

## HOTEL NETTO

TELEFONE 15

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PORTUGAL

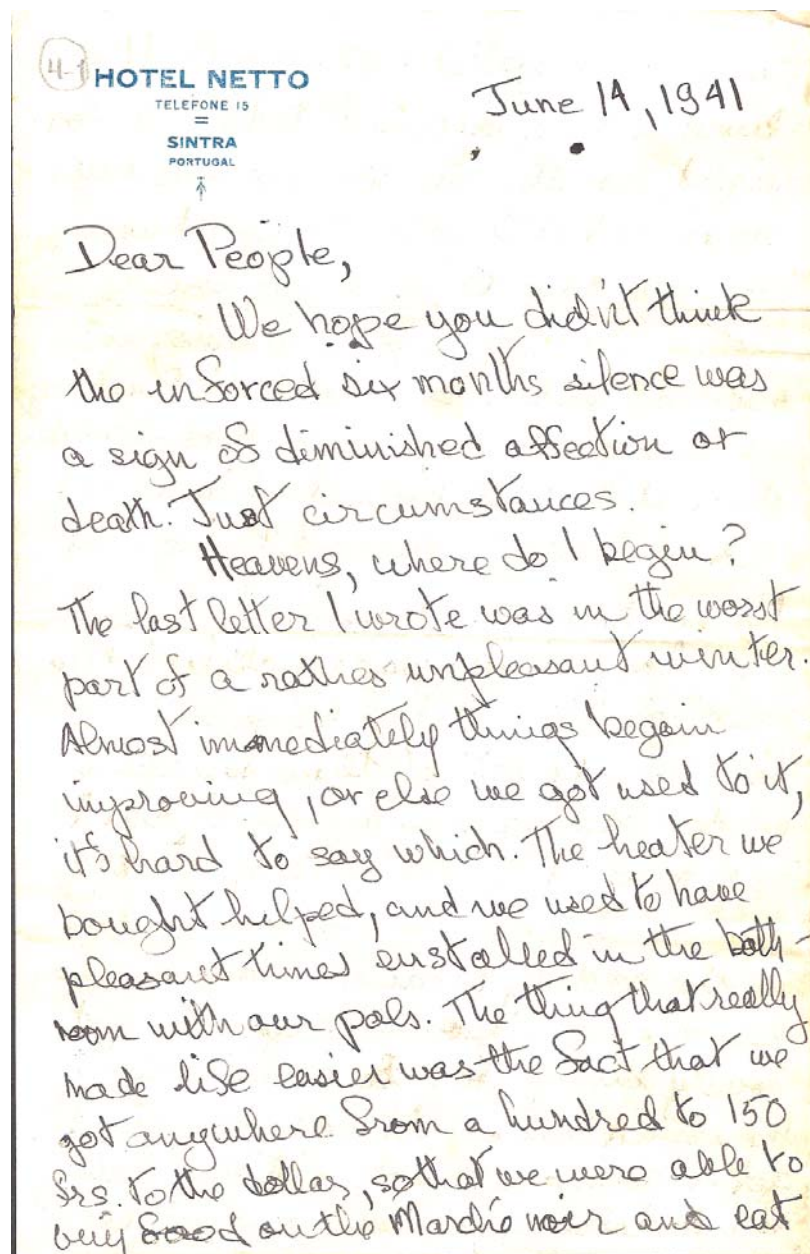
June 14, 1941

Dear People,

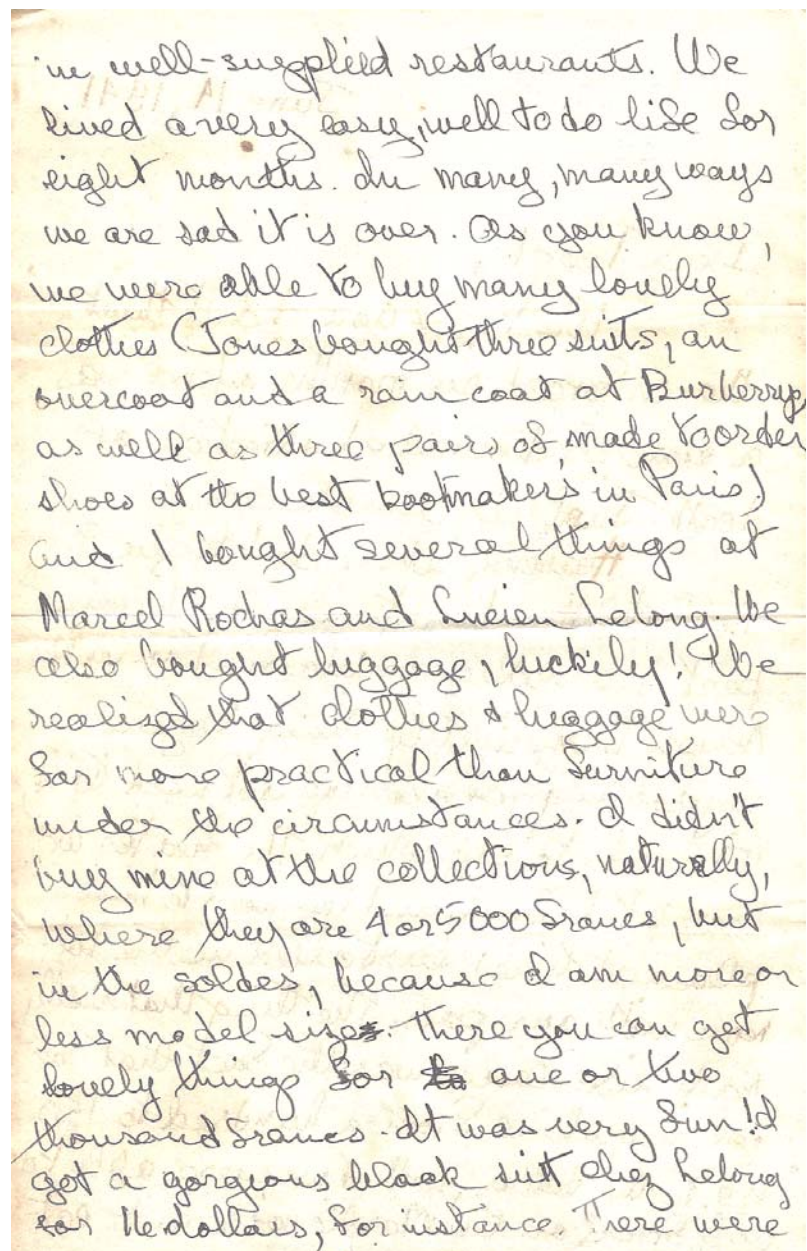
*We hope you didn't think the enforced six months silence was a sign of diminished affection or death. Just circumstances.*

*Heavens, where do I begin? The last letter I wrote was in the worst part of a rather unpleasant winter. Almost immediately things began improving, or else we got used to it, it's hard to say which. The heater we bought helped, and we used to have pleasant times installed in the bathroom with our pals. The thing that really made life easier was the fact that we got anywhere from a hundred to 150 frs. to the dollar, so that we were able to buy food on the Marché noir<sup>1</sup> and eat*

<sup>1</sup> **Marché noir**: French, 'black market'



in well-supplied restaurants. We lived a very easy, well to do life for eight months. In many, many ways we are sad it is over. As you know we were able to buy many lovely clothes (Jones bought three suits, an overcoat and a rain coat at Burberry's, as well as three pairs of made to order shoes at the best bootmakers in Paris) and I bought several things at Marcel Rochas and Lucien Lelong. We also bought luggage, luckily! We realized that clothes & luggage were far more practical than furniture under the circumstances. I didn't buy mine at the collections, naturally, where they are 4 or 5000 francs, but in the soldes<sup>2</sup>, because I am more or less model size. There you can get lovely things for one or two thousand francs. It was very fun! I got a gorgeous black suit chez Lelong<sup>3</sup> for 16 dollars, for instance. There were



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<sup>2</sup> **Soldes:** French, 'sales, budget shops'

<sup>3</sup> **Chez Lelong:** French, 'at Lelong's'

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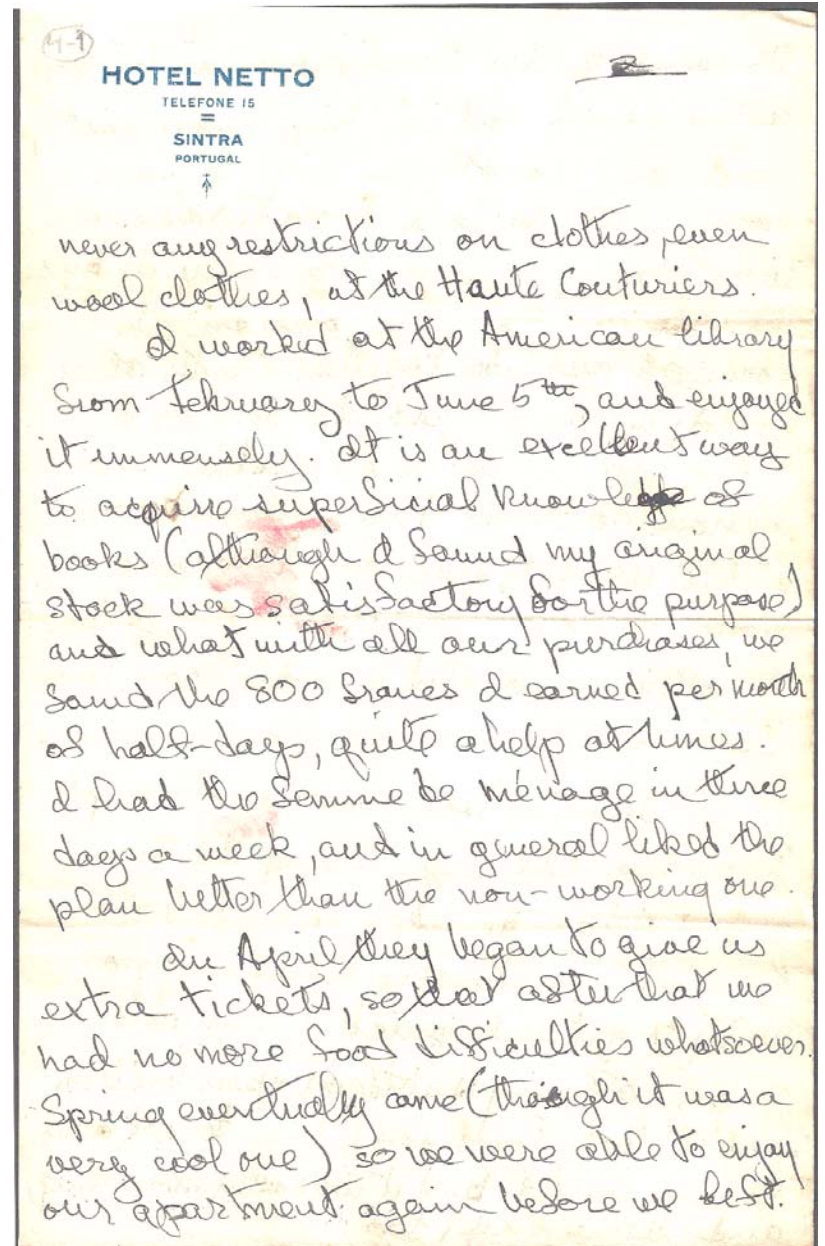
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never any restrictions on clothes, even wool clothes, at the Haute Couturiers<sup>4</sup>.

I worked at the American library from February to June 5<sup>th</sup>, and enjoyed it immensely. It is an excellent way to acquire superficial knowledge of books (although I found my original stock was satisfactory for the purpose) and what with all our purchases, we found the 800 francs I earned per month of half-days, quite a help at times. I had the femme de ménage<sup>5</sup> in three days a week, and in general liked the plan better than the non-working one.

In April they began to give us extra tickets, so that after that we had no more food difficulties whatsoever. Spring eventually came (though it was a very cool one) so we were able to enjoy our apartment again before we left.



<sup>4</sup> Haute Couturiers: French, 'High fashion designers'

<sup>5</sup> Femme de ménage: French, 'house maid'

We went to the theatre several times, often dined out in fine restaurants, and were nonetheless able to save some 280 dollars. So naturally, we were sorry to leave, especially as Paris was our home in common, the scene of our life together. On the other hand, we were glad to be able to leave because we were restive and anxious to travel. Paris seems so completely isolated; you can't imagine how cut off from the world you are. Finally we bought a radio from Tom Esten, so our horizons were widened.

Jimmie took over another job four months ago, telling the Jews about visas. He liked it much better than filing, naturally. What an opportunity to get rich quick! They were always offering subtle or open bribes, and it took Jones some time to get over feeling insulted. But it was very interesting, and very sad, too.

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*time had come. We didn't know where we*

*were to go till two days before. We made our preparations very hurriedly, and said goodbye to the first phase of our youth. We took the train to Hendaye, had three grueling hours with the German customs at the border, and then entered Spain at Irun. Poor Spain! After her war, she is suffering just as much or more than France from the blocus. Food is high, and the bread ration is 80 grams a day (In France, 275 grs.) It is a very unhappy country. We stayed the night at San Sebastian in Guipuzcoa, and I had a chance to talk Spanish (though I was tongue-tied and had stage fright, of course!) Next day and night we travelled in dirty day coaches, which*

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was really a nightmare. You can buy no cigarettes in Spain, to make it worse. (The ration is four a day, for men only.) Clothes are not yet rationed there, however. But what poverty!

In the morning we came to Vilar Fermosa, on the Portuguese side of the border. Immediately we sat down to a MEAL, such as has not been seen in France for years. The thing[s] that most impressed us were: (1) The quantity and color of the bread. It was so white! We thought they were trying to impress us, but it is like that everywhere here. White as snow. We had gotten used to brown colored bread. (2) Camel cigarettes! Unfortunately we no longer like them. We have become used to very strong French tobacco, and American light cigarettes taste sweet and doped to us. They make me cough. Only you don't

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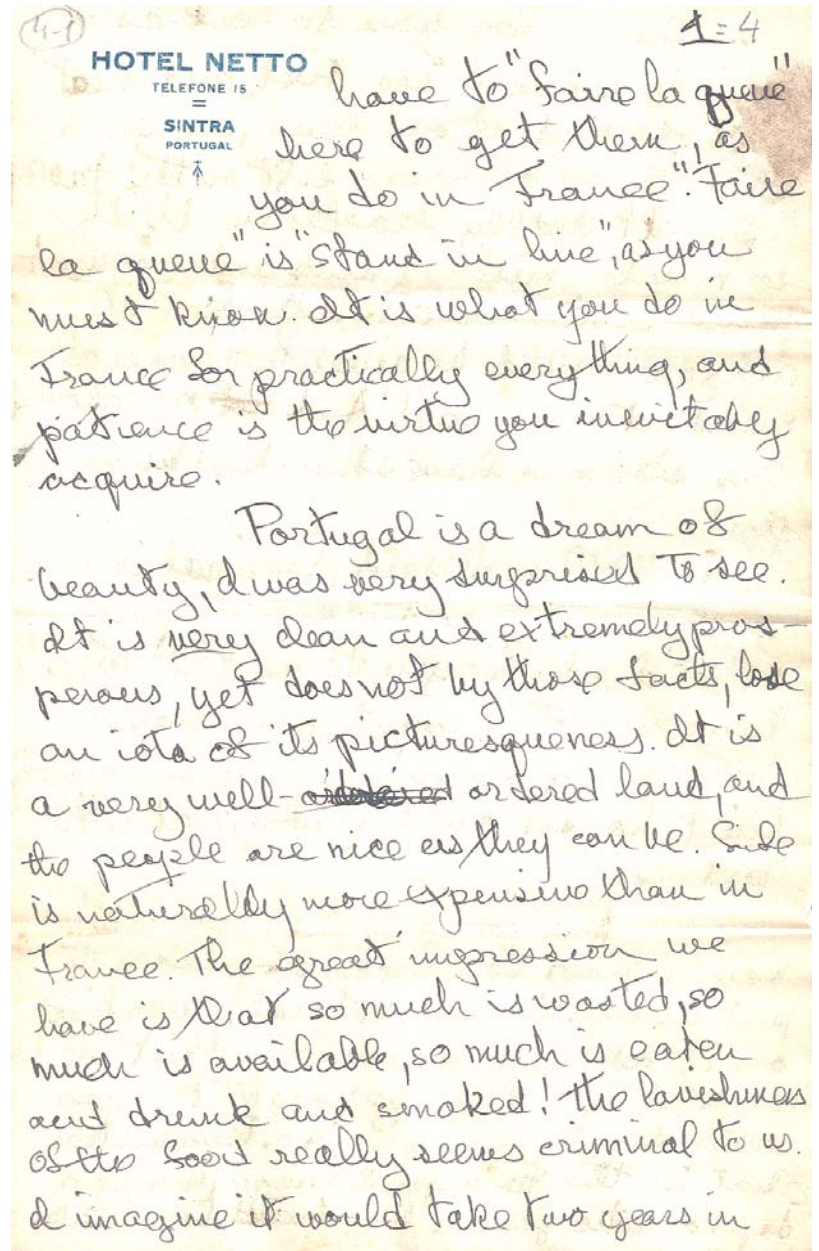
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have to "faire la queue" here to get them, as you do in France. "Faire la queue" is "stand in line", as you must know. It is what you do

in France for practically everything, and patience is the virtue you inevitably acquire.

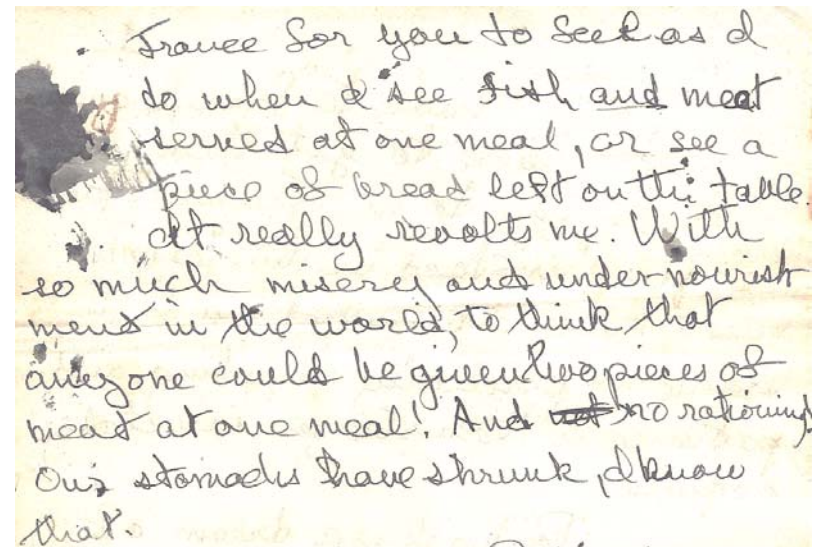
Portugal is a dream of beauty, I was very surprised to see. It is very clean and extremely prosperous, yet does not by those facts, lose an iota of its picturesqueness. It is a very well-ordered land, and the people are nice as they can be. Life is naturally more expensive than in France. The great impression we have is that so much is wasted, so much is available, so much is eaten and drunk and smoked! The lavishness of the food really seems criminal to us. I imagine it would take two years in



France for you to feel as I do when I see fish and meat served at one meal, or see a piece of bread left on the table. It really revolts me. With so much misery and undernourishment in the world, to think that anyone could be given two pieces of meat at one meal! And no rationing! Our stomachs have shrunk, I know that.

Well, as I said Portugal is a lovely country, and whenever peace comes I advise you to visit it rather than any other country in Europe. Such lovely mountains, such beautifully built houses, such pretty, neat little gardens!

Now we come to business. We may be fired for lack of places to put us in. We are naturally working on it as much as we can, but we would greatly appreciate it if you could try on your side. Remember that in the Foreign Service, many a diplomatic genius has failed for lack



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unfortunate truth that a Senator is worth  
more than a College education any day.

Could you gather together all your strings, and start pulling them? As you know, Jones would like to go to Washington and pass the exams, but in lieu of that we would like also to get a post anywhere and see what we can get out of it. We have no desire to be fired, although it is quite possible that we may be, as Jimmie has only been working a year. Could Uncle Sam do something, I wonder? Jimmie has some letters from Senators, but they are old now, and any little bit helps. I know that Jimmie has the capacity to do very well, and the only thing that's needed is a bit of push from behind. It's a bad system, but it's the only system in the Foreign Service. Please will you try? Quick? We might be given our walking papers any day. Anyway, it would be nice to see the USA

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Please will you try? Quick? We might  
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again.

In the meantime, we are enjoying our stay very much. We are trying to forget the future when there is nothing to do about it. The sea is lovely, and we are planning to visit it this very afternoon. We are on the side of a mountain on the top of which is a Moorish fortress. The view is splendid, stretching thirteen kilometers down to the sea. We look out on red tile roofs, pink and blue stucco houses, vineyards and rose vines. I speak to the people in Spanish, which they understand even if they can't speak it. We have found dark cigarettes and good red wine, so everything is fine.

Don't forget to try everything, because it is so important right now. Jones can do anything they give him to do, I know.

With all my pent-up love of six months,

Me

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