

JUDMS5_BernsteinS_06011944tr

Transcribed by Kara Kralik 06/09/2020

June 1

Dear Ones -

Today was rainy and squally. The beach was cold, and the water very uninviting. Tomorrow I start the training program they have around here. Tonight Howie Baumgarten and I will go to the movies. He & I are becoming very close - but he is QMC & we will in all likelihood be split up upon assignment. More about him later. So today passed with little activity. I answered almost all my mail. I got a letter from Stella Bowman. I took Harold Laski's "Reflections of the Revolution of our Time" out of the local chaplain's library. I urge you to read it, Daddy. I will write a criticism of it when I am finished. Viking Press published it in 1943. Incidentally mail must come in bunches around here; that letter from Richmond is the first since that big bunch the day of our arrival, and it left Beale on May 11.

Howie Baumgarten is a boy from Southern Michigan and Northern Indiana - he grew up in small towns where his was the only Jewish family. He went to Michigan (class of 44) and his story reads like mine except that I got to DC[5] so fast. He is a clean cut fellow, a year older than I - born on March 11 (!) - very intelligent, good sense of humor

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and a good conversationalist. Unfortunately we do not live in the same tent. Alphabetically my name usually follows his immediately - one reason for our friendship. He plays a good game of bridge and is very clever at a poker table. All in all, a likeable chap and a good contact.

The classification interview came off today.

I made it quite clear - it went down on my card - what I can & cannot do. I am not unique.

A lot of college men - predominantly ROTC - are officers without skill, so to speak. My card

shows my college life, age, etc. You can rest assured that whatever assignment I get I will make the best of it and the most of it. It does not concern me in the least - I know I can acclimate myself to whatever conditions I enter. And you know that I will do my best always. So now I will be happy here as a replacement while I wait for orders of some sort. Worrying is an ill wind with which I will have no truck. If I remember I am going to enclose sections of the family letter Herb Osgood puts out which are quoted from a Lt Sadon's letters from Italy, where he is a Special Service Officer. I am sure they will interest you all.

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Now is as good a time as any to say a word or two more about Zionism. I have read the Rosenwald, Heller, Friedrich materials you sent to me. I have studied under Carl Friedrich and I know he is sound, realistic. His article is proof of that opinion. His proposed policy is one acceptable to all Americans of all faiths because it is humane & progressive in its opportunities in Palestine offered to the Jews under persecution and it is logical in the context of a consistent American foreign policy which he and most of us advocate. After reading him, to read the opposing views of Heller & Rosenwald seems to lack purpose. What are we arguing about? Rosenwald would take the shirt of [*sic*] his back for the persecuted but he does it as a religionist, not a nationalist. As a result (here Heller is right) he has too strongly opposed Palestinian growth because it is linked to Nationalism; things brings up divided loyalty, etc. ad infinitum and ad nauseam. I have written of this time and again. There is no reason why Palestine should be a "National" homeland, there is no reason why Jewishness should be the common bond of the Palestine state. Palestine should be a shelter for the homeless, a place for building and rebuilding.

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It does not need the common bond of Judaism - it needs only the common bond of Palestine itself. There is no reason why Palestine cannot be opened up for settlement, its boundaries set in a post-war world, and a democratic Jewish-Arab state evolve with no reference to religion. It will be a world responsibility to maintain the balance (as the world should have done in Ethiopia & China last time.) This does not deny that Jews over the world will have sympathy & will offer support to their brothers in the Near East; but it does not omit the controversial issues of any closer bond than culture & spiritual agreement. I repeat-this is not a Jewish problem - it is a world problem. A man cannot have 2 national homes. A Jew must not confuse his national allegiance with his religion. I am an American; I am a Jew. My home is not in Palestine. I do not think that official Zionists are any more in the right than Rosenwald. Neither will admit the middle ground; there is a lack of clear thought and analysis; a vague use of terms. No one wants a homeland for denationalized Jews more than I do. I think American Jews have placed themselves on the [*illegible*] of a

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nonexistent dilemma.

Well enough for now. I am not thinking too clearly. Some of my previous letters are better thought out. But if we seek realism, if we are honest, even the most emotional of us would accept Freidrich's [*sic*] program, unencumbered by mumbo-jumbo of terminology.

Love & kisses,
Sumner.