

August 8th 1945

Dear Ones,

Dear children, now this is a molecule, and this is an atom!! -- It is good to be on the winning side, and somehow or other I can't hear enough news broadcasts about the terrifying destructive power of unleashed atomic force. The news is encouraging and there is every reason to believe that the war will be ended sooner than was previously expected; despite the capacities of our new weapon, we must still defeat the Japanese armies unless by some fortune the entire Japanese structure becomes atomized into collapse. When the details can be released we may learn that the world has entered into a new technological era; that methods of production and power are in for startling changes; that entire social concepts of work and activity are in for total revision. We live in a wondrous age. Each new advance brings new responsibility; for we well know that the same gasoline and engines which drive our cars and our steam rollers and our welders power our tanks and our bombers; the same science which gives us fertilizers and irrigation yields up dynamite and nitro-glycerin; every aspect of our technology can be used for constructive and for destructive purposes. The test of humanity is whether we can use them constructively and can master our society so that we do not have to revert to its destructive uses. And so it has been with every bit of progress, electricity, the combustion engines, turbines, explosives have good as well as bad sides; now we have atomic power. Shall we join with the Observatore Romano and the Official Catholic statement that this power should have been destroyed rather than loosed upon the earth? No! Shall we say that we are not progress because of the dangers of misuse of the fruits of that progress? No! by that standard we would still be in our caves, afraid to use the fire to warm ourselves and to cook our food because fire is the great destroyer, afraid to devise clubs and weapons for gaining food for fear of an enemies turning them against us. No - then answer is not to stop progress, the answer is in the goodness of our society. Radium can destroy the bad society and cure the good.

Today is quiet; I prepared myself for the ordeal and went to the dentist. The only cavity on the first examination was in my wisdom tooth which Major Barr never did get around to before he was transferred; I'll get it filled during my Monday appointment. I wrote to Jay today. Yesterday's mail brought notes from Dot and Willie and a slew of letters from home; I also wrote to Uncle Don who dropped me a line from Portland. I am getting pretty well along in "Of Human Bondage." The movie last night - Colonel Blimp - was exceptional and I urge you to see it if you get the opportunity. These weekend we have "For Whom the Bell Tolls" - and I do not want to miss that. Aside from that the picture of the days ahead is pretty blank at present.

I am now back in the office now and I'll get to some of your clippings. I am glad that my mail is still coming through to you all right; one of these days we can count on a sharp decline on the speed of delivery. Thanks for Judy's address. As for my watch, we will leave the arrangement that I will write for it if and when I need it; in the meantime, I know you will check occasionally to see that the one you have is in good shape. I will comment on the clippings as I come to them - so you will probably find my next letters dotted with comments on other peoples' comments on the British election. The Herald editorial was on solid ground and so was Catherine Coyne's analysis of why the English lower classes voted against the Tory candidates; but the Mullins article which labeled the labor landslide a "grudge vote" was on the wrong track. To say that Churchill was defeated because he was held responsible for the ravages and extremes of wartime living lacks logic, since by the same token he would have been hailed as the victor on the strength of wartime accomplishment; poor Mullins feels lost, he talks of ingratitude and of the terror of the Left. To my mind the sweep of the Labor victory is clear proof of a well thought-out and considered vote and of an election that was decided on clearly defined issues. The first announcements as to Labor's policy in the foreign field certainly could give no comfort to Spain; I think that the Spanish republicans, the Indian nationalists, the peoples of Europe are justified in hailing the British elections as another step in their progress toward true freedom.



of our new world leadership and responsibility; the lessons of the war and of the past 25 years seem to be lost on Wheeler and his cohorts. The talk of sending our boys to settle other people's squabbles is terribly reminiscent of the darkest days of our isolation. The intimation that our troops will be used contrary to the wishes of the people, the Congress, and the country as a whole and perhaps not to our own advantage is a remarkable admission of little faith and bad will. It is essential that the people understand and agree to our commitment - that we understand that we are offering our power in the ounce of prevention to avoid meeting the requirements of the pound of cure. The debate against Wheeler helped to some extent; I think that it should be a clearly defined issue in the next election - not a partisan issue, but something to be asked of every candidate. I do not feel that the Wheeler sentiment is strong enough to be effective now, but I do not feel either that that is any reason to relax the constant reminders of what our new position means. At least Wheeler is in the open now - the true nature of the Senate vote is clear. That is our best assurance that we will not be undermined in our effort - we know where Wheeler actually stands.

We were extremely encouraged last night to learn that the State Department has made several announcements to the effect that our policy toward Spain has been changed, that there have been errors in the past, that it is recognized that overwhelming US sympathy is for Republican Spain and against Franco, that the victory of Spanish fascism with Italian and German aid was one link in the road to war, and that the neutrality act and its effect in cutting our aid to the Republicans was a serious mistake. We have not tumbled for the new flangist-monarchist line; I think that Franco knows that his days are numbered. I hope that we see the State Department statements followed by a clear cut positive policy in conjunction with the United Nations against the current regime in Madrid. The reports of the refusal of the Argentine public to fall in line with the Governments anti-US policy is an encouraging note in that direction.

It will be interesting to see what comes of the investigation of the guaranteed-wage idea; I take it that that is classification under which the Hormel plan comes. (Poor Hormel had better seek a new trade name after the beating Spam has taken from the GI's.) Last night's news reported that Truman is considering modifying the military training program he will support into the current national guard set-up; my experience is extremely limited and I feel that the guard would be all well and good for refresher courses and to keep nuclear units alive and in training, but that there must be a period of basic training - the one year idea - on which to build. Highschool and college ROTC's are no substitute for the experience and training of one uninterrupted year in the Army. I still do not grant validity to the arguments that a year will make a young man lose ambition, become a militarist, or what have you. From the personal point of view, I think that a year will have the opposite effect - while the young man will get an opportunity to lose his provincialism and to gain a practical background for his education if he wishes to continue it, he will probably learn to dislike the Army life intensely! This in turn will lead to strong civilian supervision of the Army core personnel.

That about covers things for today; it is quite clear that Morgenthau was hurt by Truman's desire to replace him with Vinson.

All my love,

Regards to Doris.

*Sumner*