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Series D: International Relations Activities. 1961-1992

Box 67, Folder 3, *Les Droits des Hommes and the Media*, 1987.



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June 1, 1987

His Excellency
Mr. Andre Gadaud
Consul General of France
934 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear Mr. Gadaud,

It was a great pleasure for my colleague, Mr. William Trosten, Associate Director of the American Jewish Committee, and myself to meet with you and your associates recently at the Consulate for the purpose of discussing our joint collaboration in observing the 200th Anniversary of the French Revolution.

We find appealing the core idea first proposed to us by Mr. Charles Salzmann that the Symposium focus on the theme, "Les Droits des Hommes and the Modern World of Media - Opportunities and Limitations."

There is need for several French representatives and ourselves to meet shortly to explore how to develop the themes and speakers for the Symposium, as well as the appropriate academic co-sponsor. In the meantime, as preliminary suggestions which might serve as the basis of our next discussion in Paris, we submit the following:

LES DROITS DES HOMMES AND THE MEDIA

- I - A Comparative Assessment of the "Rights of Man and the Citizen" of the French Revolution and Contemporary Human Rights Principles.
- II - An Evaluation of the Treatment of Human Rights Concerns in the Mass Media -- Cross-cultural Analysis in French and American Media.
- III - Examination of Differing Types of Human Rights Problems - Civil, Political, Economic. (These might include as case histories: Incitement to Hatred and Violence, Terrorism, Threats to National Security, Refugees and Illegal Immigration, Torture, Religious and Ideological Fanaticisms.)

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What are the Responsibilities and Limitations of Governments to Communicate Reliable Information? What are the Responsibilities and Limitations of Media in Reporting on such events? National security versus civil liberty concerns?

In refining these themes it might be interesting to speculate on how the fountainheads of the ideas of Les Droits des Hommes - Montesquieu, Voltaire and the Philosophes, and Rousseau would approach these current concerns from their differing ideological vantage-points.

Since there was such a profound interaction between the English, American, and French Revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, it might be stimulating to reflect on how Beaumarchais, Mirabeau, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson (both Ambassadors to France) and James Madison would think about the issue of the opportunities and limitations in communicating human rights issues (public virtue) to the populace. That could allow for making some connections between the 200th anniversary of the birth of the U.S. Constitution and the similar anniversary of the French Revolution to be observed in 1989.

As I indicate, these are merely suggestive seed-thoughts. We would appreciate your communicating them to your colleagues in Paris and inviting their reactions and reformulations.

We look forward to being in touch with you shortly.

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Marc H. Tanenbaum
Director
International Relations

MHT:RPR

CC: William Trosten

BC: Howard Rubenstein
Gary Lewis