

9 October 1945

Dear Ones,

The sun is out and it promises to be a pleasant day - maybe some mail will come in. (Not that I don't have enough clippings to read over right now.) Things are very quiet - the attitude of everyone from the privates on up seems to just do enough to get by, not to overwork, and simply to sweat it out. My current critical date, of course, is December 1; on that day all 60 point enlisted men and 75 point officers have to be on the way home and it is assumed that, as on October 1, the War Department will come out with a new and comprehensive program. As I said yesterday, it is discouraging to see the men overseas get the bad end of the variations on the point system. The point is that even after the current point system is officially sacked, some sort of priority system will have to replace to assure fair and equal treatment of all men. All would have been well if the point system had been adhered to faithfully.

The fight over the Acheson appointment certainly hurt the Republican Wherry's position for my money. It is unfortunate for the Party that he is the whip; he and Landon seem to be the only two who have sided with the small MacArthur faction. I think PM is right in warning against the soft peace, isolationist elements which is still strong enough to be very vocal and to muster the high sounding arguments of negativism and fear to their causes. All of the clippings continue to stress the troubles of the London conferences - Russia's stand on North Africa, her blocking of China and France from the Balkan settlements, the talk of the "blobs" in Europe, even the disputes as to the location of the UNO headquarters. On that score at least, it looks as though agreement will be reached and San Francisco chosen. What we are witnessing now is the full play of real, bargaining politics; the unfortunate part is that although the general principles of international agreement have been reached and secured, we are still allong way from agreeing on the identity of interests on the specific questions involved in the settlement. This building of world peace structures is not going to be all milk and honey, we know that; we must show in our realistic approach to the problems that we are capable of ironing out even the most complex without upsetting our basic equilibrium.

The Patton dispute served to center attention on our handling of Europe and specifically Germany; our method, compared with that of the Russians, is still that of working cautiously from the bottom in our control-organization methods, apparently letting the superstructure more or less take care of itself. Clearly this denies us the method of sweeping overall changes without more or less contradicting our own procedures. I am not at all sure that this method is not as wise a long range policy as the Russian idea of working from the top. The Bernstein articles for PM and the criticisms appearing in the TIMES and elsewhere would show that that policy and directives may be wrong, but they seldom can actually criticize the method per se. We have undoubtedly been too easy on the big Nazis and on the little ones; we may not have been complete enough in destroying the elements of Nazi rule; we have failed to coordinate and control our own administrative methods in some cases. With these failings, I don't see how our use of the Russian method could have been very much more successful than our choice. Our method is just as suitable to organized revolt and revolutions as the Russian - our policy may not be as amenable to it.

PM is certainly printing strong material in support of the Zionist cause. The Harrison report must be dynamite concerning the condition of Jews in Europe. The material is there for full pressure on the British government. The case of the Grand Mufti is one of the strong points that may be brought to the fore if the Arab nationalists seek his release. Yank had a good article on fraternization; like the other studies of the question, it came to the conclusion that sex rather than fraternity was the motive behind the attitudes of the American soldiers. The kind of association which might be dangerous is not that of the lower levels but that which resulted in American officers entertaining German generals and that sort of thing right after the surrender.

Mallon, in interpreting the failures of the London Conference, gives voice to the idea that it has merely been the first definition of Russia's true policy - "The Russians doing in Europe just about what went to war to stop the Nazis from doing - namely gobbling it up" - and opposition to the American position in the Balkans, Italy, and elsewhere. It seems to me that this is completely misinterpreting the realistic significance of the current negotiations - Dorothy Thompson, with her high flown analysis of national conscience and the significance of power, comes closer to it: the failure lies to a great degree in American indifference which leads to a negative rather than a positive state policy. We are the most powerful nation - yet we prefer to be pliable balance wheels instead of forcing the issues of peace; we do not inspire the confidence commensurate with our power. Arthur Krock touched on the question of whether it is up to prove our faithfulness to Russia or up to the Soviet to prove theirs to us; it is the same idea - we are in a position of international inconsistency. The difficulties with guaranteeing a post war military, the lack of interest in the problems of Europe on the part of the bulk of the people, these factors limit the scope of action which Truman and Byrnes can use. We are in a position of tremendous responsibility - right now we want justice, we don't want a western bloc, we don't want an Eastern bloc; we want world humanitarianism, we want world trade, we want economic relations restored to a sound basis - and we have the power to be the protagonists of our new era. If we do not accept that role and rise to it, the other nations will seek guarantees which will in the end upset our basic equilibrium. It is hard to define exactly what part of our fabric is missing - perhaps that is it: we are too indefinite, we do not have an unity among our own interests let alone one we can offer to the rest of the world. America is the small scale model of the world - the Right in America favors the Right in Europe, the Left in America favors the Left in Europe. In any specific question of settlement there is no one attitude which is clearly concerned with a specific American general interest. Our interest transcends the borders and the reparations, and we find it difficult to bring it into play on those specific questions because we are not exactly certain what it is. What we need then is a clear definition in the terms with which we are concerned. We need a State Department policy statement which says: we are against the splitting of Europe and Africa into blocs; we insist upon freedom of the press and news coverage all over the world; we refuse to grant recognition to any government which represents an outgrowth of Fascist rule or which is not the result of a free election; we will not recognize governments whose constitutions do not have complete guarantees of the political, social, and economic freedom of minority groups; we insist upon and will support the use of United Nations action in questions of dispute rather than unilateral action. That is very general and only a part of it, but it gives the idea. If we can say these things and then prove them we will have made our greatest contribution to that fundamental of peace - trust and confidence. That is our strength. It is my conviction, however, that even if the US is unable to grasp this opportunity through internal differences, the foundations of peace are strong enough to carry through these periods of discussion and crisis. And of course there is always the third, but last, element that the threat of war is good assurance of peace. How much better it would be if we came forward as the positive champions of a consistent world program, how much easier it would be for the less powerful nations to put their trust in the UNO instead of their unilateral guarantees.

A few specific questions: I think that the Russian request for an Allied control commission in Japan is entirely justified. Why there should be any question as to the right of China, England, the Dutch, and Russia to share in the occupation decisions is not clear to me. I have now come to the clipping where England announces that she will turn the Palestine question over to the UNO, after a token offering of a yearly quota of 18,000 to be allowed to enter Palestine. What bothers me is the British claim that they asked the US to share responsibility for the admittance of 100,000 but that we refused, so that Truman's note on the subject just irked them. If that is true (and the old Truman statement that he would not risk troops to maintain order in the Levant would tend to confirm it) then the Jewish cause really is imperilled when the two Western Democracies refuse to act. The onus however still falls on the British - it is British unilateral policy which is keeping the Jews out. The way to correct the admitted injustice is to amend the unilateral policy and then turn the question over to the UNO.

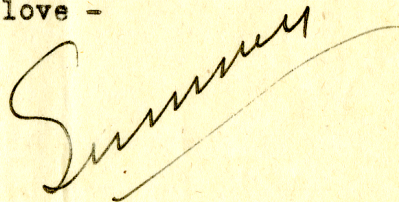
I see that the Selective Service ruled that being a soldier transcends normal union

seniority; my first opinion still goes - that I do not think that that policy will work or is wise. The average soldier who was a union man will recognize that his post-war security will depend not on his identity as a soldier-veteran but on his identity as a worker. There will undoubtedly be many test cases in the next few months - it seems to me that the Directive contradicts the rights of collective bargaining and closed shops which are guaranteed by law. If the unions are smart, though, they will avoid this issue by internal arrangements of their own seniority systems - by doing that they have everything to gain and little to lose.

Well, that is enough for today - time to shower and eat.

My love -

Regards to Doris,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely reading "Summer", written in dark ink. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.