

2 November 1945

Dear Ones,

I'll start this letter now - mail came in today, through the 24th of the month - no word has been heard on the mail that is still missing. I just went up to be paid - the base does not have a finance officer and so an officer has to fly up from SoPac with the cash for the payroll - and I took the letters that came from home up to the tent so that I can read them at leisure and sort out the clippings. I also heard from Bill Snower, Grandma and Grandpa Thurman, and I received the Alumni Bulletin. Yesterday I got a note from The New Palestine telling me that with the end of the war I would no longer receive the publication overseas but that if I desired they would send it to my home address for as long as I am in the Army plus six months. I think that this is both a good gesture and excellent publicity work. I assume that you subscribe to the New Palestine, so there would be little point in our receiving two copies - however, even though it is a form letter, I do want to answer it, so please let me know definitely that you do (or do not) receive the magazine at Bolton Street. OK? The mail also brought the AJC Reporter - again conspicuous for its ignoring the Zionist question. However the lead editorial did state unequivocally that the AJC favors the abolition of the White Paper. I cannot help but feel that the AJC and the ZOA could end their unnecessary schism under the impetus of the proper leadership - there must be personal rivalries and disputes which block even the most basic agreement and recognition between the two major groups. The editorial policy of Commentary might be indicative of the prevailing winds in the AJC. It is one thing to have separate organizations, it is another to have the lack of coordination discolored the entire picture: effective leadership and group spirit could meld the AJC, ZOA, UPA, and JDC into an integrated confederation to represent the various aspects and interests of the American Jewish secular community.

The September 22nd Alumni Bulletin was hard to read - Bob Lasker, Andy Welch were but two of the many members of our class to give up their lives; it hurts even more to learn of their deaths so long after the war has ended. I see that the letter to the Bulletin last spring which so aroused me was answered in a similar vein in this issue. I will have to read the entire issue carefully, for it contains a study of the Buck report. I see that Frisky Merriman has passed away; no more will Freshmen be awed by his striking figure, listen to him say "Gentlemen, let me impress upon you that the Middle Ages were slow, slow,.... slow," or watch him tie the eraser to the string to demonstrate the pendulum swing of man's course from liberty to security and back. How I wish I were back at college!

It is now after 8 - the movie is another stinker - I have spent the last hour or so sorting clippings. Thorpe tells me that we got a radiogram which disposes of our ammunition and that it will mean that he will stay here for a while - that doesn't make me feel at all bad. We are pretty close to having our problems licked - we are auctioning off the vehicles to the French, for low prices it is true but better than dumping in the ocean would bring. All we need is a little shipping and the picture would not be too bad.

Palestine is the first topic of the clippings. The Press Herald editorial did no more than scratch the surface in pointing out the need of US-British cooperation in solving the issues at stake; and when the editorialist did go beneath the surface I did not like his attack; first he says that "Britain is anxious to maintain order in the area astride her empire life line.. when Russia seeks to extend her influence in that general direction." Later, he continues "We will not be serving our responsibility if in our zeal to help those who have our emotional interest (surely not the Arabs - STB) we alienate the British." That attitude is wrong from the word go - we are in the driver's seat: it is our standard not the British Empire which should determine our decision. We must outline our principles and our policies and see how the British Empire stacks up in the light of them - this idea of not alienating Britain must not be misconstrued to blind support of Empire policy. Secondly, even the most unsympathetic analysis must admit that the cause for opening Palestine is based on more than "emotion." Lastly, our stake in the British Empire does not gain in stature by portraying it as opposing Russia - that is balance of power from the word go.

But enough for the surface yet revealing comments of the Press Herald - now to come to the discussion of the Harrison report. It is agreed that the element of time is greatly involved in the dispute between Harrison and Eisenhower; the fact remains, however, that by Eisenhower's own admission conditions are difficult and that the trouble lies not in unwillingness but in ~~inability~~^{not} to meet the Harrison standards. The Boston Herald came close to the truth in showing that the emphasis of the dispute comes from the viewpoint which the two personalities take. I do not doubt but that Eisenhower is doing his personal best, and it is probably true that in the carrying out and interpretation of his commands decisions are made which might be in exact accord with that of the Commander. But my feeling is that the Harrison report highlighted the European problem - it started Congressional discussion, it stirred newspaper interest, it revealed that the condition of the displaced person in Europe is desperate at best whether or not our forces are doing all within their power. The Byrnes statement to the effect that nothing will be decided in US Palestine policy without consultation did little to clarify the basic questions.

The New York campaign seems to be reaching new peaks of intensity - it was not at all unexpected that PM came out for O'Dwyer. What was a little surprising, I imagine, was Lerner's candor - he discounts Goldstein as the result of the Republican's failure to fill the La Guardia gap with a man of real stature; indicating that Goldstein's record as a political chameleon reveals a compromise for weakness. The PM support for O'Dwyer is based frankly on his ability as a politician, administrator, and progressive. Of one thing I am convinced - the NY voters must be sick and tired of hearing the Communist, Tammany, etc line battered back and forth; I know that I am just from reading the clippings. These charges and counter charges have ceased to be issues at all. The tax issue seems to be the first real point of discussion and even that breaks down into attacks and defenses of Governor Dewey and the Republican control at Albany.

I see that the Press Herald gave you top billing in summarizing the PTA conference, Mother - there is at least one keen reporter on the paper, anyway! Have you ever reconsidered running for the school board - or perhaps the new Council?? The German War Crimes trials seem to be underway in effective order; there is agreement and there is efficiency in the procedure. The charges and specifications against individuals and organizations make it clear that we are determined and on solid ground. We also seem to have solved the basic difficulties in the definition of what degree of participation in Nazi German official life constitutes guilt; we have shown that we are prepared to follow the trials through to their logical conclusions. The agreement on the plan for the detention of almost a million Germans is the first sign of this. The Japanese picture on this score also gives promise; but the scope of the Nipponese trials seems to be smaller in view of the hierarchical and feudal nature of the Japanese regime and its strength. The break-up of the economic feudal control organizations is equally important as the punishment of proven military and political criminals.

The threat of a strike of workers in the Portland Public works system interests me; off hand the requests of the labor groups do not sound unreasonable to me. Now to get to some of your letters; your report of how your packed Daddy's bag sounded familiar. Mother one of my biggest problems in the Army was learning to pack - how I longed for those days when I would lounge back while you decided what I would and would not take back to Cambridge with me. I hope that the radio repair problem was solved quickly; if I recall correctly no one in the household at 184 ever mastered the technique of changing a tube, let alone fool with the wiring or try to repair the machines! ..

OK for tonight - I have a good backlog to give me something to write over the weekend -

All my love,

Regards to Doris.

Summer