

Dear Walter,

A most disturbing letter arrived today from Paul Kern, who is now a sergeant at Camp Gordon Johnston, Fla., asking that I get in touch with you immediately concerning a ticklish situation which has broken out there.

This camp is without plumbing for enlisted men; and "sanitary companies" of enlisted personnel (Negro, of course) have been assigned to clean the outhouses. According to Paul the work is filthy beyond description, and last week a company struck in protest. A group of seventy-five or more was immediately clapped into the stockade. At first, according to Paul, it was planned to have a mass trial, but he's afraid now that the men may be tried individually and suggests that the NAACP look into the matter to see that there is proper legal representation for the accused. At the moment he says they are being held virtually incommunicado, limited to writing one carefully censored letter a week.

Does the Association have a good lawyer either in Tallahassee, which is nearby, or Tampa, a couple of hundred miles away? Paul says that immediate action is required, and that a doctor and photographer should come along to examine the latrines and general sanitary conditions.

Paul is often somewhat emotional, as am I, but I still think it's worth looking into. This camp doesn't have too good a reputation anyway and some outside interest might clear up a lot of things.

Jemy and the baby are both here now, which partly make up for the fact that life isn't too pleasant. They've given me the title of Director of Negro Activities, but none of the rating or responsibility to go along with it. Segregation has reappeared in all its fury, what with a new CO and camp set-up. Colored troops are now a numerical majority in the post, and I only wish that the facilities were better for them. But since this is undoubtedly one of the better camps in the south for colored troops I suppose it doesn't do to complain too much. Illiteracy and disease are of course very high among them, since the vast majority are from the backwoods of the south, but at least they are not too far from New Orleans.

The appointment of Bob Murphy is downright disgusting, and it's a shame to think that the administration has learned so little from the Darlan experiment. But Dewey has so far been so inept that I don't see how even an enlightened conservative could vote for him. For that reason I'm sorry that Bill Hastie resigned from the PAC, although I'm tickled that Tobias replaced him. There's no doubt that Bill had good reasons for disliking the administration; but the alternative is just appalling.

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What did you think of Dick Wright's articles? I never was so disappointed in a guy; even the writing was inferior. After all, Dick worked with the reds for years after the period about which he was writing, and it seems awfully silly to write about the trivia with which he was dealing. It looks as though a wounded ego was the motivation behind it all, and I think I can also see the hand of good old Horace Cayton.

Let me know all the latest news, because I'm starved for it in this neck of the woods. Best to Glad and the kids.

Pvt. JH
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