

Dimanche, le 27 oct., en route Marseille -
1941 Taroncon

Dearest Pop

It seems years - and has
literally been weeks - since I
last had time to write you a letter
but it is many times a day that
I think of you and wish you were
here - or I there. My work reached
a crescendo of activity right after
I got back from Lisbon, but it has
now slackened off a little, so
that I am at least able to breathe.
I still begin at 8 in the morning
and work until 11 at night, and
sometimes until one. I still see
legions of people every day, and
am witness to displays of every

possible quality of character, from heroic to despicable. I still have poor, driven refugees looking for me in my hotel in the morning when I go out and in the evening when I come in. ~~Nothing~~ I still have from six to 12 phone calls an hour, and get 25 letters a day. Sometimes the refugees walk right into my bedroom without knocking or announcing themselves. But the pressure is visibly slackening - not because the situation is improving but because more and more of our charges are being reinterviewed - and I am at

long lost getting an occasional
chance to breathe. It is terrible
to be glad that anybody has
been arrested; but I had
reached a point in nervous
exhaustion a few weeks ago
where I actually was glad to
have a few of the most resistant
and most pestiferous "clients"
conveniently snickering off. This
whole experience has been
a kind of nightmare of
horror, combined with a mad
fury of activity on my own
part which has left me
with neither time nor energy
for thought. Now at last I am
getting a few minutes, and

in a way I almost wish I
 did not have them. For the
 thoughts are not pleasant. Mostly
 things are happening here.
 Men who volunteered in the foreign
 legions for the duration of the war
 are being demobilised one week
 and arrested and interned the
 next, on the ground that they
 are Jewish. People like Paul
 Westheim, the well-known art
 historian, Prof. Ringsheim,
 a celebrated physicist, ~~and~~ the
 bro-in-law of Thomas Mann,
 and Ernst Busch, a famous
 German tenor, are being held
 in detention *campus noster*
 for long. Westheim is losing

his sight for lack of proper medical
 attention (glanders, apparently).
 Others have died of typhoid, dys-
 entery, malaria. Many, unable
 to stand it any longer, have com-
 mitted suicide - among them
 three of our writers and poet clients.
 Working here is like trying to
 stay afloat - not even God
 can do it. But in spite of the
 horrors and the many failures -
 the suicides, for instance, or
 our failures - it has to be tried.
 And the moderning thing is
 that I get neither cooperation
 nor understanding from those
boobs in New York. Our little
office in the rue Riquien is

keeping alive dozens of families.
 There is Frank Hessel, his wife, his
 son and his daughter-in-law.
 There is André Breton, wife and
 child. There is Walter Melning.
 There is Hans Sahl. There is Joseph
 Bonstein. There is Ernst Aufrecht.
 There is Hans Jacoby (mettem-en-
 xère). Etc. Peter will tell ~~at~~
 you who they all are if you don't
 know. Everyone of them would
 have been interned if I had
 not come along in the nick of
 time. Maybe they will be
 anyway. Certainly they will
 be if I leave, as those blithering
 idiots in New York ordered me
 to do a month ago. And they ^{are}

among the most charming and cultivated, ^{and intelligent!} persons I have ever met. Mehuq lives with me and has become my pet and constant companion. Soli and I are great friends. I am in love with the whole Messel family. How can I leave until those damned fools in New York get somebody over to replace me and carry on the work I have started? Every day somebody interesting and important comes in to get my help or my advice - or writes. People like Marc Chagall, Leon Piene - Quint, the byzantinologist Stein, the

best known writers, painters, doctors,
 lawyers, physicists, historians,
 of Europe. Are those imbeciles
 in New York interested only in
 them for the most part very stupid
 and uninterested "friends"?
 Or are they really interested
 in doing something to rescue what
 is left of European culture before
 it is too late? If they are, they'd
 better hurry up and raise some
 money and get it over to me.
 My! I better also hurry up and
 pick an intelligent and
 energetic successor and
 send him here quick. After
 all, I can't stay forever. I'm
 tired - almost exhausted -