

May 27, 1940

Dear People,

I don't know. But whatever we do or I do separately, it will be *much* easier than it would be if I weren't an "Embassy Wife"! I wrote a nice fine letter to you five days ago announcing that the Embassy was moving to Bordeaux, and I with it, and that we would be leaving at five that evening. Half an hour later the order was taken back & we are all still in Paris. If I left alone (horrors!) it would be dreadfully difficult to come back to Paris if the war *didn't* turn on the city, and there I would be running up bills. Everyone is in a like quandary, or one of equal proportions. So far none of our friends have left, except Mrs. Gannet who is pregnant.

We have planted a lovely garden on our terrace (or did I tell you?) with flowers and now radishes. A few ugly little sprouts have come up, which we view with paternal solicitude, and water lovingly.

Refugees everywhere – thousands of Belgian cars. Buses stopped, are now carrying refugees of the poorer variety. They even come on overloaded bicycles. It's a sad sight. Taxis being fewer and buses non-existent, we have been doing a lot of walking. The city is enjoying a beautiful late spring, and nothing seems different.

There is still no news coming out of the north.¹ I'm getting scarer and scarer of Roosevelt, but perhaps a Rep. would be just as bad. Would Frank[lin] start his war before election? Don't you think he'll be reelected?

The bread & sugar cards came today. Rationing starts June 1. They allow us twice as much bread as we use (not enough for French people's uses, however) and not enough sugar. About a pound a month per person. I'm sure we use two pounds per person, but I think most French women use less than that. We eat more sweet desserts, more porridge. We'll have to take to eating cheese and fruits that don't need sugar for dessert.

When there is any news I'll write to you.

Much love,

Me

¹ News from the north since Philinda's letter of May 13:

- 14 May: The Luftwaffe attack Rotterdam, Holland, causing 30,000 civilian casualties.
- 15 May: Holland surrenders.
- 18 May: General Kleist's German armor captures St. Quentin, half-way between the English Channel and Sedan. Antwerp, Belgium, surrenders.
- 19 May: French General Weygand is appointed Supreme Commander of all Allied forces in France.
- 20 May: German tanks reach Abbeville, France, and the English Channel. This traps Allied forces between two German "pincers", the southern in France and the northern in Belgium and Holland.
- 21 May: Allied forces launch counter-attack on Arras.
- 24 May: Hitler orders a halt to the advance of German armor to allow infantry divisions to catch up in order that a conventional assault could be mounted against the trapped Allied forces.
- 26 May: British and French troops trapped at Dunkirk, a full-scale evacuation begins – Operation Dynamo.

– Based on "World War 2 Timeline – 1940" (<http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/World-War-2-Timeline-1940/>, accessed 2016-10-30)

May 27, 1940

Dear People,

I don't know. But whatever we do or I do separately, it will be much easier than it would be if I weren't an "Embassy Wife". I wrote a nice fine letter to you five days ago announcing that the Embassy was moving to Bordeaux, and I with it, and that we would be leaving at five that evening. Half an hour later the order was taken back, & we are all still in Paris. If I left alone (horror!) it would be dreadfully difficult to come back to Paris if the war didn't turn on the city, and then I would be running up bills. Everyone is in a like quandry, or one of equal proportions. So far none of our friends have left, except Mrs. Gannet who is pregnant.

We have planted a lovely garden on our terrace (or did I tell you?) with flowers and now radishes. A few ugly little sprouts have come up, which we view with paternal solicitude, and water lovingly.

Refugees everywhere - thousands of Belgian cars. Buses stopped, are now carrying refugees of the poorer variety. They even come on overloaded bicycles. It's a sad sight. Touris being

Sewer and buses non-existent, we have been doing a lot of walking. The city is enjoying a beautiful late spring, and nothing seems different.

There is still no news coming out of the north. I'm getting sicker and sicker of Roosevelt, but perhaps a Rep. would be just as bad. Would Frank start his war before election? Don't you think he'll be reelected?

The bread & sugar cards come today. Rationing starts June 1. They allow us twice as much bread as we use (not enough for French people's uses, however) and not enough sugar. About a pound a month per person. I'm sure we use two pounds per person, but I think most French women use less than that. We eat more sweet desserts, more porridge. Will have to take to eating cheese and fruits that don't need sugar for dessert.

When there is any news I'll write to you

Much love,

Me.