

23 September 1945

Dear Ones,

Well, today I will see Don off on a plane to New Cal if everything goes well and I just have my fingers crossed that pretty soon the phone will ring and a strange voice will say - "I've been sent up here as the new Ammunition officer; come down to the airport and pick me up." Believe it or not, this morning I woke up dreaming about all my problems - a hellova fine situation. Last night we played **four** very slow rubbers of bridge but I did win the wholesum of one nickel, so I cannot complain!

I really got a kick out of your schedule for this year, Helen Babsy, because all of your teachers are old friends of mine. Mr Cobb used to live on Francis Street and we used to walk together - but I thought that he had a position teaching at one of the colleges; do you know anything about that? And the others - especially Miss Williams - it seems just as though it were yesterday that I used to study with them. Unless Miss Briggs has changed, she won't teach you very much French, and I urge you to study hard in cementing your foundation on grammar and vocabulary if you want to become fluent in the language. Sureness in vocabulary and grammatical construction is ~~essential~~ especially in conversation. I wish that you had Miss Pease but Miss Williams is not a bad teacher and English depends largely on the student - your activity in the Writers' Club will give you contact with Miss Pease and with serious composition work to supplement your normal schedule. Of course, I still think Miss Pitt is tops. So get off to a good start and make the most of your school year - educationally and socially - and don't hurry the days and weeks by; these can be some of the fullest days of your life. I truly envy your opportunity.

I am glad that you had a pleasant weekend in Boston; I trust that all the family is well. Was there any word from Uncle Don concerning the storm in Miami? Willie mentioned to me that Esther Thurman was ill and that Saul had been called for - you hadn't mentioned anything about the St Louisans but in view of what I recall of the reports on Esther's health I imagine that the report is right. I can't quite imagine Teddy Perry as the pater-familias, but the fact seem undeniable! What do you know!!! I never thought I'd be so happy to report this fact - but I just got that phone call and Thorpe is back: I feel better already!!

Yup - things are looking a little better - I feel as though the weight of the world had just floated from my shoulders. Thorpe heard down at New Cal of Don's leaving and so he hightailed it back up here. I went down to the airport and brought him back and then I returned to take Don down to the plane. A funny coincidence happened - Don put his bag down on the loading rack and we noticed right beside it another bag stencilled "Arthur E Lewis." By coincidence the fellow to whom Art sold his bag was leaving on the same plane. It was sort of symbolic of the fact that my two closest friends have left now. We got mail on the plane that brought Thorpe and I heard at last from the Osgoods, from Aunt Anne, and about six or seven times from home. Now to get back to the last letters of the previous delivery.

The problem of leadership and responsibility has been on my mind lately; your discussion of the Bowen-Payson problem concerning the CSB merger touches on some of the aspects I have been thinking about. One reason why I don't think that I could ever make a go in, say, Thurman and Company or any similar merchandising enterprise is my sense of personal responsibility to the exclusion of delegating authority effectively; it is my impression that in that way I am very much like Uncle Harold. Uncle Harold is obviously a keen businessman and yet he does everything himself - where his primary personal endeavor is concerned he builds on his own ability rather than on an organization. That is why I feel that I will do my best in law or in teaching. This in no way is to deny that I feel capable of taking and delegating responsibility and of leadership in organization. What I am trying to do is make a distinction between my vocational and avocational attitudes.

I enjoyed your report on your visit with the Marksons and the Gates, Mother. I can well



understand the nature of the plan and that despite its outward appeal, you are in no position to accept its burdens. To be frank with you, my first reaction was to shudder at the thought of another organization's coming into the field for active support. Now it is Children to Palestine and I am all for it - but where is the logic in getting a new organization, new leaders, new workers, new support?? There are at least five functioning groups that would be ready and willing to include emphasis on Youth Aliyah within the framework of their overall Zionist programs - especially with Yudy Markson behind it. I don't know how in the world, the Jews of America can expect to achieve a unifying picture if every idea brings out a new organization and a new sponsor. The problem of the camp is an example: now you own two as a result of the play of personalities, prides, and what have you. American Judaism is wide open for rifts and splits - there are literally tens and hundreds of groups, with similar names, and with purposes that vary from shaded differences to violent disagreement, modified at every level by degrees of Orthodoxy, of social position, of intellectual and cultural background. There is no overall central backbone - I still feel that the Zionist organization is the logical nucleus for efforts concerned with the specific problems of the welfare of Jews in foreign lands where they need help. I do not know current ZOA organization or what units make up the group but it should include them all under the aegis of some sort of a national central committee; there must be a definite change of attitude until we come to the point where we stress the problem with which we are dealing, not the multitude of groups with their myriad administrative set-ups tending to exist for their own survival nor the personalities who wish to establish their philanthropy and advertise it by a new venture. I guess I have written this way a hundred times before - it is the same "organization vs. organizations" theme. On the home front, too, there must be a coordination between the various anti-defamation, social welfare, and cultural endeavors. Nonetheless I hope that Gates is successful in arousing the kind of interest he is after - I take it that his interest is entirely philanthropic and impersonal.

As my letters of the past few weeks have shown - I am anything but surplus. So Pac (South Pacific) has had such little new blood in the past two years that most of the officers and men are right up there pushing the critical scores. Thorpe reports that manpower is tight as hell even at Base Command and seems like a lead pipe cinch that I will be stuck in jobs like this for many a moon. My hope is this two year deal which may become effective my mid-winter. I still set May of next year as my critical month. Funny thing - last night at supper we were joking about my many jobs and somebody said "We ought to call your office Bernstein, Bernstein, and Bernstein - that sounds like a law office, doesn't it?" --- it certainly does. But you can inform my Uncle Lou (whose optimism for October I hope is justified) that if he is planning on sticking me in the vault space, he had better think again!! Why, I'm considering taking over the whole sixth floor so I will have room to stretch! I don't know what to make of the Markson-Schefft pffft, but I take it the Marksons have no regrets; I recall Ted as the Arthur Pinansky type, and Rhonda as a rather scrawny teen-ager.

So Don Sears got married yesterday - I know that you took care of whatever social amenities were called for; I don't think that a gift was necessary, off hand. Of the old Woodfords crowd I am closest to Neil, of course, but he was never really a member of it; I hope that after the war I can pick up my more-than-casual friendships with boys like Alan Rhodes, and Wayne Lockwood, and Don.

Thanks for Aunt Etta's report on family affairs in NY - I had the feeling that she was very fair; there was a new mellowness in her tone. But one thing annoyed me and I know that you will write to me honestly - why did she hope that in the New Year "Israel improve in health?" I can only infer that you have not been well, Daddy, and that you haven't mentioned your indisposition in your letters; I pray that I am misinterpreting her expression. In any case, I hope that you are not overworking and that you are allowing yourself to relax to your heart's content, that you are not overtaxing yourself.

OK for now - it is a muggy Sunday afternoon -

All my love,

*Sumner*

Regards to Doris.