

Jerusalem, Oct. 7th 1940

Dear Dr. Glueck,

I was very glad to hear that you arrived safely in America. I hope your journey was not too annoying.

Here things are settling down now after some upheavals. As you probably know from Dr. Burrows, Dr. Fisher cabled to him about this Consul business. I must say that I think Dr. Fisher was thoroughly justified in his attitude. The people staying here were really impossible. Before you left you saw Mrs. Hare and Mrs. Wilson. To that were added two other families both quite unconnected with the Foreign Service. One consisted of Dr. Oliver his wife, his mother, his aunt, his three children and his two dogs. They are British, and come from Beirut. Surely you remember a Daniel Oliver during the riots, meddling in some obscure peacemaking. This Dr. Oliver is his son, a medical man connected in some way with the American University in Beirut. His eldest daughter is weakminded, but inoffensive. The other two children are nearer normal, but very offensive. The other family consisted of Mrs. Thacher from Alexandria and her four children. She said she knew you from a trip on a boat. She was quite amusing, but certainly not the kind of resident of which the School Committee would approve. She drank by herself, and from the early morning, every day three bottles of beer, sundry whiskies, and went around town in the most diminutive white shorts. As her figure was excellent, this was not at all disagreeable, but I can well imagine the effect on one of our Summer Schools. I should add that we took in anybody reasonable who applied, as there were no consular refugees at all after you left, except Mrs. Hare and Mrs. Wilson. There is a nice balance of over LP 550 in the Hostel account, and we make about 50-60 pounds every month.

*(The Consul gave permission to take in non consular people).*

Somehow these people understood that the Consulate was paying rent for the School buildings, and behaved as if the place belonged to them. They took out of the Director's sittingroom chairs and little tables into the garden, without asking anybody; they went into the kitchen all the time and bothered Shukri; their nanny went and helped herself to anything she liked from the icebox. All of them drank beer and whisky and soda, and demanded that they should be kept in the icebox; poor Shukri had to keep count of who drank what. One of the ladies had an affair with a Polish officer, which is nobody's business, except that he left at three o'clock in the morning and regularly left the front door wide open. All these things of course are trivial, but together they create an unpleasant situation. There was a wild horde of children running around the place under no restraint whatever, screaming and running all over the flowers. The two dogs finished the garden completely. Everything is trampled flat. The children also "played with the goldfish, with the result that most of them are dead. The watertank in the garden has holes and is half full of stones. Also there were always difficulties with the meals. Part of the children had to have their meals before the adults, and part together with them, some wanted soup at lunch, some in the evening, and altogether it was a madhouse. A housekeeper was engaged, Mrs. Abbott, who had worked for Mr. Keith-Roach. I must say that I did not like her, but she was fairly efficient, and certainly cleaned the place up. The servants had got very slack. But the people were very rude to her, making personal remarks in the diningroom, and treating her with studied insolence, so that she gave up and left. Then Dr. Fisher suddenly boiled over, having accumulated a smouldering rage for weeks, and gave the Olivers and Thachers their notice. This started the whole business, because they went to the Consul and complained, I do not know with what right, because Oliver is British, ~~xxx~~ and Mrs. Thacher is in no way

connected even remotely with the Foreign Service. The Consul started fuming about women and children being thrown into the street, which is a gross exaggeration, because Mrs. Thacher is very well off, and went to the Eden Hotel. It is true that she had to pay more than fifty piasters a day. Dr. Oliver was leaving for Baghdad anyway in a few days. The truth is that Wadsworth is frightened stiff of the damage Oliver can do to his reputation at Beirut, through his connection with the University and through his father. He actually said so: "What will people say of me in Beirut?". On the other hand Mrs. Matson has been bothering him through Mrs. Vester to find her a job, because they are practically penniless. Matson's business is dying. So this seemed a heavensent opportunity to get rid of her. She came here to be interviewed, and wanted to bring her entire family and furniture here and establish herself for life. Of course Dr. Fisher did not agree to this. The Consul came the same day for five minutes to talk the situation over and Dr. Fisher agreed to take on Mrs. Matson temporarily without her family. Everything was still unsettled, when suddenly in the afternoon Oliver brought a letter from the Consul. The fact itself that he was asked to bring it to Dr. Fisher is already very insulting. This letter is the one I am enclosing. I must say that in my opinion it is quite incredibly silly. Apparently he has not understood the situation, ~~and~~ and at the interview finance was not mentioned at all. Certainly it would be impossible to hand over to Mrs. Matson the management of the hostel and the bankbalance. Dr. Fisher phoned him up; I was in the room and could hear Wadsworth speaking. He was extremely rude and shouted Dr. Fisher down. He wouldn't let him finish even one sentence. You know how inhibited Fisher is about his stammer, this about finished him, he was raging mad. Next day he wrote to the Consul explaining his point of view and sending back the LP 20 which are mentioned in the Consul's letter. He agreed to take Mrs. Matson temporarily, as an employee of the School, and only in control of the immediate housekeeping money. The letter was firm but very polite. Up to this day the Consul hasn't answered this letter, although he has obviously accepted it, because he has shown it to Mrs. Matson, and she comes to the office to render accounts every week, like a lamb.

I hope all this is more or less clear, it is such a long and involved story. You will be able to see a copy of the whole correspondence with the Consul at Dr. Burrows'. I sent him a copy on air-mail paper together with Dr. Fisher's report. Air-mail is sinfully expensive now. The situation at the School has settled down now. Mrs. Matson acts as housekeeper, renders accounts to me. Bills etc. are paid by cheque as before. Shukri stays on, also Khalil. Bishara is gone, he was a dreadful moron. Instead we have Shukri's daughter, Aziza, who also waits at table, and Omar (from Miss Carey at Ain Karim) as houseboy, and a woman to scrub every day. The house is almost full. Mrs. Matson is quite efficient, except that she does too much cheeseparing, like using margerine on sandwiches, and beating up scraps and such other things. The only drawback is that she has brought in the American Colony. Mrs. Vester advises on everything, and we take in their overflow. Mrs. Matson intrigues to bring in her own tradespeople and servant but I hope she will not succeed. She gets a salary of LP 10.000 a month and her board. I hope also that Dr. Fisher will be able to break her of the habit of saying that she has taken over the Hostel and taking in people without asking him, and that he will put his foot down about the Colony. They are an awful bunch of crooks, and have been spreading all kinds of rumours about the school and about Fisher, and intriguing right and left. The best thing would be to get another housekeeper, but I suppose that would again bring the Consul in. Though for the life of me I can't see why he has the right to interfere in the internal household matters of the School. All there is in the agreement is that we must take in consular

refugees. This the School has done and is ready to do at any moment. It is really ridiculous what a mountain he has made out of a small incident like getting rid of undesirable residents. I can't understand it, except that he is probably afraid of gossip about his management in Beirut and Alex. I am sure you would have got rid of them much sooner, except that you probably would have managed it in a more tactful manner. The attitude of these people was that they wanted to stay here, but went around the town telling everybody what a dreadful place it is. Jerusalem is terribly over crowded, not only with British families, but also with people from Haifa and Tel Aviv who are afraid of air-raids. There is not a room to be had in a hotel or pension except the King David and the Eden. The King David now charges two pounds a day and the Eden not much less. Ordinary poky two room flats somewhere on the roof which used to cost \_\_\_\_\_ pounds a month are now ~~let~~ as a favour for \_\_\_\_\_ pounds. So of course it is ideal to live at the School if you have a family of seven people and two dogs, and are charged only LP 15 a month, and have a garden and a garage and every convenience. In the circumstances it is not very nice to criticise every single thing.

In connection with the children I have forgotten to mention a few of their exploits. One little boy aged five threw a razorblade at a passing Arab boy and cut open his cheek! You imagine the unpleasantness resulting from that. They also used to lock Lady P.'s room and throw the key into the garden, and to leave notes in her room, saying: "Get out, we do not want you here". Surprisingly enough Lady P. has been as good as gold since you left. She pays up without a murmur, and complains very little. Perhaps its only the contrast with the other people that makes her seem bearable, anyhow she has not been any trouble to speak of.

Your plans, photographs, and pottery ink drawings went off some weeks ago. I hope they will arrive in order, though you should not expect them before the middle of December. The post office said it would take three months. I also sent you by first class mail some air-photos of Tell el Kheleifeh, which arrived surprisingly some weeks ago, with a letter explaining the delay. The photographs of the pottery are being cut up, I shall be ready in a week or two and send them on. Your letter from India explaining what you wanted done with them arrived at the very end of August. Pinkerfeld's index to his plans I sent by first class mail together with the plans etc. There should be three parcels, one with the plans, one with the drawings, and one with the photographs, and two letters, one with the air-photos, and one with Pinkerfeld's index.

I am enclosing a financial statement of your own account, which is very much overdrawn, and also of Kheleifeh, which is likewise overdrawn, and not quite closed, because Pinkerfeld is still working. Also I am enclosing the yearly balancesheets, and a small scale copy of the monthly statements for July-September. I wonder what is supposed to happen with the money which used to be sent three times a year here to Jerusalem. The last cheque came in June. Now cheques from America are not cashed any more, only cabled dollars are accepted. The School Balance is getting pretty low owing to these various overdrafts. On the other hand the Hostel Balance is rising steadily. Perhaps the next School cheque would be cable to Jerusalem together with Dr. Fisher's money. He owes now the School LP 150. and the House LP 50., together LP 200. On the other hand the School owes him by the end of the year two instalments of \$ 250 of his usual salary and \$ 600 of his extra salary as acting director, together \$ 1100, or approximately LP 270. I believe he has written to Dr. Burrows, explaining this financial arrangement and asking that it should be cabled to him at the end of the year.

You will have heard about the excavations under the tennis-court from Dr. Fisher's last report. The foundations of a large tower were discovered when the street behind the tennis-court was enlarged and asphalted. They connect up very well with the so-called "third wall" which led up, if you remember, to the gates of the School. Sukenik and Mayer are digging it, and the School is paying part of the expenses. I believe it won't cost much. Up to now we have spent under ten pounds, and the excavations are almost over. What will be fairly expensive is filling in again those parts of the tennis court which have been dug up. Unfortunately when the street behind the court was widened, the Municipality sliced off 4.50 metres off the court in the back. It does not touch the court itself, but takes away all the margin. We could not do anything, as they are entitled to it by law. Also we have to pay half the cost of asphaltting the street for the length of our back wall, and the whole cost of the sidewalks and the removal and rebuilding of our wall. Altogether it will come to about 60 pounds. Nothing at all could be done about it. I think Mayer and Sukenik are preparing a note about the excavations with a few photographs for the Bulletin.

I sent the yearly statements and the <sup>list of</sup> Library acquisitions to Dr. Burrows around the middle of August. I hope they arrived in order. Perhaps it will be better if from now on I shall send the monthly statements and reports by air-mail. It is dreadfully expensive, as you can see from the envelope, but at least it is safer and does not take three months.

Things otherwise are much the same. Prices have gone up a bit, especially on tinned goods. For the past month it has been impossible to get the heavy oil for the central heating. Now there is some again, but it costs pounds a ton (prewar price .), and it is not certain whether the supply will be regular throughout the winter. We have laid in a good supply of wood, and if necessary will heat with paraffin stoves and wood in those sheet-iron Arab stoves. Everything is very expensive; the blou arrangements for the School cost us about fifteen pounds. In winter you can't paste over the windows with black paper and sit in gloom all day, the curtains have to be movable. . . . but on the whole you can get anything and plenty of it, and, touch wood, we have not felt the war at all yet, though it looks like coming our way. People are still interested in archaeology and quite a few of them use our Library. British journals come, but nothing else, except an offer of exchange of publications with Moscow!

I hope this letter will give you some information about things here, it will certainly cost a fortune, but I wanted to explain everything. I did not write before about this business with the Consulate because I did not want to do so before Dr. Fisher sent in his report about it. I hope Mrs. Glueck and the baby are well. Please give them my love. I am sorry you left before I came back to work. Communications with America are now just as good as they were then, and conditions here are such that you would have been able to go on a bit in T.J.

I shall be very glad to hear from you if you have time to write.

Yours very sincerely

Dura Pommerant