

August 18th 1945

Dear Aunt Anne, Uncle Joe, Joan, and Bobby,

This past month has certainly been as eventful as any thirty days in history - from the defeat of Churchill to the defeat of Japan. The excitement of the atomic bomb, the Russian move, and then the surrender negotiations was intense; the question of what the problem of the Emperor entailed aroused as much discussion around here as I have seen in many a moon. I was among those who felt that we might reject the first offer and I was a little disappointed that the decision had been made to use the Emperor; I firmly believe that we run the danger of keeping a live that which we sought to destroy by allowing the Mikado to remain on his throne apparently retaining his divinity. The whole feudalism of Japan must go or the seeds of danger are everpresent. However, I believe equally strongly that now that that decision has been made with an aim to save the lives that would be lost in future invasions and in mopping up operations we can avoid those dangers by enforcing a wise occupation policy: the emperor is a means to our end and we need not condone him or any segment of the Japanese society which he represents. Our occupation and control must be rigid and strict; nothing can be left undone that is necessary to wholly overthrow the archaic and oppressive economy and social system of Imperial Nippon. In the end that means that the Emperor must go and that in turn means that while we use him we must constantly debunk him and limit his sway over the people until it is eventually destroyed by a stronger faith. We have decided to avoid the chaos which would come about if we did not have the Emperor institution to build around - we must be eternally vigilant and assured that we do not allow our victory to slip through our fingers.

For myself, the end of the war has not had any immediate results - not even a day off! the routine continues. No doubt that this will change all plans for reassignment and the like and it becomes more impossible than ever to predict what will happen in the next six months. I am hoping that the Army comes out with a policy which it will effect so that I will know where I stand. The everpresent possibility is that I will be in the class deemed eligible for the occupation-police force requirements. Uncle Sam, please don't point at me!!

The British elections were certainly clear in their decision; while most of the reactions here and abroad have been "wait and see" it is easy to pick those who think that socialism in England will fail and result in authoritarianism and dictatorship or in some equally distasteful predicament and those who see in England the hope for the proof that man can achieve social guarantees from his government without giving up his democracy and his control of that government. And in foreign affairs the feeling was unanimous (with the exception of the Arab League) that the victory of Attlee will mean a new liberal policy toward India and the Levant and a strong opposition to the forces that dominate in Spain and Argentina. It is to be hoped that the Labor government will identify the Empire interests with world interests, not find them running counter to world trends.

The non-military results of Potsdam were sort of forgotten in the Pacific excitement, but they are a remarkable achievement, proof that we have build a solid framework of agreement, cooperation, and understanding, bulwarked by practical plans and arrangements for the management of Europe, that not even the ranting of Clare Luce or Robert Taft can visibly shake. They are the best answer to the Eastmans and Chamberlins and all those who preach a new American isolationism and antagonism against the Soviet union. And it is my firm conviction that we will iron out the difficulties in Asia just as we have those in Europe; North China may be Asia's Poland, but no difficulty is insurmountable to a world unity that is determined to secure a just and enforceable peace.

I may be all wrong but it seems to me that every one is interpreting the Buck report a little too freely in the matter of the elective system at Harvard; my experience was that there were a number of courses I was required to take both within and outside of my field of concentration. And to require everyone to take six course out of 16 is not to "end the elective system." That will leave ten courses for the student to give full play to his intellectual whims. I think that the Buck criticisms and suggestions for general nationwide education and the specific recommendations for Harvard were all well taken and should be adopted.



Yale seems to have followed ~~snit~~ and come up with a similar revision of its elective programming. I hope that the Harvard lead is picked up and that educational circles especially at the high school levels profit from it. The Army has impressed me time and again with the fact that there are serious failings in the educational system of our country; the average person does not leave high school with a mind trained to remain open and to think. It is important that the educational foundation of functioning democracy be recognized and nourished.

Well, that sort of covers things for this noontime - I am glad that Bob is hitting it off well at school. My love to you and to all the clan - thanks again for your letters -

*Sumner*