

1503

FORUM FOR CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

P. O. Box 127 • Stearns Wharf • Santa Barbara, California 93101

I accept your invitation to join the Forum on the terms you have outlined. Please enroll me as a Founding Member, begin delivery of my Forum Letters and send me a statement for my first year's membership dues of \$18. I understand that I may confirm my Founding Membership by sending you a check for this amount, or tell you to cancel within 30 days, return my statement unpaid and owe nothing. I may then keep my first two Forum Letters free.

Name _____
(please print)

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P. O. Box 127 Stearns Wharf, Santa Barbara, California 93101

M. Elizabeth M Borgese
Box 40 8
Santa Barbara CA 93103

Dear M. Borgese:

It is my pleasure to invite you to join a distinguished group of journalists, scholars and public figures who comprise the Forum for Contemporary History ... to participate with them in a bold new journalistic experiment ... and to receive, as a membership benefit, direct communications from prominent world and national leaders.

Perhaps you've read about this important undertaking already in your newspaper or the national news magazines. In a moment, I'll tell you more about it and explain how you may become a Founding Member, but first, I'd better explain exactly where we stand.

I am asking you to participate in an organization which dedicates itself actively to preserving -- at the risk of criticism, censure, intimidation and perhaps even legal action -- the letter and spirit of the freedom of expression guarantees in the First Amendment.

We accomplish this by creating a totally new opportunity for the free expression of thoughts, ideas and opinions. A new medium through which people with significant things to say can say them in their own words, without being edited, censored, stage-managed, misquoted, sensationalized or limited by time or space availability. And through which interested citizens can respond.

The press, radio and TV are subjected to severe pressures from governmental bodies, advertisers and a variety of other special interest groups. As a result, unpopular, controversial, anti-establishment or institution-threatening viewpoints rarely get equal time or space. It is extremely difficult for a spokesman who hasn't built up a power base -- in terms of followers or dollars -- even to get access to the news and information media. So it's not only that you're not hearing all the arguments on an issue; you're not even hearing all the issues.

The Forum for Contemporary History was formed to fill this void ... to provide a new medium for the free and open expression of opinion. It is a non-partisan organization, entirely independent of outside affiliations. For its support, it depends on mem-

bership dues and sales of its publications.

I've spoken of a "new medium". Actually, it is ages old. But it has rarely, if ever, been used for the broad dissemination of opinion and comment. It consists of personal letters -- unedited, uncensored letters to you and other Forum Members from those who are making contemporary history.

You will receive Forum Letters by first class mail every other Monday (or more often, when urgency demands). Because Forum Letters are of immediate interest, published on relatively short notice, I can't predict who future writers will be or what topics they'll discuss. But just to give you some idea of the kinds of letters you'll receive, let's conjure up a few hypothetical possibilities;

- ... A prominent TV executive resigns from a major network in protest over what he claims are systematic, deliberate efforts to present biased news reports. He cites examples, discusses attempts he made to correct the problem and explains why similar efforts under the present network setup will fail to produce the needed remedies. (He makes his announcement through a Forum Letter because he wants to be absolutely certain he is not quoted out of context.)
- ... A disenchanted executive, former holder of a key position in one of America's largest corporations, reveals how his company surreptitiously -- and illegally -- channeled millions of dollars into the campaigns of selected politicians. (He drops his bombshell in a Forum Letter after his undocumented charges are brushed off by several newspapers.)
- ... The Chief of Security for an African nation explains, in brutal detail, the tactics he used to solve his country's airline hijacking problem. (He writes a letter on invitation from the Forum, which learned of this extraordinary story through its own investigative sources.)

In a past Forum Letter, the Nixon administration was accused of co-opting the key tenets of socialism -- not by a right-winger, as you might expect, but by the national chairman of the Socialist Party, U.S.A. A dissident industrial designer used a Forum Letter to accuse his colleagues of mass murder. A distinguished writer turned his novelist's eye on the "Pit", a New Haven courtroom redolent of the 19th century.

Some Forum Letters contain announcements or revelations of headline significance. Some present contrary opinions or new insights on current events. Some represent extremely sensitive, controversial or unpopular viewpoints. Some are vindictive, vitriolic, intemperate or immoderate. Some offend the establishment, some offend the revolutionaries.

Expect to read things you'd never read elsewhere, because the Forum avoids the obvious and concentrates on topics and points of view that may not have occurred to most observers. And that would not be likely

to appear in conventional news media.

Topics may occasionally be suggested to writers, or comments invited from prominent people by the Forum. But the Forum imposes no limitations, restrictions or restraints. Letters writers must be free to express themselves as they wish.

To insure the significance of Forum Letters and to see to it that the Forum remains steadfastly non-partisan, an independent Editorial Review Committee oversees Forum activities. (Members of this Committee, listed on the first page, are not affiliated with the Forum and do not endorse the organization.)

You will never know, in advance, from whom future letters will come. But they will contain writings never before published or publicly released ... from people who are distinguished either by contributions to 20th century thought, by the roles they play in the world community or by virtue of their having been witnesses to the making of contemporary history. Because each letter is sent to you by first class mail prior to its release to the press, you are always among the first to be informed.

Letters appear on the writers' own stationery and are signed with authorized facsimiles of their signatures. They are reproduced on high quality bond paper, appropriate for documents of permanent significance. (If you keep your letters, you will build a collection of enduring historical interest and value.)

For you, this is a rare opportunity to receive, first hand, illuminating commentary on the great issues of our time from individuals who are doing the most to shape them.

But it's important, I think, to keep in mind that the Forum is also a rare opportunity for the letter writers. Through Forum Letters, these history-makers can express themselves freely, openly and directly -- to an exceptional group of concerned, informed, influential and responsive citizens.

"Responsive" is important. If it weren't possible for members and other qualified individuals to respond to Forum Letters, the Forum would not really be a forum. So in addition, the Forum publishes a bimonthly members' Journal, devoted to comments, rebuttals, arguments and debates from qualified outsiders and members - on the issues raised in the Letters.

Should you wish to communicate directly with letter writers, the Forum will forward your replies to them unopened. If you prefer to make your comments through an open letter, you may at any time write to the Forum. Your letter will be acknowledged and forwarded to the original letter writer. In some cases, your letter may be published in the Journal or included (with your permission) in Forum books, papers or

reports.

The Forum may not be the ultimate answer, but it's a start. It's a way to insure that you get to hear what important voices have to say about important issues. A way to make your own voice heard. A way, maybe, to influence the course of contemporary history yourself.

If you care, if you are really concerned, you are vital to the Forum. Without you and other concerned people ... without an informed public to listen and answer ... it doesn't matter much whether world or national leaders have anything to say or not.

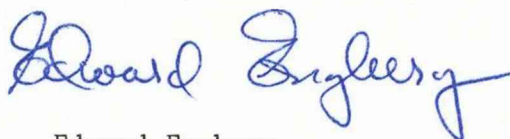
I hope you will accept this invitation. Not out of the goodness of your heart, but because you believe it matters. And because you want to be a part of this bold new journalistic experiment.

Dues for Founding Members are \$18 for the year (when the inaugural period is over, new members will pay \$25, a figure that comes much closer to covering our expenses). You get 26 Forum Letters and six issues of the Journal. I should add that as the Forum grows, we'll widen our circle of activities to include "town meetings", seminars, weekend retreats, etc. We'll publish books, reports, papers, pre-recorded cassettes. As a Founding Member, you will be entitled to discounts on all of these.

But I imagine you'll want to try us out before you commit. So don't send your dues yet. Just return the order card I've enclosed. We'll enroll you as a Founding Member, start the Forum Letters coming to you and then send a statement for your dues. If you decide "no", you may write "cancel" on your statement, return it unpaid and keep your first two Forum Letters free.

A wise man once said, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for enough good men to do nothing." May I suggest that you take this opportunity to do something -- to enroll now in the Forum, and help us preserve the freedom our forefathers saw fit to place first on the Bill of Rights?

Sincerely,



Edward Engberg
Editorial Chairman

EE:ph

P.S. If at any time, for any reason, you wish to resign your Forum membership, you may do so and receive an immediate, unquestioned refund of your fee, pro-rated for the balance of your membership year.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PUBLISHER

If you've decided not to take advantage of this no-obligation offer, please take a moment to satisfy my curiosity.

I can't help being puzzled. Frankly, I don't understand why everyone doesn't respond. Thousands of citizens like yourself who have shown an interest in -- and concern about -- the significant issues of our time have been sent this offer. Yet we can expect only about 3 out of every 100 to reply.

Perhaps people feel that there must be some catch, some hidden charge. If you've been wondering about that, let me assure you that the offer is exactly as stated:

We'll enroll you as a trial Founding Member of the Forum for Contemporary History and start sending you Forum Letters. We'll also send you a bill for your first year membership dues -- \$18. If, after you receive two Forum Letters, you decide not to continue, write cancel on the bill, send it back unpaid and keep your two Forum Letters without cost or obligation. The risk is ours, as it should be. If you try it and don't like it ... well, we can't ask more than that.

There may still be other reasons why you didn't respond to this trial offer, and I'd be interested to hear them. Could you take a moment, please, to satisfy my curiosity and tell me why you decided against it? (We'll pay the postage -- just use the enclosed reply envelope.) Thank you for your help.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James L. Bartlett, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a horizontal line at the end.

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