necessary in connection with applications you submitted and the several awards given to you by the A. H. A. on our recommendation.

From all these sources of information I believe I have a very clear picture of your views and ideals and activities and it is inconceivable to me that you would engage in subversive activities. You have never had reason to conceal your ideas from fear that I only pretend to be a "liberal"; everyone, including yourself, knows that I am devoid of guile and how far I stand from the views of the radical right. In so many intimate contacts over a decade any sensible "subversive" in your spot would have made at least a tentative effort to

... as well as intellectual contributions to be made in the field of medicine and on the part of the men to strive for the realization of a prosperous, peaceful world of better education and health.

You have made outstanding efforts toward these goals through your hard and effective work at medical research and its application. You have clearly exhibited a sense of moral obligation in your work as a man who gives a stronger impression of complete dedication to the study of the causes of disease and to apply the knowledge thus gained to the relief of the burden of sickness and death.

I personally know that you have devoted to the cause of medical science so many hours, day and night, seven days a week, that it is literally impossible for you to have engaged to any appreciable extent in other activities, at least over the years I have known you. And your contribution to our world's progress in medical research is such that I greatly resent the time you are losing because of the action of the House Committee.

I suppose you could be called an "internationalist" in the same sense that I am, because we both want all the world to collaborate in the war against heart and other diseases and want to give everyone the benefit of the advances of medical knowledge. I think you share with me such "radical" views of internationalism: the arms race, the wish for more medical and scientific and fewer military missions abroad, the belief that World War I was not always blameless in the creation of international tensions, and that Communism is not the only dangerous ideology in the world.

You may even believe, as I do, that excessive nationalism has been a major cause of untold horror in the past and is a continuing threat to our safety. But all your actions and beliefs that I know about convince me that you are and have been a truly loyal American in every real sense.

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I have no idea as to who may be trying to make trouble for you. I know, of course, that some vested interests in medicine oppose your views, which I share, about giving better medical care to everyone, regardless of ability to pay. I know also that some commercial food industry interests consider themselves threatened by your (and my) views about desirable changes in the American diet. Your views about segregation would make you hated by the Ku Klux Klan. Your open opposition to Barry Goldwater, to the John Birch Society and the ultra-nationalists undoubtedly has made enemies.

Perhaps you may be counseled to see many friends rally to your side. Perhaps in the long run the cause of the ideals you cherish may be helped by what will come out of the House Committee action.

Sincerely,

Ancel Keys, Director

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Enclosure