

July 3, 1944

Dear Ones -

Got the Harvard Bulletin and a couple more PressHeralds this afternoon. Our tent project is coming along fine. The closet is all built and painted inside. We have relined all but one corner of the tent with new plywood. We have a table and a number of chairs (painted green.) And now we have rigged up an indoor washstand: a can with a faucet soldered on, and a basin with a hole in it, and a pipe leading outside to where I dug a drainage hole. Really neat. Now we are going to put on a new plywood floor and we'll really have a minor palace. May even tack up a ceiling if we can get some light material. We secured most of the stuff through Herb's contact with an infantry outfit - it comes from some slightly damaged stuff, I guess. It's going to cost us a couple of bucks in the reckoning but it will be worth it - the place looks like something now and will be even better when everything is finished and we have stained the walls. No movie tonight. Rumor has it that in his tour of this area, Boh Hope will stop here; more about that when confirmation comes.

I promised that I would at least try to put down my ideas on our internal political structure. Here goes:

First of all, we are seeing the end of an era. Its primary manifestations are the growing recognition of the need for social legislation and the rise of labor. We will never return to the rugged individualism of frontier capitalism; rather we will advance to truer social equality. What we are learning is simply that work, labor, whatever you want to call the contribution of the worker, deserves the same consideration as the property and management contribution of the so-called capital. And we are coming to the realization that it is the function of government to assure this. To say that the Roosevelt administration has achieved a perfect system or anything of the sort is sheer folly; it hasn't, no administration could have. But it has pointed out the direction we must follow if we are to achieve our revolution, or evolution, whichever you prefer, with a minimum of difficulty. It is the responsibility of government to assure that the interests of the few do not mean hardships for the many.

This does not mean the end of capitalism in the sense of the importance of individual initiative. It will still be the basis of our national economy. But just as you have a police force to protect law and order, just as you have traffic rules, just as you have any type of law and enforcement to protect citizens from the encroachments of other citizens, positive steps must be taken to see that economic initiative is not exercised to the detriment of any segment of the population. And just as the police force is government, so the controlling agency in this case must be government; since we have a national, rather than a state, economy, this agency becomes the national government. The elements of this control have many aspects: briefly it means social security, it means maintenance of full production levels, it means a national economy recognizing that labor, while primarily dependent, is not to be submerged before the selfish interests of the more limited capital, it means that we can find a truer basis for social and political equality in economic equality. We face a great many

problems in changing our system. Everyone is selfish, the "capitalist" hesitates to give up ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ his free reign, labor is quick to grab and abuse control when the pendulum swings its way. Radio, the greater part of our press, have been elements of private enterprise as much as steel mills and mines. We have an educational system full of misconceptions. It is not property that is sacred, it is the individual, his freedom of political and social and economic expression within society. America has the capability to encompass the changes necessary smoothly and without sudden upheaval, although the very pace of modern living demands a speedy recognition of our logical course. What we must avoid at all cost is retrogression. Any one who talks of returning to the "good old days" is on the wrong track - the depression, the chaos of the thirties, the war are no enticement for me. We must be alert - on the international scale we see a parallel danger in the cartelism which was one of the hamstringing factors of the "free" world during the interbellum.

In very broad and sweeping terms, that is the direction in which my thinking is tending now. Every day presents new problems to be related to the general framework and set of tenets. Each one in its turn brings up myriad questions of practical politics. What we must do is to make clear in our minds the social values which we wish to set up. Mine are still very vague - but I am sure of this: I always have been taught to change a losing game and that **MAX**im applies here.

Well, I'll add a hello in the morning.

The 4th

Happy Birthday, Toots!

Nothing special -

Love -

Sunny