

November 1938 to early 1940, part 5

FACTS

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Danish National Gallery

Creator/key person:
Ernest Mancoba

General comments:
Rules of transcription:
Spelling errors kept, followed by
correction as [sic: corrected spelling]
Necessary insertion of missing
punctuation marks added as [.]
Necessary paragraph breakage as
[/P]
Illegible words indicated with
[illegible]
Scratched out letters and words not
transcribed

SUMMARY

This Mancoba diary covers Mancoba's first months in Paris. He is enrolled at L'École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Rue d'Ulm. He has befriended the Danish ceramicist Christian Poulsen whom he abbreviates as "Xtian" and various other students whom he variously identifies as "Pultzer/Pulzer/Bulzer", "the Algerian", "Chargo/Chago" and "Roser" (amongst others). He has a visit with a South African identified as "Mall". The diary likely ends at the end of December 1938 or January 1939.

TRANSCRIPTION

He [Chargo/Chago] looks stupidly at the Paris Soir [newspaper] and says France & Germany can never have permanent peace as Germany is Dictatorship and France Democracy – We talk of the Strike at Le Havre and look at pictures of Marines taking an [illegible] of the ship "Paris"¹ – I read Candide to Chargo and he looks sleepy – A knock at the door and Xtian [sic: Christian Poulsen] arrives with a Swedish girl friend of his – It is exciting she is the first girl to get into my room and Xtian me to go with them and have coffee – I agree, get up & dress up – Chargo is embarrassingly excited – I say I shall meet him afterwards but he insists on coming [illegible] like a child –

[/P] We go cafe () opposite Le Latin – The lights are wonderful at night – the revolving lights especially advertising the picture of the [illegible] line of defense [sic: defence] at the Rhine – Describing the cafe – The young girl is very attractive [,] her teeth are uneven and when she smiles she is very beautiful

Chargo talks about his travels and tells them how shy I am to eat at the hotel [insertion in margin: He tells them I sing etc etc .] He laughs at odd times [,] I am embarrassed but the girl is interested [,] I talked little but I enjoy sitting on the Boulevard & watching the crowd – She tells me she is a student at Sorbonne – She asks me to go with her one evening to dance at Montmartre [,] I agree with hisgivings – [insertion in margin: We take beers and a coffee for young girl] I am quite attracted but I feel it is merely an infatuation soon to pass – I hope so for love affairs exhaust me – and it is a job to amuse a young woman –

We leave & go to listen to gramophone records at --- . Chargo departs & I am glad [,] She says she likes Chargo for he is kind [,] I say he is too kind & sweet – I feel I am getting tired of Chargo – I listen to Beethoven 8th symphony 1st movement – We take the young person home 12 ocl [sic:

o'clock]. I am sorry to part with her – we go to cake shop and buy cakes from the vendor in to the mouth & march down St Michel eating – I break into laugh and tell Xtian [sic: Christian Poulsen] how unheard a thing like that in London – or South Africa [.] How miserable I was carrying ice cream for a young lady once in SA. She insisted on buying some and eating as we walked in the street [.] I could have collapsed – He says it is the same in Denmark – Paris was different [.] nobody bothers about any other person's affairs – we go towards his hotel and he tells me [illegible] how free he is in Paris [.] (It reminds me of Grahamstown [in South Africa] and the fellows from Transkei) Pamela etc etc and go to sleep and think of the young person all the night [.] damn rotten –

// At school usual things [.] afterwards I meet Alexandre and talk. Dinner and I go to Xtian's Hotel [.] He wants to make pictures of the Bible – So I give him one – He is talkative [.] we talk about the [illegible] and how [illegible] – Pulzer says the French want another revolution to wipe up the muck of this system – and that we have not long to wait for one [.] He speaks of corruption of France & of 200 hundred families – No Liberty, No Equality No Fraternity – He hates Deladier [Edouard Deladier was Minister of Defence of France, 1936 to 1940] & I believe Blum [André Léon Blum, French socialist politician] cd [sic: could] have done something – Xtian is not interested [.] he thinks the French Revolution & blood were hideous & unjustified [.] but then I feel he is confused because he had sympathised with the workers on Nov 30².

[/P] He rises and goes & I go to Putzers room & continue talking – He has been to a nightclub & met some Scottish Highlanders seeing Paris – It struck me as odd even to think of a Scotchman in Paris to say nothing of a night club – He says they don't like the English – He tells me of his young lady in America & how he wd [sic: would] have liked to marry her but he has not enough to keep himself alive – It is a tragedy he says [.] I say it looks as if prostitution has every justification for existence as things are [.] it is horrible and brutal but sex must be recognised and catered for as such to the degradation of man – He shaves & dresses to go out to meet a girl friend – Xtian [sic: Christian Poulsen] is restless also dresses & goes to do shopping for a tea party – He expects visitors and asks me to wait & show them in while he is away – I wait but he returns before them with a parcel of eatables – He is very kindhearted & likes to entertain – I go to my hotel and shave & get ready for Hearn's – I go down to supper –

[/P] After I walk to Montparnasse [.] I take the lift and arrive on the 7th floor Mme Hearn's [.] I was ushered in by the lame fellow – And presently she

appears and all beaming hospitality etc etc – dressed in the most unconventional manner – biggish & middle-aged [,] a perpetual cigarette – Shows me pictures of the lame man – very like Putzer's in some ways based on the cast and fantastic – Shock of black hair concentrated on the forehead – The apartments are delightful – I stay in the foreroom and the bell rings a bell rings and the couple walks in [,] A wife & husband and they speak English – woman has agreeable face [,] the man [,] no – He seems to be on the point of breaking into tears – He sit [sic: sits] down and talk about Johannesburg & Durban [,] the womans sister staying in Johannesburg [“] I asked her to go there as living is so comfortable and cheap – Her brother has business there & doing well [“] – I am not happy discussing South Africa – They tell of thunderstorms & earth tremors in Joburg [sic: Johannesburg]. He cannot imagine what Johannesburg is like – wonders if have photographers etc. The women gossip & we three now talk a little politics [.]

[/P] The man is a writer of short stories & novels – He has stayed in Egypt. He asks what the Natives would feel like with Hitler as a coloniser – I tell him that the Africans are tired of England and that the English have bungled things in South Africa – He agrees things are bad but they would be worse with German colonisation – The Germans race purity etc – The English have done well for [crossed out: India] Egypt & I tell him I don't like the English in South Africa at any rate [.] Then he speaks of the haughty and overbearing attitude of the English man in the colonies – as compared with the sincerity of the French Equality feeling Blacks officers in the Army in Paris with white wives and nobody takes any notice – He also admits that in the event of a war the English colonies would take the opportunity to revolt against England with the assistance of Japan & India especially – He tells me he does not believe there will be a war and that Munich was a bluff – Russia, France & England & America too strong for the dictatorships – any way the Italians wd [sic: would] revolt against a war [,] America wd [sic: would] come within two weeks [,] does not wish to see a powerful Japan [.]

[/P] The lame fellow fusses around and speaks broken English [,] he seems unhappy [.] Mme [French: Madam] has too domineering a personality [.] She does a bit too much ordering about.

We have tea and cake in glass cups [,] they are strangely light – I thank goodness I manage to lift one without spilling tea – I prefer tea and rum in a long bottle

We talk on and there is a common friend they discuss who was a great fortune but lost all the money no one seems to know how – But man explains : expensive clothes, and Russian temperament to throw away money – lived in London & sought things shirtmaker-tailor in Bond Street [reference: Bond Street, London, renowned for many skilled and expensive men's tailors] –

Huge cat frightens the little woman [.] She says she fears cats – the sleekness – But this is no ordinary cat [.] its uncanny – I too have a vague fear – The lame one takes it away – The writer speaks of Surrealism, English Breton & novel [presumed to be André Breton, who was a French poet and writer] – [illegible] is finished and [illegible] new young writers coming to the fore – He has just written a new novel and cannot make the corrections ([illegible]) –

We see photographs and magazines where Hearn has sent photographs [.] “Paris” has very suggestive poses and obscene [.] It is all boring & unexciting – I like the photos of street with workmen [.] The young girls have interesting faces [.] Mme has mastered technique but I feel the choice subject matter is dead and haphazard –

Mme [French: Madame Hearn] does not like to live in London prefers Paris – I too prefer Paris [.] more healthy space for the arts.

Little woman says her sister wants her to go to Johannesburg [.] life so easy there (Yes cheap black labour but not for long!) I say Johannesburg is nothing but a huge mining camp with no culture –

Mme hopes some one shoots Rippendorp [sic: Joachim von Ribbentrop, French Minister of Defence] and sorry no body blew up the train when all Nazi chiefs went to Italy – [insert in margin but illegible] Little woman fears war [.] had experience in Brussels [.] Madame plays with cat and lets it take cigarette from her mouth. Also makes it leap to her arm after much coaxing - & snapping of fingers [.] We go –

[/P] Muns is sorry he was not clever tonight [insert from margin: I is an English way but poor in France] following sorry Xtian [sic: Christian Poulsen] asks what it was like [.] I tell him good – promise to take him to the house one day – Paul is interested [illegible] the Egyptian works away and cuts & tears the clay like mad – I work better now with clay – I tell Paul about South Africa and the Zulus – He is interested & evidently fear reading about SA for he speaks about the Boers as being the most wicked

of the white group but I correct him & say the whole lot of whites in Africa
[,] English included [,] are wicked – He is dismayed –

We go out and see notice for all students to demonstrate against Italy's
pretensions towards Tunis [sic: Tunisia] & Corse [sic: Corsica] [.] Paul is
excited and runs to Place de la Sorbonne – We meet Putzer and He tells
us about demonstration of students [.] Hear [illegible] Putzer says they
say "Paris for the French" but really it is "Venise à la France" & "Avant
Daladier" [.] We see a huge crowd & among them some fellows from the
Art School [,] they sing The Marseillaise [National anthem of France] - &
shouts – The police have come out in great numbers – no incidents –

Afternoon I go to Xtian & we go to Grand Chaumiere – Xtian says I am a
damn fool for not cutting my papers properly – I agree with him – I say I
like to hear him swear [.] He says he was drunk [.] I congratulate him for he
looks too unhappy & too responsible [,] contented [.] He ought to make an
ass of himself a few times

¹ W. Sze: The New York Times newspaper reports that on 8 Dec 1938, the ship "Paris" was able to leave Le Havre for New York but other ships were still grounded by strikes

² W. Sze: The French Communist party called for a general strike on 30 Nov

KILDER TIL
DANSK
KUNSTHISTORIE

NY CARLSBERGFONDET

He looks quickly at the Paris Givres and
says Francklin, can never take
permanent peace as Germany is still
and some democracy - he talks of
the strike at Jettavre and looks at
pictures of marines taking on board of
the ship "Paris". I read Carducci
to Champs and he looks sleeping. A
knock at the door and then
arrives with a Swedish girl friend
of his - His exciting she to the first
girl to get up in my room and then
asks me to go with them and
have coffee - I agree get up +
dress up - Champs is extraordinarily
excited - I say I shall beat him
apparently but he insists on coming
together like a child - we go Cafe
(opposite de Laton) - The
lights are wonderful at night - the
revolving lights especially advertising
the picture of the Maginot line of
defense on the Rhine - I describe the
Cafe - The young girl is very attractive
but still we are over and then
she smiles she is very beautiful

KILDER TIL
DANSK
KUNSTHISTORIE

NY CARLSBERGFONDET

Clayo talks about his travels and tells them how shy Jan is at the Hotel. He laughs at odd times I am embarrassed but the girl is interested. I talked little but I enjoy sitting on the Boulevard & watch the crowd. She tells me she is a student at Sorbonne - She asks me to go with her one evening to dance at her apartment. I agree on with hisgivings. I am quite attracted but I feel it is merely an infatuation soon to pass - I hope so for love affairs exhaust me - but it is a job to amuse a young woman - we leave to go to listen to gramophone records after Clayo departs & I am glad he says she likes Clayo for he is kind. I say he is too kind & sweet - I feel Jan getting tired of Clayo - I listen to Beethoven's 8th symphony 1st movement - we take the train from home at 12 Ocl. I am sorry to part with her - We go to cake shop and buy cakes from the bakers & to the museum & march down at pickel eating - I break it caught

He tells them
Ding
etc
etc

he
take
sheets
and a
coffee
for my
girl

He speaks of corruption of France + of 200
hundred families - No talent No Progress
No ~~fruition~~ - He hates DeLafayette +
Belmonte Blum cd have done some-
thing - He is not interested he
thinks the French Revolution + flood were
ridiculous + unjustified but then I
feel he is confused because he
had sympathized with the workers
on Nov 30. He rises and goes down
to Putzes room + continue talking - He has
been to a night club + met some
Scottish theel ladies seen Paris - It
struck as odd eyes + that of Scotland
+ Paris from nothing of a night club -
He says they don't like the night -
He tells me of his young lady in America
that he cd have taken of room
for but he has not enough to keep
himself alive - It is a tragedy he says
I say it looks as if prostitution has
every justification for existence as things
are with so horrible and brutal but sex
must be recognized and catered for as
such + the degradation of man -
He stands + comes to go out to rest +

good friend - Klaus is rather also dresses
& goes to do shopping for a party - He
expects visitors and asks me to wait
to show that I shall let you - Wait
but he returns before then with a parcel
of catables - He is very kind hearted &
likes to eat - I go to my hotel and
shave & get ready for Henn's - I go
down to supper - after I walk to Montfameur
take the lift and arrive on the 7th
floor - Henn's has ushered in
by the same fellow - and presently
she appears and all bearing with
hospitality etc etc - dressed in the most
unconventional manner - bigged & middle
aged a perpetual cigarette - shows me
pictures of the same man - very like
Putzler's - some says based on the
east and fantastic - shock of black
hair concentrated on the forehead - The
apartments are delightful - I stay in
the forenoon and the bell rings and
a bell rings and the couple walks in
~~a~~ dwarf husband and the sleek
English - Woman has agreeable face
the man no - He seems to be on the point

breaking into tears. He sits down and
talks about Johannes. He is on the
Kosans side. He says Johannes
has asked her to go there as living is so
comfortable and cheap. He broods in
his mind that doing well - I am not
happy discussing with Africa - He
tells of the adventures & the horrors in
planning. He cannot imagine what
Johannes brings in like - pictures of boys
photographs etc. He knows of course
he should now talk a little politics
The man is a writer of short stories &
novels - He has stayed in Egypt. He
asks what the natives would feel like
with Hitler as a coloniser - I tell him
that the Africans are tired of England
and that the English have bungled things
in South Africa - He agrees things are
bad but the world is worse with
German colonisation - He knows race purity
etc. - The English have done well for
Egypt & I tell him I don't like
the English in South Africa at any rate
then he speaks of the laughing and
overbearing attitude of the English man

in the colonies - as compared with the
sincerity of the French - especially feeling
black officers in the Army, Paris
with white boys and nobody takes
any notice - He also admits that
in the event of a war the English
colonies would take the opportunity
to revolt against England with
the assistance of Japan & India
especially - He tells he does
not believe there will be a war
and that Munich was a bluff -
Russia, France & England & America too strong
for the world - any day the
Italians will revolt against a war
America will come within two weeks
does not wish to see a powerful Japan
The lane fellows juries around and
speaks broken English - he seems uneducated
more he too dominating a personality
He does a bit too much ordering about
We have tea and cake in glass
cups they are strangely light - I
thank goodness I managed to get
an Italian coffee tea - I prefer tea
and rum in a tin bottle

We talk on and there is a common
friend the dancer who was a good fortune
but lost all the money he one seems to
know how - Port has explained: expensive
clothes and Russian temperament to
throw away money - lived in London +
troughed King's shirtmaker - tailor
in Bond Street -

Huge cat frightens the little woman
she says she feels fears like the sleep-
ers - But this is no ordinary cat it's
uncanny - I too have a vague
fear - Helmer one takes it away -

He writes books of Surrealism Right
Betty + novel - He has no finished -
certainly no young ladies come to the
for - He has put into a new world
and cannot make the corrections (Cape
painted) -

See photographs and magazines
above Helmer the best photographs
"Paris" has very suggestive words and
obscene it's all being very exciting - Like
the photos of the street with Helmer
the young girls have military faces
more he mastered technique but feel

the choice of subject matter is head
and tail hazard -
 Mre was not like Klive in London
 prefers Paris - I do prefer Paris more
 wealthy than the other -
 Little Roman says for side - bar to her
 to go to Johnny life to eat, then (No
 cheap black labor but not for long!)
 May Johnny is not a big
 mining camp with no culture -
 Mre hopes some one shoots Ruppel
 and sorry no body else up, the
 train then all Nazi chiefs went
 Italy - Little fear to had experience Ruppel
 Madame plays with cat and peeks
 at take cigarette from her mouth, also
 makes it leap to her arm of the
 much creaking - a scapping of fingers
 We go - Mre is from Berlin with dark tonight
 following her when asks what it
 is like still her good - promise
 to take him to the Dama house one
 day - Paul is interested in the
 Egyptian books away and into steam
 the day like had - I work better
 now with clay - Tell Paul about

Bundes
 kind will
 be the
 nation
 after the
 biggest
 Congress
 of National
 character
 is found
 no longer
 in Berlin

North Africa and the Zulus - He is interested
to read about the ready about S.A. for he
speaks about the Boers as being the
most wicked of the white group but I
correct him & say the whole lot of
whites - Africa & Egypt included are
sicked - He is disappointed -
He goes out and see where for all students
to demonstrate against Jeli's
predecessor's works James & Coorse
Paul's excited and runs to Plose
de la Fontaine - He sees Pitzer and
he tells us about demonstration of students
to the head de more Pitzer says the say
Paris for the French "but really it's
Venise à la France" + "avant Dadaisme"
he see a huge crowd & among the one
yellow for the art school the sign
"Le Marseillais" - & shouts - The police
have come at a great number -
no incidents -
Afternoon I go to Klia & we go
to ~~the~~ Grand Chancery - Klia
says I am a damn fool for not cutting my
papers properly - Jagu's with
him - Day I like to see him soon
I should like to see him soon
I should like to see him soon

It is an
infinitely
that poor in
France
to say
less
drank
I am
his for
he looks
turning
the
report
about