

June to September 1940

FACTS

Date:
June to September 1940

Page number:
5-9

Diary location:
Danish National Gallery

Creator/key person:
Sonja Ferlov Mancoba
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 section of the Mancoba diary most likely begins around June 1940 when France is on the brink of World War II and Mancoba is still a free man. The section continues with Sonja Ferlov Mancoba writing about her concern over Mancoba's incarceration and her recitation of a poem.

TRANSCRIPTION

The evacuation of Paris has begun – The earth has turned of [sic: off] its contents like a disturbed fool – All sorts & conditions of humanity flooding the streets especially St Michel & Aven. [sic: Avenue] Orleans – Place Montrouge sight unbelievable [.,] cars cars – Sonja & I go down the street near Café Zeyer & man tells Italy has gone into the war – had not seen it in the papers – artificial mist and Sonja thinks we should get gas masks –

// Sonja & I go for gas-masks & past Goetz – The fruit woman tells tells [sic] Goetz had left for Pepe –on the Spanish border & that there is no need for confusion – Speaks encouragingly of 1914 – I go down St Michel & Sonja goes home. I see miserable sights of refugees a continuous stream towards the south vers [French: around] Port d'Orlean – I go to Swansons & find him packing [.,] he wants to get to the outskirts of Paris, dreads the outburst likely to come – fears the artificial mist & can't stand it – Does not think they will shoot negroes – Queer dream of earoplanes [sic: airplanes] & white birds – plays Bach [.,] England Suite(?) promise to call on me – Return home by Montparnasse [.,] the Gare [French: train station] is shut & people in crowds around – waiting – a woman says “there are no more trains.” Streams of camions [French: trucks] & wheelbarrows & baby prams, & handcarts – over the baggage an occasional baby “thrown into the bargain” [.,] sad procession & one thinks how Europe has been a playground up til now –

Sonja & I wait for Swanson [.,] he does not arrive presumably gone away –

Clarice [presumed to be Clarice Penso] arrives & tells artificial mist was the burning of Rouen – She leaves a note for Rita & Renée & tells us Paris likely to get order of evacuation – leaves an address in case we might lose each other [.,] Sonja & I – She weeps a little [.,] very good woman –

Get some food & get out to see the refugees – Place Montrouge – It is like a show. people around the cafes & the Boulevards to see the March past – One thinks of “14 Juillet” [reference to Bastille Day] but instead of victorious soldiers – one sees miserable little woman tired worn & haggard with their babies clutching at their breasts – There is no triumph here – It is the people on the move – One sees French types of the French Revolution – The French people to whom Paris is a den of thieves and

hotbed of crime & evil – One wonders what they are thinking – After all what did they think during the last war – Will they go on being refugees generation after generation –

Among the traffic now & again one sights camions [French: trucks] full of soldiers or Police or guns – We return home – Rita has not evacuated after all – She is restless [,] in the middle of the night she knocks at door and shouts – She has seen light leaping in the air – Suggest we should be calm & wait but she replies – Attendre Attendre [illegible] quand les bayonette est dans ta ventre [French: Wait wait [illegible] when the bayonets are in your belly]. She goes off again nervous – Sonja thinks it does not matter what happens to us as we have worked our best we can only hope the next generation will be luckier – we go to see Joe – gone – Nervosity [sic] in the air [,] Several drunk – woman waters –

// The morning I go down to Sonja & see her in the street with a crowd of people round 2 soldiers from the front [,] They look tired & worn – They say the army has retreated & one believes it will all be over in 48 hours [,] he has had enough – A woman asks if any of them from England – One answers affirmative [,] She wants to know in a vague way something or and the about somebody – He says many dead & navy sank –

After we go down the street many soldiers walking Southward tired – thousands of refugees [,] St Michel endless flood [,] all sorts of conveyances – Some seated on pavement moving their 'boots' swollen feet – We speak to several [,] all no hope [,] It is a miserable procession against 14 J. [reference: 14 July, Bastille Day]. All seem to have sticks to lean on – we meet little Senegalese [,] confused – return – Same scenes & mad woman screaming [,] she seems to have on only her raincoat [,] her legs show white through the vent as she totters about leaning on the Seine – I suddenly remark that is true expression of our times.

Cows & oxen pulling wagon impressive [,] Strange to see them at Luxembourg Garden [,] group of unhappy soldiers seem to have had enough [,] inclined to be too talkative at last they are reasonable & calm – Red cross dubious little woman wishes they had stayed on [,] calls officer – taxi fiasco back home –

We go to P Orlean [sic: Porte d'Orlean] in evening

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earth has turned up its contents like
a disturbed pool - All sorts & conditions
of humanity flooding the streets especially
St Michel & down Orleans - Place
Montrouge sight unbelievable cars
cars - Sonja & I go down the street
near Cafe Zeyer & man tells Italy has
gone to the war - had not seen
it in the papers - artificial mist
and Sonja thinks we should get
gas masks -

If Sonja & I go for gas-masks & post
Goetz - The faint woman tells tells
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the Spanish border & that there is no
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trunk to get to the outskirts of Paris
dreads the outbreak which to come - fears
the artificial mist that stand it - Does
not think the Lill stood his part - Great
arcade of caplans & white birds - Philip Back
English Suite? Pinner Bell at the -

Return home by Montparnasse the Gate
is shut + people in crowds round-
waiting - a woman says "there are no
more trains" - streams of carriages +
wheelbarrows + baby prams, + hand
carts - over the baggage an occasional
baby "thrown" into the "bargain"
and procession + one thinks horse
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Sonja + wait for Eranson he does not
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Clarice arrives + tells a typical
night was the burning of Rouen -
she leaves a note for Rita + Renée
tells us Paris likely to get order
of evacuation - leaves an address
in case we might see each other
Sonja + I. - She keeps a little
very good woman -

Get some food + get out to see
the refugees - Place Daumesnil - It's
like a show - people crowd the
cafes + the Boulevards to see the
march, past - One thinks of the
Millet but instead of Victorians

Soldier - one sees miserable little woman
tired worn & ragged with thin fabric
clutch at her breast. There is
triumph here - It is the people, or
the move - One sees French
types of the French Revolution - The
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I suggest we shall be able to visit but
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happens to us as we have worked

our best we can only hope the next
generation will be luckier - ^{he got the}
^{person} - ^{clear several drinks -} ^{man} ^{water} -
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they look tired + worn - they say
the army has retreated + one believes
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He wants to know in a vague way
something or another about some body - He
says many dead + many sick -
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refugees a mixed endless flood all
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feet - he speaks to several all no hope
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Seine - I sudden remark that is true capes
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✓ Cons + open pulling wagon impressive
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Cross dubious little woman who they
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~~On following day I arrived in Paris we go
to Orleans in evening~~