

August 12th 1945

Dear Ones -

ourselves
Today is the 12th - I think I have been a day late all week long! Well, we have committed and I cannot honestly say that I am fully in accord with the answer of the Big Four to the Japanese offer of conditional surrender. My interpretation of things as they stand now is this: the allied leaders could not find it in themselves to wholly reject the offer of peace and they threw the ball back to Tokyo. The Japanese forced our hand and it seems as though we - the US, England, Russia, and China - adopted the Grew line of using the emperor system as our tool in enforcing our victory and reforming the Japanese. In other words, we rejected the idea of the emperor with full sovereignty and prerogatives but we did not reject the emperor institution. Even if the Japanese refuse our new definition of the terms, we have indicated that at present at least it is the Allied policy not to plan on the destruction of the emperor. We will use the emperor to control Japan; right now it offers us the chance to avoid future bloodshed and death to our forces. We may destroy the industrial classes and control Japanese economy, we may destroy the ruling groups of political and military barons, we may destroy the supporters of the fanatical shintoism and the divine empire. But we choose to retain the personification of what we are fighting against, we choose to retain the personality who represents infallibility to an entire people, we choose to retain the living symbol of what we are destroying. We run the risk of putting the emperor on a more lofty level of uniqueness than he now occupies, we run the risk of making him appear immune to the forces that destroyed his nation, we run the risk of allowing the loyalty to his divinity to remain and to be enhanced. In exchange we have peace now; for this risk we have an established channel with which to deal with our defeated opponents. We take this risk rather than the risk of destroying the current Japanese empire-god society and of having to deal with a Japan that is in chaos and without an anchor. I do not necessarily believe that if we allow the emperor to live and to be our medium of effecting our peace dictates in Japan through our Supreme Commander that we are necessarily sabotaging the peace. (Certainly if the omission of mention of the Emperor from the Potsdam statement is indication that the Big Four never intended to do away with the Emperor in the first place, then there is no reason for not granting that condition to unconditional surrender.) It is possible that even with the Emperor we can enforce our controls to the full extent and wipe the elements of evil away leaving the framework as the structure for the growth of liberalism or what have you. It seems to me that it is less likely though since we leave the Emperor in a position of divinity in the eyes of his people, and that is hardly a logical basis for democratic and intellectual escape from the current feudalism. I know only what I read and the Times, PM, everything which you sent me, were unanimous in pointing out that the "God-head" must go with his structure. And I would have preferred unconditional surrender to have remained unconditional; I would have preferred a clear enunciation of what "those forces that led Japan astray" included and what "doing away with them" meant in line with the Lerner and Times theses. If the Japs refuse our interpretation of retaining Hirohito, and we resume full scale operations and the current exchanges are cut off, I hope that we will clear up these points. But it is more practical to prepare for Japanese acceptance. And if we leave the emperor we must be surer than ever of the effectiveness of our control; at the slightest hint that the feudal economy is retaining or regaining its hold, at the first sign of a reawakening of virulent national shintoism, the Emperor goes - terms or no terms. We must be certain that we use the medium of the emperor to destroy the present significance of the emperor. There can be no pussyfooting - the emperor must declare himself against his own divinity and absolutism; we are dealing with a unique society and it must be completely undone. Otherwise we are not saving any lives by stopping the war now. I am awaiting the clippings - I want to see what Lerner and the Times say - one thing is clear: if the decision is made to leave the emperor, we must work on that basis and that must be our basis of constructive criticism. The aim will not be to cry that we have made a great mistake - I think it is the unwise choice but not necessarily entirely without justification - but to insist that we understand fully what we have done and what the required follow ups are.

Enough for now - last night I only lost a dollar at poker - the best I have done in a long time! Saw "Valley of Decision" - a good show but only vaguely related to the story of the excellent book. This morning was interrupted by a real Thorpe session where he got excited

over nothing at all; it is a little bit depressing. Most of us are tired from staying up to hear news broadcasts and of course for me at any rate what I am doing here seems less important than ever before now.

It was ~~sell~~ of Carl to drop over - it must have been like old times. I hope he get a chance to drop me a line. I don't recall the Eisensteins of Youngstown, but I am glad that some one had a good word for me! I am glad that you send a nice present to Mike and Renie - thanks. Rosh Hashonnah is certainly early - this year we will be lucky to scrape up a mince and I think that things will ~~can~~ be done on a modest scale; of course, I will observe the high holidays. The Empire State Bldg accident was certainly a freak; like the death of Dick Bong in California, it is a part of the inexplicable fortune that steps into our lives, whether in war or in peace. If such mishaps could only be avoided - but you can't spend your life in a rocking chair for fear of standing up and slipping on the rug.

That sort of covers things for this Sunday -

All my love,

Regards to Doris

Samuel

Sunday evening - Nothing special; rest of the day quiet. Wrote letters to Franklin Allen & Willie Stern.