

Levi Pennington

People

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## Pennington to Guy Cordon April 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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April 29, 1946.

Hon. Guy Gordon,  
Senator from Oregon,  
Senate Office Building,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Gordon:--

You may be sure that my sympathies are with you and your associates as you grapple with the problems of these days, problems some of which are more difficult, as it seems to me, than the problems of the war.

There are three things that I am deeply concerned in these days. One is the matter of food and clothing for the starving peoples of Europe and Asia. For weeks I have been working on a local program for the raising of funds and the collection of clothing for the sufferers in Europe, but of course private enterprise will have too little effect on the whole great problem. I am sure you will wish to cooperate in every way in which the Congress can aid in saving these starving peoples. There is no peace insurance in starvation of children and women and men, of our former friends or our former foes.

A second matter is peace-time conscription and compulsory military training. You have had opportunity to know my views on these matters, which seem to me utterly un-American and undemocratic. And of late evidence multiplies that the extension of the draft, which seems like a subterfuge to force peace-time conscription on us by indirection, is unnecessary from the standpoint either of national defence or the maintenance of occupational forces. The Conscription News, based on War Department estimates, says that the army will have 1,070,000 men, the total required by its own estimate, by July 1, 1947, without draft extension. It seems that General Eisenhower made clear the real purpose of peace-time conscription when he said before your Senate Military Affairs Committee that he wanted conscription if not one man was drafted. Isn't the real purpose of peace-time conscription and compulsory military service to force on us the same sort of military system as that against which this war was waged?

A third thing is the matter of amnesty for political prisoners, especially those whose only crime has been obedience to their consciences in refusing to participate in war. Is any good purpose being served by keeping these men in prison? If not, could you not appeal to the president, the attorney general and the secretary of war for a general amnesty for these men?

With best wishes for your success in dealing with these and the many other problems that face you, I am

Sincerely yours,

Levi T. Demmington.