



Tpr R. E. Close
 A Squadron
 DEOR
 Ptech.
 Friday 3.11.44



Dear Hilda,

Just a few lines to thank
 you for coming down to speak to the
 discussion Club & a few comments on
 the results of your talk.

Everyone here, favourable &
 unfavourable ^{to your ideas} (and they are mostly the latter)
 was very impressed with what you
 had to say & the way you said it.
 And I can tell you that if any
 speaker here arouses interest sufficient
 to cause discussion for the next two
 days the way you did then they've
 moved mountains. Quite a number
 of chaps who were present have made
 a point of coming to tell me that
 your's was the most interesting lecture
 they've ever attended. They were
 impressed (this includes the mildly

2.
drunk gentleman who put the long
question about Poland's frontiers).

Perhaps if you knew the fellows
here as well as I do, their complete
lack of interest in things political, their
lack of interest in the discussions at
the Club, you'd realize better that
the mere evoking of this interest in
those who attended ^{your meeting} is a major
achievement & quite a step forward
for them.

It is a pity that your lecture
had to be last Tuesday & not some
other one. There were two concerts on
(one in Camp with women taking part &
one in town). In addition it was
pay day, the occasion when every-
body goes out or gets drunk or both.
In these circumstances 48 was a
very good attendance for your meeting.

Although I myself was impressed
with your lecture, perhaps I could
suggest a few points for your consideration.
I do this because I know "van eie
andrewinding" how difficult it is to
get ideas across to these people.
Your introduction about the need
for good future USSR-SA relations was

3.

good & is most necessary. It is something that really interests soldiers:

— will we fight Russianism?

For those who don't understand the Finnish War, "invasion" of Poland by the Red army

before USSR was attacked it would be useful if you could manage to deal shortly with that & the "annexation" of the Baltic states, also a little about Russia's foreign policy, particularly her struggle for Collective security.



2/ Most people, ~~are~~ even those sympathetic to Socialism, reckon it is a dictatorship. If that ^{question} could be clarified a little more it would be useful. And in this connection I don't think it would be out of place to point out limitations of Capitalist Democracy & the rôle of ^{big} industry, agriculture & finance in controlling the state machine.

3/ The way you dealt with Trade Unions would, I take it, usually be necessary. It was a pity you didn't know beforehand that we have few, if any, Trade Unionists here. However, it did them no harm to learn something about Trade Unions.

4/ Otherwise, in addition to pointing out ~~so~~ the benefits enjoyed by the Soviet

people under socialism and also what prevents us getting the same high standard of social security, I think it wouldn't be a bad idea to tell the Chaps something about the USSR geographically & from the general interest point of view: i.e. draw their attention to it on a map, its raw materials, resources etc, somewhat after the fashion of the film we had here "Battle for Russia", an American production.

These are just a few suggestions. You did mention ~~some~~ points in connection with these matters but I feel the effect of a little more time spent on these would be good on the audience.

The silly questions put to you in the discussion (some of them) are quite typical of the outlook of a lot of these people. They are the sort of comments, questions & objections I get everyday. I think you dealt with them very well (so did the audience).

Your visit to us caused a big stir so I don't suppose you'll be here again for some time. I'm looking forward to seeing you on Thursday 9th in town & hearing news of Rusty.

Yours
 Galt.
 Ret.

Letters from
Ben Everingham met an
book - American from
Wander what happened
to him - conscientious objector

April 9, 1940

I'll absorb so much budding spring that
you'll find it still in my hair when you
get close enough to touch it - and two-thirds
will be for you. 48.1

Fear of night on the high veld is as natural to you as fear of the hard cornered city after dark is to the raw native. It is alien to your ancestry farther back than any man can count his forefathers. I too have know the fear of wide, dark unsheltered places. As a young adolescent I knew this fear and knowing it I was angered and later I would set my alarm for three a.m. and get up and walk into the country; when I came to a remote and fearsome spot far from any of my kind I would stand with clenched fists and pressed lips until the fear drained away and I could stand and listen attentively to the unfamiliar night sounds of the wood and view with curiosity the luminous log and the intermittant light of the insects. This I had to do many times until now I lie often in the dark remote places and invite the strange life to come to me and tell its story to a fellow creature who has been so long separated from this freer unself-conscious nature. For you this carry^{ing} the fight to the enemy's camp and finding him to be no enemy is more difficult but try some time when you are camping - step away a hundred feet from your tent and fire and open your senses wide and you may get some inkling of this ancient comraderie of the night - it is good medicine for "dark streaks".

Dear Hilda it hurts me to know that you are unhappy and I am so far away and my help so tenuous. How strong is my wish that that you might come to be at such times that we might in the quiet of our blended unassailable goodwill refill our emptied vessels of hope and courage. My hope is refreshed, far be it from me to deny that it often needs refreshing, by the knoweldge that I am working every hour from the place where I am toward the place where I want to be, and can be most effective; even though I admit that I don't see clearly just where that is. Let justice be your guiding drive until you are convinced that the ever present weight of this burden is stagnating you and then it is

your first duty to yourself- all you ever hope to be or mean - to stir up your mind and body with new infusions of beauty. The alternative is a narrowing, auto-cannibalism leading to the blinded rut of fanaticism. Believe me dear the goal is not won by the first man there but by the man who having arrived is still alive enough to colonize the place, thus consolidating forever the ground gained.

Today has been the most startling of the war. Everyone here is hoping that Britain wasn't caught napping as much as the first flashes would indicate. We may not be Anglophiles but we know where our best interests lie and that Britain with all her clumsy faults more nearly approaches our ideals than do her opponents. The stupid and horrible shortsightedness of the mad business continues to hit me hard between the eyes day after day. Nothing that has transpired has in the least shaken my conviction that we should stay out of it not so much because of my deep hate of war but rather because in so doing we may be able to retain some sanity and really help to straighten things up in the less spectacular but no less cruel period of pain and panic which will follow. To do this effectively we must maintain some degree of contact with the Nazis even tho our emotions rebel.

I received to lots of papers from you and enjoyed them them very much. This is fine work. Try to keep it as South African as possible. Please send me more of the same and others when the opportunity offers.

Don't worry yourself writing to me. I look forward with keen anticipation to your letters but don't want you to feel that you must write consistently as a duty or something of the sort.

My work with the handicapped has progressed and developed beyond my hopes, which are always optimistic. In less than a year the real interest of the right people has been aroused and definite steps taken and plans made, and cooperation offered. The work at the youth center goes more slowly but has progressed and I hope will bloom considerable this summer when it will be critically needed. In this work with the poor laity that inertia nearly stifles one and demands patience plus.

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