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Washington, D.C.

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Letter from the Post Office Dept., Office of the General Counsel, Washington, D.C.

In January 1965 The Circle was informed by various USA subscribers that a smaller number of the November and/or December 1964 issues of The Circle had been held up for inspection by the New York Postal Authorities. Quite a few of the subscribers when receiving notification of this went to the post office where in every single case the issue in question was handed over to them without any fuss since the question of 'obscenity' did, naturally, not arise at all. Other subscribers, understandably, let the matter drop and in consequence did not renew their subscription for 1965.

In trying to clear the whole matter up The Circle wrote on April 23d to the Postmaster New York. Just before the material for the July issue 1965 of The Circle was sent to our printer we received under the date of June 11th a letter in answer to our inquiries from the Post Office Dept., Washington, D.C. We think this letter will be of sufficient interest to all our USA subscribers to warrant reprinting below:

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
Washington, D.C. 20260

Mr. Rolf
Der Kreis / Le Cercle
Postfach 547 Fraumunster
Zurich 22, Switzerland

Dear Mr. Rolf:

This will acknowledge your inquiry of April 23, 1965, to the postmaster, New York, New York, as to why copies of the November and December 1964 issues of your publication were returned.

We have examined these two issues and from our examination and information from the New York post office, they were not returned because of any decision that they constituted obscenity, per se. Rather, according to our information, they were returned for the reason that the addressee failed to provide the necessary authorization for opening to study the contents as requested by the post office in accordance with the regulations.

Joint Customs-Post Office regulations were established many years ago to assist in the enforcement of certain laws administered by the Customs Service. It is prohibited to bring into the United States various classes of illegal matter, such as obscenity, lottery tickets and advertising. Therefore, when a sealed first-class article is received and there is suspicion as to the nature of its contents, it is necessary to obtain the cooperation of the addressee to make an examination of the material. If this authorization is not forthcoming then, under the regulations, the mail article is returned to the sender.

For the General Counsel
Sincerely yours,
Saul J. Mindel
Assistant General Counsel
Mailability Division