

7 October 1945

Dear Ones,

Today I start my 18th month overseas... We played bridge last night and this morning I slept in until after nine. Then Milt and I cleaned up the tent, culling out everything that we are going to throw away. We now have authority to turn in all the GI equipment we used to have to carry around. This afternoon I was all set to come down and write letters but somehow or other I got sidetracked by a packet of 52 pasteboards and three smiling faces and it was 5:30 before I knew it. And I have a strange feeling that when I finish this letter and the boys come back from the movie we will be at it again. I just dropped a note to Aunt Mel and Uncle Harold. And now your stack of letters is before me - as usual I will separate the letters and then get to the sorted clippings later on.

The obvious topic is Zionism - I am a little hazy as to what has happened: I heard one broadcast to the effect that Truman has requested British action, but nothing more. I have not gone through all the clippings yet, but I assume that the British Government has done nothing except offer the 1500 last visas under the White Paper and that the Jewish Agency rightly refused them. Of course if the Labor government has come out actively against the Zionist pleas then it is even worse and that may be the reason for your stressed concern. Perhaps you recall that in the early days of this discussion I was strongly against political Zionism - I can remember writing that once the gates of Palestine were open the politics of the internal situation would take care of itself. My arguments were that the strength of Zionism lay in the refugee problem's solution and that political Zionism was too great a sore-spot to make it worthwhile to use it as a primary element in the question. My intention was not to deny the eventuality of a predominantly Jewish State in Palestine or its advisability but to oppose the techniques being used by Zionist leaders. However, as American Zionists gradually defined their positions, I began to feel that the tie-up between opening Palestine and political Zionism was so strong that, in fact, nothing was to be gained in deemphasizing it, since the American Jewish Committee, the Arabs, all the anti-Zionist forces, were basing their opposition on the reality of that tie-up. The result was that from both sides, end of the White Paper became synonymous with the cause of political Zionism. Now you have reverted to my original position, Daddy. I don't know whether such a reversal of argument is now possible in view of the current Zionist commitments; I wonder how many current anti-Zionists will be convinced by the new emphasis. Do you really think that we can achieve American unity behind the limited White Paper program? The British will not stick to the White Paper on the opposition to the refugee-humanitarian argument, but on the opposition to the political arguments, which they quite obviously link to the opening of the gates of Palestine. It is too late for the volte-face which you suggest, Daddy, to be convincing. The separation which you suggest cannot be achieved in organizational shifts or in mental attitudes at this stage of the game. Perhaps we are in the dilemma which you picture; perhaps we are stymied in our attempt to move forward to opening the gates and political Zionism; perhaps we have closed the door on the other avenue of supporting only the end of the White Paper. And so far it is an insoluble dilemma, for I do not believe that your alternative is realistically attainable at this time, Daddy. But despite the current pessimistic picture, I do not think that all is lost. I do not have an answer - except that continued pressure on the current British position should bring results.

I am happy for Uncle Lou and for you, Daddy, that I am now the only Bernstein in uniform. And I do hope that you get to take your well-earned rest, Daddy. (I am not in the mood to write for some reason or another - so I will close now and write again tomorrow)

Love,

