

19 September 1945

Dear Aunt Anne, Uncle Joe, Joan, and Bob,

Slowly but surely the wheels of the army are beginning to move - not for me, to be sure, but it is encouraging to know that the machinery is oiled and in motion and that those who are ahead of me have been started on their way out. It is having the result of putting the pressure on to get these bases cleaned up - of course the only immediate prospect I have is eventually to traipse to another base and help close it up until I sweat out the required time for my trip home. MacArthur has everybody hanging on to his every word in view of his recent estimate of 200,000 and the State Department's immediate reaction to it. It is unfortunate that what we want most to here - that is, a low figure for our post war occupation needs - is directly contradictory to our obvious need for adequate troops to make our victory and its significance sink into the mentalities of the vanquished. Wait and see, wait and see - that seems to be the only answer.

I can't help but feel that the combination of Pearl Harbor and the reactions of most of the men to the workings of the "old Army" will lead to important reform in the post-war Army - reform, in drastic form, is a certainty if the Army is given a major role in post-war military training programs. First of all, I think that there will be closer civilian supervision of Army policy; that may be accomplished by a combined armed forces or simply through a revitalized civilian War Department. Secondly, I think that the Army's own Inspector Generals Department will be given a new role and will become more active and separated from the influences of local command control. Thirdly, I think that the West Point system might well come in for some changes with more emphasis on men from the ranks and less emphasis on the importance of political or family connections. In this vein, the whole scheme of seniority is probably due for a reshuffling - it is now at the point where seniority outweighs ability disproportionately. And lastly, I think that there will be an insistence on constant shifts of personnel and changing of commands, to keep new outlooks and fresh viewpoints from going stale. (I am saying "what I think" while I probably mean "what I hope," or perhaps "what I wish we had had." I realize that what I say will not be of as great interest in a few years when the Army ceases to be a primary civilian concern - of course that is all the more reason that I feel these steps should be taken.)

We are waiting to hear some definite news on the Chiang-Mao conversations in China - so far it seems that everybody but the Chinese has come up with a basis for agreement and a rosy picture for the Asiatic future. I am pretty optimistic myself - the stumbling block seems to be the traditional mistrust between Chiang and the communists. Chiang won't revitalize his National Convention and grant political equality to the Communist Party by destroying the semi-fascistic features of his Kuomintang rule until he is sure that the Red Army will be dissolved and melded into his own nationalist forces - the reverse is true of the Reds. The Russian pact strengthened Chiang's hand but actually forced it; and so far America and Britain have been correct in their attitude of sponsoring the effort for democracy - not either faction. I guess poor Max Eastman is biting his fingernails as he sees his plan to embroil America against Russia over China go up in the smoke of unity and agreement.

I don't know what to say about the announced policies of Bevin and Attlee - neither is a Ramsay MacDonald, but surely neither is Nikolai Lenin, either. I am speaking of the Bevin statements on Europe and the Attlee hedging on the question of Palestine. Bevin has made it clear that England will depart from empire policy only gradually - I do not think that his echoing the Byrnes' stand on the Balkans is a betrayal of the Labour Party or the Left or anything like that; it merely reflects a tendency to gradualism and the necessity of coordinating traditional empire policy with the avoidance of extreme, unrepresentative governments (Right or Left) in Europe. Being progressive, liberal, what have you, means to assure democratic processes and functioning, not to give a blank check to the parties of the Left who in unsettled Europe seem quite ready to enforce democracy undemocratically. As for Palestine, I am frankly disappointed in the failure of the government to clear the air by announcing its stand. The plight of European Jews cannot go without an answer for long.

OK for now - thanks for IN Fact; please do send me them when you write. Thanks again for your letters -

All my love,

Samuel

p. 3. If you insist on sending me a subscription, I suggest either "Current" or "Reader's Digest". You might check with Mother and see if she had a subscription to either. Since I will be in the Navy, I don't think I should be my address. I don't get regular over-seas letters any more.

LT S T BERNSTEIN
HQ USAF ORDNANCE
APO 708 SAN FRAN

VIA AIRMAIL



THE JOSEPH B ABRAMS
70 MARSHAL STREET s-3
BROOKLINE 46, MASSACHUSETTS