

August 9th 1945

Dear Ones,

The news this morning was pretty dull - just another atomic bombing, we've had one of those already! Last night we played volleyball with the New Zealanders and managed to beat them again. Again I had a couple of scotches so that the evening was a complete success. We came back early - I read a letter from Franklin Allen - and I was asleep at 9; for some reason I was extremely tired. This noontime - it is Friday and fish day - I think the men and I will go down to the beach and eat a picnic lunch. They got some bread and butter and peanut butter and I took some of our canned collection that is still more than we will ever eat. Last night one of the small news items was that the army does not contemplate reducing its size below 7 millions before ^{June} 1946 under any predictable conditions and that must have included the Russian declaration -- fine; I think that Army has done a pretty fair job during the war, I think that the Army is necessary in the post-war period for protection and for training, but I also think that once the war pressure is over the Army must return to a status of complete civilian supervision of its general policies. If the Army brass does not realize that fact I fear that they are going to find civilian dislike for the Army so great that all of their programs will be foredoomed to failure. It would be a good sign if Stimson were to resign at the conclusion of hostilities and if a younger man (not an Army man - he must be a civilian through and through) were appointed. Let's see - a man like Joe Ball is the type I am thinking of.

It will be important to note the results of the World Zionist Conference; the fact that it is being held in London, where the Labor Government is newly in power, should help to center attention upon it. At present there is every reason to look for Attlee's friendship to the cause of Zionism and for an effort on the part of the Government to put its pledges into action. Certainly there should be no conflict between Labor's promise and their Empire policies as there was with Churchill. All reports from Europe point to the fact that the Uprooted Jews will not be repatriated and that Palestine becomes a greater social necessity than ever before. The statements of the Arab League do not have the force which they did when the Conservative coalition was in the driver's seat.

I wonder what the national reaction to the reforming of the Communist party has been - as good as the TIMES is it doesn't (fortunately) reflect the thinking of the Hearst and similar press and public groups. At present it seems to be only a matter of New York State, but even if the Communist groups spring up in other centers, they undoubtedly will not deserve the vilification which they will be endure. The people who believe in non-violent communism have every right to organize and to express themselves as a political group; you can argue with their platforms, their statements, their theories, but you cannot dispute their right to speak. It is not surprising that Browder and Minor and their policy of compromise has been dropped in favor of Foster and the Duclos line.

It is interesting to note the many reactions to the British elections; one thing is clear from Krock through PM - the forces of the Left and of Labor Organization in America are going to be strengthened considerably. Certainly we should see Hannegan start getting a little closer to the PAC than he has been up to now; and Truman may well swing back stronger into the left of center channel. We shall see. Certainly PM felt that the Left all over the world got a shot of adrenalin.

That covers what clippings I brought down to the depot with me - I will finish this letter up in the office even though the ribbons up there in the typewriters are so poor. (I'll tack another word or two on now) We had a pleasant noon hour at the beach; it is beautiful day and the kind that makes one realize that Santo is not too bad after all. We had every thing we wanted to eat and drink and then I stretched out for about a half-an-hour. Loken - he is corporal, U of Wisconsin '44, well-read, aesthetic, serious and yet entirely indifferent to the Army - was telling us of his misadventures in the infantry before getting into Headquarters. It was a pleasant noontime and my being the only officer caused no difficulty at all.*

The red is so much clearer than the black that there is little point in not using this bright type. I cannot see in the Potsdam ultimatum what it is that bothers Lerner - in fact his reaction to it is exactly what I felt was wrong with his concluding approach in his series of editorials. The ultimatum was primarily a military threat, its conditions were unconditional surrender, in only the question of stripping Japan did it go into any detail - it was not the purpose of the ultimatum to say on what day the Emperor would be executed, on what day the Mitsubishi cartel would be destroyed, and on what day the missionaries were to arrive to start the counter-activity to Shintoism. Lerner keeps talking about getting "the people" to surrender, he fears an empty victory - I see no reason for his fears, for his denunciation of the ultimatum because it was not a full length peace treaty with all the specifications. His goals are fine, his approach to the Japanese problem is hard to criticize, but his critical approach to our military-diplomatic program toward Japan is not sound for my money. I know little or nothing about the current Supreme Court disputes; it seems that Frankfurter has swung away from the Black-Douglas group of the court and the current alignment is just about 4-4 on the critical anti-trust and labor law interpretations. I have forgotten too much of my Gov 1 to be sure as to the nature of the "due process" dispute - I recall that it is part of the 14th(?) amendment and has long been a critical point of discussion. Perhaps the next article I receive on the topic from PM will help clear it up. As for the appointment: theoretically there should be no question of partisanship in the choice. I imagine that Truman will appoint someone prior to the adjournment of Congress. I hope that Congress does not adjourn prior to action on the key conversion legislation such as the Wagner employment bill.

The counter-rally used in Los Angeles to counter the efforts of GLK Smith was a neat one and an idea that should be catching; as Carey McWilliams points out it is the positive answer. Give Smith and the Nationalists and the purveyors of hate and fear a clear field and then beat him at his own game; public spirit can be as strong and obviously infinitely stronger for the good and the right as for the rabble rousing of the malcontent. It is the old story - Smith and his crowd suffocate in the free air and thrive in the dark.

The PM report of the new revivalism which combines swing and religion under the impetus of the Heart Press was quite the thing. Hearst is probably on as safe a ground as he has ever been - and it is a cinch that he has more than the spirit of Billy Sunday behind this little venture. The religious aspect puts the movement in a good public light - it will attract many supporters who look and see nothing but its revivalist cover. The point is that what McWilliams argues may have a great deal of validity - certain of its supporters are known to be men of the GLK Smith camp and there is a strong link between this movement and the current nationalist groups. I imagine that Seldes in IN FACT would have greater documentation. In any event I see no reason to swallow the religious facade hook line and sinker. The new Lindbergh line is much more obvious; the American Right has not given up hope of selling the Lindbergh lemon to the American people. We must be certain that our internationalism is not perverted to anti-Russianism. In all of this, whether it is Heart, or Smith, or McComick, or Lee O'Daniel, or Reynolds or who have you, I am not afraid of their power - I just think that we must maintain our vigilant attitude and be sure that we never become casual or negligent and ignore the forces who seek to undo the progress we are making. While ^{we} remain alert and critical we need not fear.

One of our problems is drawing the line between good and bad, because the American way of doing things so thoroughly confuses things: for example the many "Mother" groups with high-sounding names and lofty ideals that seek to cover up the most virulent forms of native fascism. A similar formula could be applied in greater or lesser degree to many organizations on the American scene - the good and the sincere can be roped in by the bad. As always the answer comes in the free press and the honest press and in constant and public analysis and criticism. On the political front, the current picture ~~is~~ is an outgrowth of this condition - labor's general position emphasizes the current misalignment which finds progressives of both parties against the extremes of both the Democrats and the GOP. What the answer will be I do not know - good political leadership might bring about a complete shift of party names and significance with the result that the right and left would be defined and not confused by the party labels. And in turn

this would clarify the general national picture - Bilbo and Colonel McCormick would find themselves together where they should be. We are living in a complex and extremely political era and the more political organization we can secure out of political-social chaos the better; you can remain non-partisan only up to the point of making a decision. I would not dare to predict the course which we will take; I do feel sure that we are going to see a political realignment. We are leaving an age of political naivete and entering an age of ideals and realities not labels. And despite the wide range of America's groups from Right to Left there is a clear line of demarcation which enters into almost every issue at a decisive point - our solution will come as that large amorphous middle group in the American scene settles into some degree of form and organization. The day of fence sitting is gone (- and there should be no confusion between being aligned behind a generally progressive, leftist policy and losing your rights of ^{AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND} criticism.)

The Mead report seemed to have hit a number of nails on the head and it is to be hoped that Congress and the President will revamp the administrative organizations to meet the reconversion period with some semblance of order and responsibility. Ed "This is London" Murrow certainly hit the nail on the head in predicting Russia's declaration of war against Japan. I got the letter which had the clipping noting his prediction the day we got the announcement. I was a little surprised to read in the ^{HQ} Massah Newsletter clipping you sent that Professor Fay had written an article for Current History which strongly favored the Arab position in the Near East; I studied under Fay only during my "uncritical" first year and a half at school - he was an elderly man and a good teacher, though hardly an ardent adherent to any philosophy. My impressions of him as a critic are very vague; he wrote for the Guardian and I think that most of us looked upon him as a disinterested historian of the old school.

I am glad that you had the contact with Sachar - his comments on his difficulties with selling Hillel to the Jewish students were excellent. My feeling still is that for Judaism to become the living force that is for men like Sachar and Samuels, its lessons and its backgrounds and its cultural significance must be disassociated to some degree from the religious aspects. Certainly that was my experience. The Caryl will shocked me; I don't think it reflects well on its author - if nothing else, it puts a price on observation of the mourning period. I do not imagine that anyone concerned was especially happy over its terms or its publicity. Where is Irene now?

Thanks for the full story on the Jane-Susan summer experience; I had not known that they were at the same camp. I assume that were it not for the Susan problem Janie's summer would have been more successful and that she (Janie) is not doing badly in developing a pleasant personality and character. The problem of Aunt Julia seems to be carrying on into the second generation, and it would seem wise for Uncle Harold and Aunt Mel to protect Janie from the many complications. Susan, as I recall her, is attractive - I have only seen her best side, just as is my case with her mother, and so I can't really judge or criticize. I hope that Uncle Arch is able to find the solution to the problems which you depict, Mother. He deserves a break somewhere along the line.

I am glad that Daddy was asked by Hidreth and did go to the meeting on the veterans' program. So far, so good. Between Old Orchard and Menikoe and all the trips the B's are doing a lot of vacationing and I certainly like to see that. It was interesting to note that in all the discussion of Morgenthau's position as next in line for the Presidency, his being Jewish was never mentioned in what I read; Pearson's tribute to the retiring Secretary was good. It is clear that even with the best political management, the job of reforming a cabinet has a lot of rough spots in dealing with personalities. The Mauldin story continues to be far and away the best of the war.

OK for now - I don't know how this managed to get to be such a long letter - it cut into what I was going to write tomorrow -

All my love,

Sumner