

April 7th 1945

Dear Ones,

Boy, today turned out to be no day of rest - we had a special report to get out and were busy until 5. It has been a rainy overcast day - I did not get up to see Stein, but I invited him down for Friday night. Today I got a note from Juj and a three page letter from Joe Thompson who is on his way back to the coast, his broken jaw pretty well mended. Joe writes with the same enthusiasm that he used to have in the old days.

On the subject of White's "Report on the Russians" it seems that every reviewer is in basic agreement as to the nature of the book: even the TIMES reviewer, Foster Rhea Dulles, said "Looking for trouble, he quite naturally finds it at every turn - and then proceeds to make all possible literary capital out of it." And later "... reveals an attitude of mind that permits his indignation at the suppression of individual liberties to carry him to unjustified extremes." And again "there is no attempt to evaluate" or "his attitude of belittlement." I think that those criticisms pretty well cover the main arguments which have fallen around White - and the point is that whether or not it was just a few personal notes or not, the book will be widely read, and what it presents as fact and interpretation and impression will influence the reading public, and for that White deserves to be taken to task. White's failure is not uncommon - it is just a prominent example of something which I have long harped on in connection with validity in criticism: the writer must evaluate his overall approach when he is writing critically, whether he has an axe to grind or not - and the straight reporter cannot be indifferent to what he is reporting and putting it in a true light. The book lacked that elusive constructive approach; I have read only the Readers' Digest version.

I think that LaGuardia's stand on the curfew was pretty damn weak - why didn't he get into the spirit and suggest closing a half hour earlier? No, he is in the wrong on this one - what applies to New York applies to all the country in proportion. As for the fight over the Williams appointment - it was undoubtedly the demonstration to top them all of low Congressional tactics: the charges of religion and the like. Basically it was the same fight as the Wallace fight. I am not discouraged by the vote against Williams - I guess both Maine Senators were against him. These are but the opening rounds, the first blows at the national level, of the conflict over the course of American democracy which will have to settle in the immediate post-war period. And I am sure that you can see how everything ties together - anti-discrimination legislation right on through full employment - the alignment is beginning to ^{take} place for the eventual decision.

The New York Times editorial of Friday March 16th on "The Great Powers" is one of the best I have read in many a moon - in a few paragraphs it answers so many of the doubts and fears that seem to beset those to whom the responsibilities and problems of peace seem overpoweringly difficult and full of inevitable failures. It points out that at Dumbarton Oaks and at Yalta we have created a context for judgment that puts the Churchillian oratory and the ogre of wicked power politics in a very modified light. First of all, if any of the big powers decides on war nothing can be done anyway, so we must work on the basis of peace. Smaller wars are preventable and treated as such. Second, the small nations can initiate actions of grievances and demand a hearing. And the final point is that we now have the well planted seeds of cooperation and agreement of a working partnership. If only its words were read before any pessimistic critic launched off into his petty arguments, our constructive considerations of the future of world peace might be considerably enhanced - for the editorial does the key job: it establishes a basis for valid and constructive criticism.

On the home front, it seems as though the groundwork is being laid by men like Bowles for the continuation of price control and necessary rationing into the immediate post war days. These measures seem essential if we are to solve our economic dilemmas with

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at least a healthily functioning democracy to work ~~with~~. I would very much like to see this supported by a comprehensive plan to cut out the excess bureaucratic wartime accumulations of Washington and to reduce the agencies and departments of such policy and activity control to a consolidated and effective minimum. However, that is primarily a matter of mechanics - the important thing is that the necessary policies are approved by Congress for administrative action; then comes the requirement of not killing its effectiveness in a welter of bureaucratic confusion. At the present time our experience is complete enough for some effort and planning to be made in this direction, without destroying the basic principles of action and policy.

In this morning's letter when I was writing of Hecht's comparison of the spirit of the Jew and the spirit of democracy in America, I thought of my earlier statement about the fact that the Jews were not in agreement and a result could not parry the Arab Cairo compromise offer with a unanimously agreeable answer - so in our current state in America we are not yet able to send a man like Lubin into conference with experts from other nations with a clear cut policy of the course of the American economy. The quicker we can resolve the apparent split in our nation over the nature of our economy, the surer will be the promise of world peace. I hope that American's realize that as other nations' policies affect us, so ours affect them - we do not live in a political vacuum and our ability to face the problems and agree to basic economic goals and methods will be a big factor in the adjustment of the entire world from war to peace. It is one of the innumerable essential cogs in the gears of peace for freedom. As I said earlier, I feel sure that when the realization of what is going on strikes home to the American people, the right decisions will be made so that the groundwork will be assured for future progress.

I will save the list of books suggested by the law school and if I ever run into them, I will try to get to them - most of them are hardly designed for casual readings; they are serious studies and should ^{not} be undertaken as light reading. It is much too ambitious a program to even consider seriously as long as I am in this neck of the woods - generally stimulating reading will have to do me for the duration. If I hit some of them on the list, all well and good. On the general topic of education I liked Mrs Craig's ^{column} and the greater attention which is being paid to the failures in our system so far. However the measure of democracy is not in terms of formal education, but in the practice of democracy itself; you know that I believe that education is one of our keystones - it cannot be neutral in the question of the role and significance of functioning democracy. The conditions must be created for a fair educational opportunity for all and for the proper emphasis of democracy within the educational system. The knack of democracy is not an accident.

Well that finishes the first four or five batches of clippings - I have skipped topics like the possibility of Jap-Russ war since I have covered them to some extent before. TRENDS is not too bad, but there is seldom anything new in it - I guess I prefer a little more meaty reading matter, stuff with comment and criticism which gives me something to work on.

Well, this turned out to be longer than I expected it to be - I hope we have a fairly quiet week ahead - can't tell - all my love -

Regards to Doris.

Summer

PS I've been meaning to ask you a favor - please do not relay the parts of my letters to friends or relatives which appear to you to be material for my letters to them: for example - the description of the Passover. You know what I mean - I don't know whether you do quote my letters to the rest of the family at any length or not. OK?