April 28, 1963

Mr. Richard L. Wentworth
LSU Press
Baton Rouge, La.

Dear Dick:

I'm glad that you are interested in the Cohn manuscript; in fact, I was so glad that I took another look at it, buried in a wooden box here in my office. And, once more, it scared me. For I think there are three or four or five manuscripts, or versions of the same, apparently David rewrote various parts. There must be around seven hundred, or more, pages in all. I doubt if anyone could sort it out without a major effort.

Some day I intend to make that effort, the main reason being that David Cohn had a very considerable influence on my own life and because he was the wisest man I ever knew intimately. Actually, I've had a couple of prospects in mind. First, the publishing of this particular manuscript when whatever needs to be done to it is done. Somewhere I'd like to write and publish a fairly long introduction, telling what I knew and felt about David.

The other thing that has been in the back of my mind is the publication of a "Best of David Cohn," or something like that. As I wrote you, David was primarily an essayist and he wrote on everything. His more than sixty articles in the ATLANTIC are, of course, buried. Of his 12 books only one is in print. He wrote innumerable letters to the editor, etc. The "piece" I'd like to write might better be the introduction to this sampling of Cohn rather than appear as an introduction to the other.

But I don't dare let myself get involved in this now. I have never turned the Cohn manuscript over to the library and I don't intend to until I decide what to do with it. One factor, of course, is that my tenure here at the moment is damned doubtful. What is going to happen to me this fall or before God only knows.

But I've got to stay with this talk for the SHA and not let anything else interfere. Then there is the book I'm supposed to be working on. (The trouble is that I'm too slow and perhaps pretty lazy and even more likely, not too bright). Also, I have a good girl who is working up a thesis on Cohn - she should be finished shortly and I want her study at hand when I go to work - I got most of the materials for her in any case.

In view of all this nonsense, I'm perfectly willing to send you the Cohn manuscript(s) if you want it (them). Just let me know.

Sincerely,