

Jan 1 '40

Dear people,

Corrections and additions dep't. Somehow the other part of this epistle never got posted. You know how it is? In any case, there are some new facts to record. Last Friday James got off at 8 PM for some obscure reason, so I hiked over to 2 Rue des Italiens and we went to the local cine to see Elle et Lui (Love Affair), after which James remarked that a four months holiday from movie-going hadn't given producers a chance to make pictures that appealed to him any more. Gosh, it was an awful picture! After which we went to the café Flare, over on St Germain des Prés, where one sometimes sees a few lonely Frenchmen, but not often. It's one of those inexplicably famous cafés where the litterati hang out a lot, as well as some of our friends. We picked up some of the boys & girls & Sam Dashiell, of whom I have spoken, I think,¹ and after sitting there for an hour or so, took them over to our place with a bottle of vin blanc ordinaire.² Everyone was properly overwhelmed by the grandeur of our jernt, so a fine time was had by all.

Sam Dashiell just came back from Germany reporting the League meeting. He said in a private resume that the boys threw out Russia,³ got drunk, & went home. Sometimes Sam gets extremely amusing. You should have heard him explaining about Byrd in the South Pole. He can't see how Mrs. Byrd takes it, being left all alone, with the rear Admiral down there "among all those polar bears and questionable Eskimos" for years at a time.

New years eve, i.e., yesterday, James also got quite a few hours off. I came over there at 8, we were going out to eat at a new and lovely restaurant, but it was too crowded, so we went to Druant's once more, which didn't annoy me at all. Fine, intimate time was had by both. Then back to the mines for an hour or two, while I waited in the visitor's room and read Time. Then Sam, James & I walked over to Harry's New York Bar. There was a large, riotous, & faintly nauseating crowd there, which James said reminded him too much of his wild youth in Chicago, so we hurried on to the Flore. There we met some friends and Virgil Thompson (Four Saints in Three Acts)⁴ who treated us all to champagne and high spirited argument in which voices were raised & fists clenched in the very best accredited way. Somehow we got invited to a nearby party, where we soon met up with practically all our friends. James got talking with some people who turned out to be Blain [?] Conger (Michigan man thrown out of Germany)⁵ and his wife. Former said 3 words all evening, Mrs. Conger was a very

¹ There are no earlier references - at least, not with any similar spelling.

² *Vin blanc ordinaire*: ordinary white wine.

³ "Dec 14, 1939: USSR expelled from the League of Nations. On this day, the League of Nations, the international peacekeeping organization formed at the end of World War I, expels the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in response to the Soviets' invasion of Finland on October 30." From <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ussr-expelled-from-the-league-of-nations>, accessed 2014-11-30.

⁴ *Four Saints in Three Acts* "is an opera by American composer Virgil Thomson with a libretto by Gertrude Stein. Written in 1927-8, it contains about 20 saints, and is in at least four acts. It was ground breaking for form, content, and its all-black cast, with singers directed by Eva Jessye, a prominent black choral director, and supported by her choir." From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Saints_in_Three_Acts, accessed 2014-11-30.

⁵ "Seymour Beach Conger was born on 1 March 1912 at Germany. He was the son of Seymour Beach Conger and Lucile Bailey. Seymour Beach Conger appeared on the census of 8 January 1920 at Sheet 4B, District 122, Leslie, Ingham County, Michigan;... He married Genevieve "Marion" Cunningham, daughter of George Albert Cunningham and Marion Sonntag, on 8 July 1938 at New York City...

"From TIME, November 27, 1939: 'Nazi Germany probably is more confused today than it has been since the days in 1933 when the Hitler Government first came to power....Submarine crews in Hamburg have been refusing to leave on trips unless they are released from the necessity of coming to the surface before torpedoing belligerent commercial vessels [sic]....For some time certain persons have been firmly convinced

soft-spoken, nice lady. I danced and talked and sipped elegant Vin blanc ordinaire, finally we left with the Congers on a taxi hunt. When we got to the office, there were only two hours till time to go home, so I waited & nodded over a file of Newark [New Jersey] Evening News. I went right to sleep when I got in bed.

We are going to be rich pretty soon, because we just discovered that a picture James bought last summer so a friend could leave the country in a hurry (no carte d'identité⁶) is by Constantin Guys⁷, who is mentioned in the same breath with Daumier, Gauguin Toulouse-Lautrec, Cézanne, etc. in a book belonging to our absent host. We nearly collapsed. We are going to have it appraised at the Louvre, very hopefully. In any case, it's worth more than 125 francs, which is what James paid for it. Odd picture. He always drew prostitutes.

Love,
Philinda

that Germany intended to invade the Netherlands.....It was learned today that the conservative Army high command flatly refused to countenance any such action..'

"So ran a dispatch on the front page of the New York Herald Tribune one day last week. Had it been datelined London or Paris, most propaganda-wise readers would have passed it by with an indulgent smile. But it was datelined Berlin, signed by 27-year-old Seymour Beach Conger, newly appointed chief of the Herald Tribune's Berlin bureau. It had slipped easily through German censorship, which concentrates on suppressing "undesirable" writers, not undesirable words.

"New day, when correspondents gathered in the Propaganda Ministry for their regular morning conference, there was hell to pay. Blond, youthful Dr. Karl Bomer, head of the press department, grimly read passages from Newsman Conger's dispatch, exclaiming, "'Lies!...Scoundrelly reporting!...False to the last syllable!' Deprived of his right to attend press meetings or send dispatches, because of "Violation of the hospitality of the Reich", Newsman Conger was effectively silenced. Stern Dr. Bomer offered to restore his privileges if the Herald Tribune would print a retraction. But is [sic] was unthinkable that the Herald Tribune would take orders from Berlin, repudiate what its own correspondent had written. Said Managing Editor Grafton Wilcox in Manhattan: "If there is an official German denial, we'll print that." There was no German denial.

"Thus ended, six weeks after it began, Beach Conger's brief career as a Berlin Bureau chief. Born in Berlin, he is the son of a foreign correspondent; the late Seymour Beach Conger Sr. spent 13 years in Russia and Germany for Associated Press, was attached to the German Army during World War I. Young Conger was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1932, went twice around the world, then joined the Herald Tribune staff two years ago.

"When Joseph Barnes gave up his job in Berlin and went home for a rest (weary of constant Nazi threats to muzzle him), Herald Tribune editors debated long over Beach Conger's youth and inexperience, finally gave him Barnes's place. Blond, meticulous, with close-cropped hair and thick-lensed spectacles, Conger looks like a respectable German official. Within two hours after his arrival in Berlin he had telephoned more people than Joseph Barnes knew. Most of them were young Nazis who had once been his schoolmates.

"They could not help him last week. The day after he was expelled from Dr. Bomer's conference a Nazi agent handed him his passport and visa. By week's end he was on his way to The Netherlands, homeward bound. The Herald Tribune office in Berlin was silent, forbidden to gather news or send messages out of Germany. A Nazi agent was on guard outside the door. For German coverage the Herald Tribune was dependent on press services alone.'" From <http://conovergenealogy.com/sisler/sisler-p/p308.htm>, accessed 2014-11-30.

⁶ *Carte d'identité*: government ID card

⁷ Constantin Guys, "Ernest-Adolphe-Hyacinthe-Constantin, (December 3, 1802 – December 13, 1892) was a Dutch-born Crimean War correspondent, water color painter and illustrator for British and French newspapers". From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantin_Guys, accessed 2014-12-01.

Jan 1 1920

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Sam Dashiell just came back from Geneva, regarding the League meeting. He said, in a private resumé that ~~that~~ of the boys, knew our Russia, got drunk, & went home. Sometimes Sam gets extremely amusing. You should have heard him explaining about Byrd in the South Pole. He can't see how Mrs. Byrd takes it, being left all alone, with no rear Admiral down there among all those polar bears and questionable ~~type~~ eskimos "for years" at a time.

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hour or two, while I waited in the visitor's room and read Time.
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There was a large, riotous, & faintly nauseating crowd there, where
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