

GREENBAUM, WOLFF & ERNST

285 MADISON AVENUE

NEW YORK

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COUNSEL

November 12th, 1936.

Robert M. Jackson, Esq.
United States Attorneys Office
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Jackson:

Undoubtedly, you share my long-growing conviction that the American Bar Association is an unrepresentative and altogether inadequate National spokesman of the American Bar. The performance of its recent annual conventions has served to crystallize and to confirm this same conviction in the minds of the vast majority of American Lawyers, not to mention the public at large who look to the Bar for some measure of leadership and example in public affairs.

At the recent Boston convention, more than ever before, the American Bar Association manifested a stubborn partisanship to die-hard reaction, a uniform opposition and even hostility to every resolution and suggestion of a forward-looking and progressive character, from whatever source proposed. Editorial comment on its proceedings, even in the conservative press was almost always adversely critical.

The obvious and urgent need is for a national association of American lawyers which shall be a truly progressive force in the life of the nation. It must lead in responding to the overwhelming national sentiment, attested by the late election, for the making of the Constitution and the law important instruments in effectuating the popular will rather than the means of nullifying it and of paralyzing government to deal with urgent public questions in the public interest.

In the course of a recent address to some four hundred lawyers here in New York, I had occasion to advance these very suggestions and specifically to propose the formation of an American Lawyers Guild of the character described.

The response was so widespread and enthusiastic, that I was invited to elaborate my proposal at a meeting of the Lawyers Security League held in the City Bar Association assembly room in New York some two weeks ago. Again some three hundred lawyers were unanimously of the opinion that there exists a professional and public need for such an organization and that the time is ripe to launch it.

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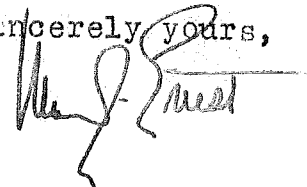
Robert M. Jackson, Esq.

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In this letter I have not developed my proposal beyond vaguest contours because I think it had better be enlarged in an informal exchange of ideas with you and the several other lawyers to whom I am writing.

For this purpose, will you join me at dinner at the City Club, 55 West 44th Street, New York City, on Tuesday evening, December 1st, at 7 P. M. Please let me know whether I may count on your attendance and proceed with the necessary reservations.

Very sincerely yours,



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November 18, 1936

Mr. Morris L. Ernst
285 Madison Avenue
New York City

Dear Morris:

I share your feeling about the American Bar Association, although we must not under-estimate the prestige of an Association that has a long tradition, that has a name which implies so much, that has a fairly dependable income of between \$200,000 and \$300,000, definite headquarters and established publication and a functioning organization. It is a going concern.

While the changes made this year in its organization may improve it some I do not look for great results.

Such an organization as you suggest would not only have value in itself but might help to consolidate sentiment that would be effective in influencing the American Bar Association through the choice of officers or otherwise.

About three years ago I gave a good deal of consideration to the same general topic. It was my feeling that while we have an immense and ungainly organization in the American Bar Association we have nothing which corresponds in function to the American College of Surgeons for example. That organization admits by invitation and selects its members for outstanding work or capacity. If your proposed organization took on something of this aspect it would avoid duplicating the American Bar Association as simply another Association. If we established some qualification for its membership we might not escape ~~it~~ becoming a conservative organization. It is my view that the Bar will always be contributing on the conservative side to the balance of social forces and that this is inherent in the nature of the profession. But that does not excuse us for being so damned unintelligent as the Association was at Boston.

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I shall certainly try to get to your dinner. I am doubtful whether I can make it, but I am completely in sympathy with the purpose.

When you are coming to Washington let me know and have lunch with me so we can spend a little time cussing the same people.

Best regards and good wishes,

Sincerely,