Peter J. C. Perry

AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMISSION

The Story Of A Journey Through Europe's Disaster

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To the memory
of my parents

Leo and Herta Pinschewer (Perry)

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Introduction

THE OLD SAYING, 'truth is stranger than fiction', comes to my mind whenever I contemplate the extraordinary twists and turns of my life. The outline of the story is shared with my contemporaries, and especially with those who were caught in the net of Nazi persecution; but my personal experience covers our shared fate from a number of extraordinary angles and may well add a new dimension to the interpretation of our past.

These personal eye-witness accounts should therefore make a small contribution to an understanding of how the unpredictable course of our existence influenced our attitudes and actions. New schools of historians have to rely on the study of documents for their 'macro-historical' conclusions. Our generation's experience, on the other hand, is based on real life as it was lived – and of death as it was suffered. It is the stuff of which history is fashioned. At their humblest levels such accounts can add a sense of 'micro-historical' reality to academic perspective. Human experience compensates in detail and immediacy for what it lacks in breadth. It needs to be preserved to counteract growing attempts to deny or modify the facts.

My story differs from that of the majority of my less fortunate contemporaries through no merit of mine: I escaped the Holocaust through the foresight and sacrifice of my parents; was young enough to adapt myself easily to new conditions; found a new home in a community with whose philosophy and way of life I was happy to identify myself; and was enabled to play a full part as a member of this community in war as well as in peace.

The point at which reality overtook imagination in my life occurred when I was commissioned into the Royal Fusiliers as an infantry platoon commander. It reached a climax in what I have called my 'Extraordinary Commission' when I found myself posted to Berlin in September 1945. Ten years after my escape from Germany I became the Food and Transport Officer of my birthplace, the district of Charlottenburg. From this position, and at this crucial time, I gained unusual insights into Allied and German actions and attitudes and played an active part in the implementation of our policy. This book contains a well-documented and illustrated personal account of an historical period, and described its

effects on Parliamentary Debates and Government policy in 1946. It makes interesting reading in the light of present doubts on Britain's place in the European Union.

In the course of my duties I met a Jewish girl who later became my wife. She had lived in Berlin throughout the war. Details of her experiences are described in *Ellen's Chronology*, as seen through the eyes of a child. I was privileged to record her experiences in these pages. Her documented and illustrated Chronology provides a counterpoint to my own fortunate fate.

The writing of this book, long intended, was finally triggered by the realisation that, half a century since the end of World War II, new generations had grown up without any personal experience of events which had deeply influenced their parents and grand-parents. It made me reexamine my diaries and the comprehensive collection of documents of what is now a part of our history. To this evidence I have added some of the contemporary photographs I took in Berlin during its 'Zero Hour'.

I hope that this 'Story Of A Journey Through Europe's Disaster' will not only help future historians in their search for a true and balanced account of the past, but also make the young readers aware of the parts played by the characters who feature in these pages.

None of this work would have materialised without my wife's constant encouragement, help and inspiration. I am deeply grateful to her.

I

'Once Upon A Time ...'

THERE WAS NOTHING REMARKABLE or special about us – except that, like the rest of some 500,000 German Jews, we suddenly disappeared from our traditional home in the 1930s. This is the authentic account of one such family.

We were a typical, well-established family, whose roots had been firmly based in the province of Posen. My ancestors on both sides can be traced back to it for at least four generations. My father's family lived in Hohensalza, which was renamed Inowrazlaw after Posen's annexation by Poland in 1918, while my mother's family lived not many miles away in Lissa (now Leszno). By the 1880s, however, increasing numbers began to move to the capital. My mother's parents lived in Berlin, where she was born and met her husband.

The earliest record we have on my father's side is of my great– great-grandfather, Josef Pinschewer, a master tailor, who was born in Hohensalza at the end of the eighteenth century. He and his wife Berta, *née* Ruben, are mentioned on the death certificate of their son, Moses Pinschewer, who died on 24 December 1904, aged 80.

Moses, also born in Hohensalza, was married to Jette, *née* Schwalbe, and is described on his death certificate as a house owner. His son, also named Josef after his grandfather, was a merchant. He lived from 18 December 1851 to 14 August 1917 and was married to Bertha, *née* Lewinsohn (4 July 1857 – 16 September 1922). They were my paternal grandparents. I found their grave, miraculously preserved in the damaged Jewish Weißensee cemetery in Berlin, in 1945. We have an early photograph of a powerful-looking man, and we know that he maintained a strictly orthodox household, which had the effect of converting my father, like many of his generation, to Reform Judaism. A photograph of my grandmother portrays a dignified matron in the customary black dress of a woman who considered herself old at forty.

On my mother's side, we can trace our family for a similar period, and with equal constancy. My great-great-grandfather Michael Krall was born in Lissa in 1775 and died there, aged 88 years, on 29 May 1863. He was married to Ernestine, *née* Cohn. His son, Samuel, my great-grandfather,

was born there on 13 August 1813 and died on 16 June 1877.

On 4 December 1855 Samuel Krall's son Carl (Casriel), my maternal grandfather, was born in Lissa, like his forebears. This little town was also the birthplace of my grandfather's illustrious contemporary, Rabbi Leo Baeck. His life formed an extraordinary link between my grandfather, who died before my birth, and my own generation. Like my grandfather, Leo Baeck left Lissa and moved to Berlin. He became the President and inspired leader of the German-Jewish community throughout the entire period of its desperate persecution and, after survival and rescue from Theresienstadt, moved to London. I first met him at my new spiritual home, the West London Synagogue. In 1955, I witnessed the foundation of the Leo Baeck Institute, which helped to safeguard our future by creating new generations of rabbis; and I joined the crowded congregation which mourned his death during a memorial service held at the West London Synagogue in 1956.

My grandfather was typical of the rural population which became increasingly attracted by the rapidly growing capital; but, unlike his famous contemporary, he sought his future in the Industrial Revolution, which followed in England's footsteps and was transforming Germany's economic landscape. Prussia's victories over Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866 and France in 1871, had confirmed its dominance over the other German States and had led to the proclamation of Wilhelm I, King of Prussia, as Emperor of the *Reich* in the conquered splendour of the Palace of Versailles on 18 January 1871. I well remember Anton von Werner's monumental oil painting of the glorified scene, dominated by Bismarck's commanding presence in a striking white uniform. A reproduction was prominently displayed in my school, named after Wilhelm's successor, Kaiser-Friedrich-Schule; and its imperial message was emphatically approved and endorsed in my German history lessons during the early 1930s. In 1945, I found another reproduction of this painting, set in colourful mosaic pieces, among the ruins of Berlin's once prominent and fashionable Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche.

The foundation of the Wilhelminian Empire was changing Berlin from a sleepy Prussian capital into a thriving industrial and economic metropolis, which was also developing into a major cultural centre. Carl Krall was one of many thousands of provincial citizens who were contributing to the *Gründerjahre* – the foundation years – of Berlin's headlong expansion. My grandfather founded the 'Berliner Metall-und Alfenidewaren-Fabrik Carl Krall G.m.b.H', a company manufacturing decorative and ceremonial vessels, at Elisabeth-Ufer 5/6. It prospered, and Carl built up a thriving business which sold its products throughout Germany. He also promoted

a substantial export trade, travelled widely abroad and taught himself English, French and Italian. He generally became prominent as an enlightened supporter of industrial development.

Among his papers we have a letter addressed to him by the *Oberbürgermeister* (Lord Mayor) of Leipzig, dated 4 May 1914:

> I have just been informed by the Royal Ministry of the Interior that at my request you have been awarded the Knight's Cross First Class of the Order of Albrecht, in recognition of your active promotion of the Leipzig Fair.
>
> It gives me particular pleasure to express my congratulations to you on the award of this highest distinction, and to thank you on behalf of our City for your successful co-operation in the development of our Fair. I should like to add the request that you will continue to support our Fair in the future. We hope that we shall long continue to have the pleasure to welcome you frequently in our City.

Coloured portrait photographs show my maternal grandparents, immaculately dressed and looking the very personification of early twentieth century bourgeois prosperity. They were among the first residents in the fashionable Hallesche Ufer residence of Berlin to install electric light and subscribe to a telephone.

My mother wrote a thoughtful set of rhymes, which she recited at her parents' Silver Wedding celebration on 15 September 1914, and during her father's 60th Birthday on 4 December 1915. The verses are recorded in her copper-plate writing in a small note book. She recalled that her father had left school at 13, quickly learned the skills of business management and had used his linguistic abilities to acquire a fluent command of English, French and Italian.

He had passionately wooed his bride, Emma Heymann, and had brought her to Berlin from her home in Frankfurt-am-Main, for their wedding on 15 September 1889. He seemed as ambitious in his family affairs as in his business and had agreed a target of not less than five children, in the expectation that some of them, at least, would turn out to be boys. He loved his children; but when the first three babies were girls, he changed his mind about further increases for fear of producing an even greater harem!

The outbreak of the First World War had devastated his belief in a bright future. The husbands of his two elder daughters had been called to the colours at the very start of their marriages; and he rightly foresaw ultimate ruin in his industry and his country. He died, broken-hearted, on 1 June 1918, my mother's 26th birthday.

My immediate family

The illuminated, glass-fronted show case, which filled an entire wall in the Council Room of the West London Synagogue in Upper Berkeley Street, contained a display of Jewish religious objects – old prayer books, ancient Chanukah candelabras and the like. In the late 1980s, a meeting of the Magazine Committee, at which I had outlined my editorial plans for the *Synagogue Review*, had just ended. I got up to look at the latest additions to the displays in the show case. Many of these nostalgic exhibits came from congregations which had been destroyed in the Holocaust.

One of the items, displayed in its velvet-lined case, had me riveted to the floor. It was a small surgical instrument, used by a *Mohel*, a Jewish doctor who performs the ancient ceremony of circumcision on a male child on the seventh day after his birth. It had been donated by a member who had been born in the small town of Hohensalza. A note explained that this instrument had been used there in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This encounter provided an unusual and somewhat unconventional link with my family's past.

My father, Leo Pinschewer, was born in Hohensalza on 23 October 1882. After completing his secondary education, he studied chemistry in Leipzig and then moved to Berlin, where he married my mother, Herta Klara Krall, on 12 August 1914. Within days of the wedding he was in the Army, serving in the *Sächsische Armee Fernsprechabteilung 108*, a signals unit, in the East. He became a corporal and was awarded the Iron Cross, Second Class, and the Saxonian Friedrich-August-Medal in Silver. His demobilisation certificate is dated 26 December 1918.

My mother frequently mentioned that her father, Carl Krall, always regretted the absence of a son, and how delighted he would have been with the two grandsons he never lived to see. His wish might have been fulfilled. My arrival had been intended for 1915, but the First World War delayed my birth by five years. I belatedly appeared on the scene at our flat at Mommsenstraße 40, in Charlottenburg, on 3 January 1920, and was joined there by my brother Geoffrey on 11 April 1922.

My father became a partner, and then owner, of a company, L. Marquard & Co, later H. Pinschewer & Co, in Berlin-Mitte, manufacturing accessories for hats and caps. His knowledge of applied chemistry enabled him to develop a method of processing materials, which he patented, and of which he became the sole manufacturer.

From time to time he took his boys on visits to his factory near the bustling centre of the famous Alexanderplatz, where policemen positioned on top of the unique traffic control tower were trying to bring order into a turmoil of horse-drawn carriages, buses, trams and taxis.

Dad, like the rest of his work force, wore an overall when in the factory and impressed me with the comradely authority with which he guided the activity of a company in which everyone seemed to take a genuine interest.

He died in London on 1 March 1948, afflicted by a heart disease caused by the persecution which had robbed him of his livelihood and threatened his and his family's life.

Our mother was born in Berlin on 1 June 1892. Her life was devoted to her family in a way which was steeped in tradition, and which we accepted as natural. It created and maintained a positive and optimistic approach to life. Without it, our chances of survival would almost certainly have been lost.

After the war she actively helped the needy members of the community as a member of the Leo Baeck Chapter of the Jewish B'ne B'rith Lodge. She died in London on 31 March 1982. Her life was summed up by an ancient prayer, often recited by the husband at the traditional family dinner which ushers in the Sabbath. It was quoted by Rabbi Hugo Gryn, the Senior Rabbi of the West London Synagogue – himself a survivor of a Concentration Camp – when he conducted my mother's funeral:

> A woman of worth, who can find her,
> for she is more precious than rubies.
> Her husband trusts her in his heart
> and has no loss by it.
> Every day of her life
> she does him good, not harm.
> Her hand is held open to the poor,
> reaching out to those in need.
> She is clothed in strength and dignity,
> serene before the time to come.
> When she speaks, it is with wisdom
> and on her tongue is the guidance of love.
> She looks after her home with care,
> and does not idle away her time.
> Her children stand up and honour her,
> and her husband sings her praises.

A happy family event occurred in 1952, when Geoffrey and Helen Weissberger were married at the West London Synagogue by Rabbi Hugo Gryn. Their children – my nephews Stephen and Nick – were born in 1954 and 1956. and in the fullness of time were also married by our dear friend Hugo, who later took much interest in the progress of this book.

My nephews' children – Emma and Alice, and Joe and Hannah – will, I hope, gain a further glimpse, through these pages, of events which filled the lives of their kith and kin.

2

Harmony at Home – Discord at School

IN THE EARLY 1920S, TWO TINY TOTS, gripping their mother's hands, could often be seen making their way down the Mommsenstraße in Berlin. Their walk took them under the Charlottenburg railway bridge to their favourite playground in Lietzensee – one of Berlin's many attractive parks – past bubbling waterfalls cascading through a succession of basins into a big lake below.

On Sundays, these walks were usually replaced by family outings, often accompanied by friends. One of our favourite destinations was the Grunewald, a beautiful, densely-wooded forest on the city's outskirts. These leisurely rambles tended to culminate in a feast of fizzy lemonade and cream cakes at the Alsengrund Restaurant, set in a clearing in the forest. Sometimes, as a special treat, dad used to allow us to take a sip from his glass of *Weisse Mit,* a typical Berlin drink consisting of light ale with a dash of raspberry juice. Hunting tadpoles in the small pond adjoining the restaurant was one of our favourite pastimes. At other times, in the summer, we went swimming at Wannsee, whose sandy beaches along one of the Havel Lakes on the city's western edge brought the joys of a seaside holiday right to the Berliners' doorstep.

My brother Geoffrey and I enjoyed a happy, untroubled childhood in a close-knit family. We were shielded from the political turmoil, the run-away inflation and the deep economic depression of the post-war years which caused great anxiety to our parents.

Our father was a congenial man, who enjoyed discussing the affairs of the day with anyone he met, whether postman, paper seller or the barber across the road from our flat, where dad had his daily shave before breakfast, until he adopted the newfangled safety razor. On Wednesday evenings he would meet a group of long-standing friends for a traditional card game of *Skat* at the *Brüderverein,* the club building of the Jewish Lodge to which he belonged; and on Friday afternoons we would meet him at the near-by Charlottenburg Railway Station when he arrived, carrying the bulk of the family's weekly shopping which he had bought at the *Zentral Markthalle* in the city.

Our father had a simple, trusting disposition in the essential goodness

and decency of his fellow citizens and firmly believed in traditional German virtues. He combined hard work, scrupulous fairness and a strict sense of discipline with a quick temper, which made him flare up occasionally.

At home he represented loving but strict authority, to which our mother would occasionally appeal for support when Geoffrey and I failed to respond to her gentle persuasion. This happened mostly on those occasions when we were engaged in one of our bouts of stimulating and childish strife at home; but we instinctively understood that even punishment was based on fairness, understanding and affection. But beyond our family – especially at school and other public organisations – we were increasingly exposed to a form of discrimination which we could not understand, and from which we felt we had somehow to escape.

Our mother had a profound influence in guiding us through a childhood in which we were therefore tempted to view some public conduct with skepticism and to opt for easy solutions of doubtful morality. The guiding principle which she handed on to us was to listen carefully to the still voice of our conscience and always to have the moral courage to act accordingly, regardless of outside pressures and policies.

She was a gifted piano player, who implanted a love of music in us, and a popular hostess to our friends. Despite our father's decisiveness, she was the motive power in our family and the anchor, whose loving support became more and more essential as the external menace grew. We were deeply attached to her.

Among the toys with which Geoffrey and I played there was a box which contained coloured pieces of paper with pretty pictures. They came in many sizes, but all had one thing in common: they bore the promise to pay the bearer on demand thousands, then millions, then billions, and then trillions of Marks. Dated 1921 to 1923, these pretty toys at one time represented some of our parents' hard-earned savings.

Our parents told us of those chaotic years, which coincided with our births, when those who were lucky enough to have jobs were paid daily before noon and then rushed round to the shops to buy food and other essentials before prices rose in the afternoon and once again made their hard-earned money worthless. It was easy then for political adventurers to lay the blame collectively on 'Jews, Communists and Capitalists who had stabbed the Fatherland in the back' during the war. Defeat had replaced the high, mighty and authoritarian Imperial system with weak, toothless and frequently changing post-war governments. They often left the country on the brink of civil war during their attempts to introduce a

parliamentary democracy. Nevertheless, Germany had gradually been received back into the international community as a member of the League of Nations. The burden of reparations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles had been eased. But the traumatic post-war events had had the effect of destroying the savings accumulated patiently over several generations. Chief sufferer was an emerging middle class which should have provided the basis for a democratic rebirth of a defeated and humiliated country.

Our mother told us how her father had built up a prosperous manufacturing business which had enabled him to give substantial dowries to each of his three daughters when they married. He had also left a considerable fortune by the time he died in 1918. Within three years all this had been destroyed by inflation, and his widow, our grandmother, had become dependent upon the help of her children. I was only five years old when she died, but I clearly remember a small, affectionate but deeply worried old lady who spoilt me when I was staying with her in her flat at the Hallesche Ufer. At that age, however, my childish recollection vividly recalled a more prosaic event: she prepared my favourite liver sausage sandwich when I woke up crying in the middle of the night.

We were surrounded by a large and stimulating circle of relatives and friends. There was Uncle Martin, our father's jovial younger brother who taught us to smoke cigars when our parents weren't looking. There were our father's twin sisters: Aunt Margaret Samuel who was married to a South African but spent a good deal of time with us. Having a British passport, she was later to be of great help to us. And there was Aunt Regina Hammerstein, married to a director of the *Wach-und Schliessgesellschaft*, a security firm. They had two pretty daughters, who emigrated to the United States and Argentina.

Our great-uncle, Julius Pinschewer – by an unusual overlap of generations the same age as my father – pioneered the development of the cartoon film long before Walt Disney transformed it into a major industry. He was a powerful, domineering man with a strong sense of artistic mission. His wife, Lotte (*née* Schwalbe) had been a noted soprano before her marriage and, with her gentle and charming disposition, formed an exact counterpoint to her husband. I remember their fine house in the Prinzregentenstraße, but we did not see much of them in Berlin. With their two children, Henriette and Michael, they emigrated to Switzerland soon after Hitler's advent. The Swiss welcomed the introduction of a new industry, and Uncle Julius built up a studio with notable success. I did not see them again until Geoffrey and I were able to spend a holiday with them in 1946.

On our mother's side we were close to her elder sister, Rose Wassermann, married to a patent lawyer who died tragically in a traffic accident. Her daughter Anne was regarded as exceptionally beautiful. At that time we were too young to appreciate such things; but Geoffrey and I felt privileged when we were occasionally invited to serve as ball boys while she moved gracefully across the tennis courts to the admiring glances of her partners. Anne later married the film script writer Julius Epstein, co-author of 'Casablanca', and we continue to be in close touch. Aunt Rosie died tragically in London in 1940.

Among our family's many friends the closest were Gustav and Helene Selig and their son Gerhard, who lived above us at Mommsenstraße. For many years each family alternately hosted the annual Passover Dinner. Our parents played bridge and paid the winnings into a common holiday pool, which helped to finance many enjoyable outings. Gerhard was our constant companion. His father was a charming but somewhat timid man. His wife Helene, by contrast, was a stout-hearted character who took a philosophical view of life and did much to share it with us. We later learnt that both of them perished in a concentration camp. Gerhard managed to join the French Foreign Legion, but we lost touch after receiving one brief letter from him.

Arthur and Gretl Levy and their daughter Lilo were likewise close friends. This pretty girl was Geoffrey's age and provided us with a target for an early rivalry which was hotly denied by both of us. The family managed to emigrate to Australia, where it was hoped we might be able to join them. Gretl's widowed mother perished in the holocaust.

'If music be the food of love ...!'

Shakespeare's famous words, which I learnt to treasure a few years later, came true: music soon developed into one of the joys of my life. My parents presented me with a half-size violin and introduced me to one of my mother's school friends, Charlotte Rosen. She was a well-known violinist and music teacher, and I became her pupil at the age of seven, while Geoffrey started taking piano lessons a little later. We boasted of being a truly musical family: 'Mummy and Geoff play the piano, Peter plays the violin – and Daddy plays *Skat!*'

My teacher, 'Aunt Charlotte', impressed me. She was upright in her bearing and strict and precise in her interpretation of music; but she also proved kind and understanding in her teaching. She was totally devoted to the magic which she conjured out of her violin. It inspired me, but also taught me the discipline of regular practice. With my mother's

persuasion and her dedicated accompaniment of my efforts on the piano, I made sufficient progress to be in frequent demand for performances at school and sports club functions.

I was one of Aunt Charlotte's youngest pupils and delighted, but also slightly scared, to be invited to perform before an audience of parents and friends during the periodic *soirées* held in the music room of her flat at Geisbergstraße 11. These were admirable occasions for testing the musical skills, as well as the nerves, of her pupils when faced with a friendly and often knowledgeable audience. The programme for the *Vorspielstunde* (Recital Hour) at Aunt Charlotte's on 12 November 1930 recalls that I contributed to a trio by a composer called Söchting, and that Adelheid von Weizsäcker was among the gifted students who also took part in the recital.

My first public performance had, in fact taken place at my primary school on 16 December 1928, when, as an eight-year-old, I played Christmas melodies. As a reward, my mother began to take me to public concerts. One of them left an indelible impression, not only on me, but on the packed audience which filled a special performance at Berlin's major concert hall, the *Philharmonie.* On 12 April 1929, Yehudi Menuhin was billed to play an unheard-of collection of three major violin concertos – by Bach, Beethoven and Brahms – in the course of one concert. He was accompanied by the world-famous Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Walter.

Yehudi was just four years older than myself. I watched him with utter fascination and a little envy as he walked self-consciously onto the platform, a lock of hair falling over his brow. He glanced a little nervously at Bruno Walter, who gave him a reassuring smile – and then the concert began. It transformed a sturdy little schoolboy into what seemed to me to be a towering genius, who combined incredible technical brilliance with artistic interpretations which filled me with happiness. I was sitting on the edge of my seat, my feet dangling in mid-air, occasionally jumping up and down in my excitement.

The passage of half a century after this momentous event marked yet another remarkable encounter – this time in Hollywood. In 1976 I was paying the first visit since my childhood to my cousin Anne, married to film script writer Julius Epstein, one of the authors of 'Casablanca'. They had been invited to attend a charity dinner in Los Angeles at which Yehudi Menuhin was the guest of honour, and they took me along. We were seated at a neighbouring table and were absorbed by his after-dinner speech at which he described his meteoric life-long career. His Berlin

concert of 1929, he said, occupied a vital part – so much so that he and his family described it as his 'Mayflower Concert'. I went up to him after his speech and was warmly welcomed by him when I introduced myself as one of the passengers on his Mayflower expedition.

An introduction to German discipline

The beginning of my school life almost coincided with the start of my musical education. I well remember the day of my enrolment in my primary school, the *Volksschule* in the neighbouring Sybelstraße. Clutching my mother's arm with one hand, and in the other holding, like all new boys, the symbol of impending scholarship in the form of a gaily decorated conical cardboard box, almost as tall as myself and filled to the brim with sweets, I was handed over into the tender care of my first form master, Mr Fricke. He was a giant of a man and a strict disciplinarian, who once locked me into the class cupboard for a minor misdemeanour. Another teacher who left an abiding impression on me was my Jewish Scripture teacher, Mr Schwarz. He was a kind, diffident man with a black, pointed beard, whose lessons, it must be confessed, I did not always follow with the attention he would have wished.

It would have seemed incredible to suggest that, as a British Army captain, I would meet both these men again among the ruins of Berlin, nearly twenty years later. Truth once again proved stranger than fiction. It seemed like the stuff of which improbable plots in cheap novels are made.

In 1930 I was transferred from my Primary School to a *Gymnasium* (secondary grammar school), the Kaiser-Friedrich-Schule, at Savigny Platz. I quickly found myself recruited into the school orchestra, advanced to the position of *Konzertmeister* – first violinist – and regularly featured as a soloist at the school's concerts. On 17 December 1931 I played Händel's Bourrée, and the professionally produced programme even included the dates of the composer's life (1685-1759) for the pupils' benefit and instruction. My rendering of Verdi's 'Fantasie' from 'The Troubadour' followed on 13 March 1933, and Simonetti's Madrigal on 26 March 1934. This, however, was the end of my public contribution: the Nazi ideology had by now penetrated even the school orchestra's philosophy. It ultimately led to my departure, not only from the orchestra and the school, but also from Germany.

When I joined the school in 1930, it had a good academic record and was

run along the customary, highly disciplined lines of a senior German educational establishment. After Hitler's accession to power in 1933, however, an indication of the way in which the life at school was being manipulated by the Party-controlled State was exemplified by two unusual incidents. The first involved an intrusion into the pupils' personal and private contacts: 'Hands up those of you who exchange correspondence with foreigners abroad', ordered a form master.

Several pupils put up their hands. I was one of them, thinking of the exchange of letters with my Aunt in South Africa and my former school friend, Heinz Glesinger, who was now living in London. The questions which followed made us feel increasingly apprehensive:

'Give me the names and addresses of your correspondents.'
'What is your relationship with your correspondents, and what positions do they occupy?'
'How frequently do you exchange letters?'

The next question indicated the final destination of this information:

'What subjects do you discuss with your correspondents?'

The teacher concluded his inquiry by instructing us to bring these records up to date without further warning whenever any changes occurred.

Another sign of the times was vividly illustrated by the senior forms being summoned to a demonstration in the school's courtyard. It had been transformed into a parade ground. We were formed up in an open square which contained a number of gadgets: buckets filled with sand and water, pumps and a variety of other fire-fighting implements, together with an assorted collection of airborne weapons. They were all handled with confident expertise by a determined-looking team displaying swastika badges on their air raid wardens' uniforms.

We were given a short address by the leader of the team. The hate to which Germany was exposed by an envious world made it essential, he said, for the Fatherland to prepare itself for another war. Fortunately, the *Führer* had recognised these threats in good time. This demonstration was therefore merely intended to illustrate the need to familiarise ourselves with potential dangers. There was no need for undue concern. No enemy planes would ever be able to penetrate our iron defences and cross the Fatherland's frontiers.

One member of his team then ignited a few incendiary devices. The others set about the job of extinguishing the blaze with grim efficiency.

This demonstration was evidently part of a well-planned preparation for war. Shortly before my departure for England, Berlin experienced its first major air raid exercise. On 18 March 1935, it started with the black-out of all shop windows at 10 p.m., and led to a total black-out of the entire city between 11 p.m. and midnight.

Leading up to this exercise, public interest and involvement were stimulated by the wide-spread display of a frightening poster in striking colours. Unlike the boastful confidence expressed by the air raid wardens at my school demonstration, the poster showed massed squadrons of hostile aircraft, caught in German searchlights above a blazing Berlin skyline, and urging the people: *Rettet euch in den Reichsluftschutzbund!* – 'Seek safety in the Reich's Association for Protection against Air Raids!'

Ten years later I stood in the deserted courtyard of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Schule, a Captain in the British Army, surveying the empty ruins.

Fighting isolation: Positive Judaism

The political development through which we found ourselves propelled showed a rapid escalation. Life at school became increasingly oppressive, although the relationship between the Jewish pupils and their non-Jewish school comrades remained largely friendly. This was surprising, in view of the unremitting hate propaganda to which the 'Aryan' members of our school community were being subjected by public propaganda and in the Hitler Youth, which many had been induced, if not compelled, to join.

The growing intensity of anti-semitic manifestations – at first verbal and then increasingly violent – resulted in a more positive form of Judaism. Some of those whose attendance at Synagogues had been confined to the High Holidays found renewed faith and self-confidence by joining a congregation in regular worship; others became more involved in the numerous voluntary social activities; and many were converted to Zionism. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 filled them with hope for survival in the promised 'national home for the Jewish people'.

The varied expressions of religious and secular Jewish solidarity were encouraged by the way in which the *Jüdische Gemeinde* functioned: it was a Community governed by laws which had been enacted by the vanished Republic. Subscriptions payable to religious bodies were based on a sum calculated as a proportion of its members' income tax. This provided a firm basis for financing its Synagogues – which represented various shades of observance – as well as Jewish social and educational institutions. It also supplied a launching pad for additional voluntary services, which multiplied in response to growing persecution.

We witnessed with dismay how these urgently needed charities fought a losing battle for the diminishing funds left after successive confiscations of Jewish resources; and we had to watch helplessly while the State controlled all these organisations as part of a policy leading to the Jewish Community's ultimate destruction. The only positive, but certainly unintended, side effect of Nazi persecution was that the diverse branches of the Community were welded together ever more closely, and persuaded Jews from different backgrounds of the waste and futility of internal conflicts.

At this time I was preparing myself for my Bar Mitzva (Confirmation), which took place at the Friedenstempel in the Markgraf-Albrecht-Straße on 13 May 1933, just a few weeks after the first traumatic shock of the country-wide, violent boycott of Jewish enterprises. (The destruction of this treasured House of Worship during the notorious *Kristallnacht* on 9 November 1938 is commemorated by a small stone tablet let into the wall of the block of flats now occupying the site).

My Rabbi, Dr Joachim Prinz, was a charismatic personality, who instilled a sense of courage and confidence in me and the other young people who met each week at his home for confirmation lessons. His sermons filled the synagogue to overflowing, and he exerted an influence which extended far beyond the boundaries of his congregation.

There were two celebrants that day – my friend, Peter Schmoller, whose family was preparing to emigrate, and I. Our families and friends made up a substantial part of the congregation which filled the synagogue that Saturday morning.

I have never forgotten the sermon which Dr Prinz then addressed to us, shortly after the passage of the first anti-Jewish laws, because its beauty stood in such evident contrast to the racial megalomania which threatened to overwhelm us outside. Its theme was based on Jeremiah's exhortation, more than two thousand years earlier:

Thus saith the Lord:
Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
  Neither let the mighty man glory in his might,
Let not the rich man glory in his riches;
  But let him that glorieth glory in this,
That he understandeth, and knoweth Me,
  That I am the Lord who exercise mercy,
Justice and righteousness in the earth;
  For in these things I delight,
Saith the Lord.

The risk of feeling increasingly isolated was very real to us. My parents therefore ensured that Geoffrey and I enjoyed an active social life by enrolling us in organisations like a children's orchestra and the sports club Maccabi, which still had the use of an athletic field in the Grunewald. We also joined its associated boxing club, and the scout club Maccabi-Hazair. Here, too, I found my violin a considerable asset and a stimulus to cultural activity.

A letter sent by the 'Maccabi' Boxing Club to my father on 19 February 1934, to thank him for a violin recital I had given at the Club's Purim celebration, contains an inconspicuous but significant sign of the times: The entry, 'Member of the Brandenburg Boxing Federation' in the printed letter heading had been crossed out. By government decree, a Jewish club was no longer accepted as a member of a German organisation.

One of the Community's most splendid achievements was the Jewish *Kulturbund,* created as a result of the authorities' prohibition for Jews to visit public places of entertainment. Whenever possible we attended concerts, plays and operas performed, according to the newly enacted law, by Jews for Jews under strict supervision by Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda. At that time the Jewish Community had not yet been decimated by emigration and deportation, and so there still existed a sizable pool of world-class artistes who ensured that the standards achieved were extraordinarily high.

How the Fiddler fell off the Roof

All these trends combined, and influenced my school fate in an unusual way. In addition to performing my role in the orchestra, it had became customary for me to be asked to give solo recitals at school concerts. This also happened in connection with the Christmas Concert in 1934. I had been asked to play a violin concerto by Bach. Everything was ready, the programmes were printed, the pieces rehearsed and expectations were running high. But this was 1934, almost two years after the assumption of power by Hitler; and for the first time in my young life I was to experience the effects of Nazi policy.

A few days before the event, Dr Artur Böhme, the music master and conductor of the school orchestra, told me to stay behind after one of his lessons. He came straight to the point: 'On further consideration, we have decided to shorten the programme of the concert', he said. 'As a result, your solo performance is one of the contributions which will not be required on this occasion.' He offered neither explanation nor apology. There was no expression of regret: he was issuing an instruction which

was not subject to question or debate. I left him, feeling bewildered and upset.

In the corridor I met a fellow-pupil looking equally confused. 'Would you believe it', he said, 'I have just been told that my piece has been deleted from the programme'!

The new régime's first attack on the Jewish community, which had been initiated with the violent country-wide boycott on 1 April 1933, had since been augmented and refined in many ways. It did not require much imagination to work out the real reasons behind our suspensions; and so it was not long before we discovered that all Jewish soloists were similarly affected by the cancellation.

On the spur of the moment I went to see Dr Böhme again. I asked him whether I was right in thinking that the cancellation was due to my being Jewish. He hummed and hawed and then admitted that there had been some external pressure.

'If I am not allowed to appear as a soloist', I replied in an unaccustomed mood of defiance, 'I am sure you will not expect me to perform as an anonymous First Violinist in the orchestra.'

'I am not going to tolerate this kind of insubordination in my class', he thundered. 'Your solo performance was a special privilege which had nothing to do with your duty as a pupil to obey the rules and instructions of the school. You will therefore be in your proper place in the orchestra at the concert and attend the orchestra's future activities in the usual way.'

I went home, full of anger and disappointment, and sought my parents' advice. To my great relief they supported me, but pointed out that if I failed to attend the concert I would almost certainly face disciplinary action and, at worst, expulsion. They left the final decision to me, but promised to back me, whatever my choice.

I decided not to attend the concert. On my return to school following the event, I was told to report to a very angry Dr Böhme, who repeated his instructions for me to take up my duties with the orchestra without further delay. I refused.

My diary for 1935 reminds me that on Tuesday, 15 January, our parents took us to a stirring performance of 'Joseph ben Matthias' at the *Kulturbund*. Hermetically sealed from the non-Jewish population, and ostentatiously controlled by officials from the Ministry of Propaganda, we watched an historic spectacle which seemed as full of topical meaning to the audience as it was to the performers.

This visit took place on the day before my mother had been summoned to appear before the school's Director, Dr Voigt, on 16 January. It was a

painful encounter – painful for the Director, whose liberal instincts were outraged by instructions which he was too weak to resist, and painful for my mother, who had to face the prospect of an end to a higher education for her eldest son.

Dr Voigt at first tried to maintain the fiction that the programme, as originally planned, had been found to be too long and needed to be shortened. For the fact that this had been done entirely to the detriment of the Jewish soloists he pleaded superior instructions. In any case, he said, he could not accept my unauthorised withdrawal from the school orchestra, regardless of whether my complaint was justified. If I continued with my refusal to return, he had no option but to expel me, much as he would regret having to take such a step.

My mother reported the outcome of this encounter to the family that evening. My parents again left the final decision to me, but I sensed their pride in the stand I had taken. They supported my renewed determination not to rejoin the orchestra, but decided to notify the school of my resignation, instead of waiting for the school to expel me.

The next day, Friday, 18 January, has a special entry in my pocket diary for 1935. It records that I accompanied my father to a post office at 9.15 a.m. to dispatch his letter to the Kaiser-Friedrich-Schule, removing me from that school with immediate effect. I specially noted that he sent the letter by *Rohrpost,* a local express delivery system in which the letter was sent along a tube by means of compressed air. The thought crossed my mind that my unfinished German education thus ended in a puff of cold air.

Predicting 'The Final Solution'

Compared with what was to follow, these early experiences of persecution were mere pin-pricks. To the objective observer, however, their unchecked progression, clearly outlined in Hitler's *Mein Kampf,* indicated the beginning of 'The Final Solution'. My mother was typical of many Jewish women who were able – and courageous enough – to foresee the future more clearly than their husbands. They anticipated the war and rightly predicted that, once Germany had been isolated from the restraining influence of foreign public opinion, the persecution of the Jews would assume extreme forms. They therefore urged emigration at a time when many men were still fondly hoping that civilised humanity would prevail, the comradeship engendered by army service would prevent the excesses from getting out of hand, and that, in any case, Hitler's Government would soon go the way of its many predecessors. They totally under-

estimated the determination of those now in power, who hid their lawlessness amidst a veneer of brutal legislation; and they failed to foresee the absence of popular reaction to a total seizure of power by a dictatorship which allowed no dissent from its criminal course. Giving up home and livelihood became more difficult, the longer and closer were the ties which bound the family to its local roots.

My parents discussed the options with growing desperation. The need for emigration became increasingly compelling and inevitable; but the timing presented a problem. In one thing our parents were, however, totally at one: they agreed that the future of their sons had to lie in England; and that in order to give us the best possible chance of success in life we had to have the benefit of continuing our education there with the least possible delay. My sudden departure from the Kaiser-Friedrich-Schule had given this matter immediate urgency. Buxton College, in Derbyshire, had been warmly recommended to us by friends, and so this is where my parents decided to send me.

We eagerly studied the prospectus which reached us from across the Channel. Latin, we discovered, was going to be one of my future subjects. The Kaiser-Friedrich-Schule was a *Real-Gymnasium* – a science-orientated grammar school – and Latin therefore did not feature in its teaching syllabus. I needed to close this gap to the best of my ability.

We sought the help of a retired Jewish teacher, Professor Kalischer, who lived around the corner in the Wilmersdorfer Straße. He combined kindness and patience with the traditional academic characteristics of other-worldliness and pedantry. He achieved remarkable results with his one-to-one teaching.

In this way, the time for my departure quickly approached. I viewed it with mixed emotions, but was not fully aware of the material sacrifices accepted by my parents. Enrolling me, and subsequently my brother, at a good English Boarding School stretched our parents' resources to the limit. Penal taxation, combined with the boycott of Jewish businesses, which was being stepped up steadily with all the power and influence of Party and State behind it, was rapidly eroding the viability of our father's factory. The moment when he would be forced to sell out to an 'Aryan' competitor, who was already waiting in the wings, was almost predictable.

In 1934 we gave up our flat in Mommsenstraße and moved into a smaller apartment in the Eisenzahnstraße, only a few minutes' walk from our old home; but Geoffrey and I felt the change acutely. Leaving the surroundings which we had known for as long as we could remember was a painful experience.

At the same time, our mother started to tailor children's clothes to supplement our father's shrinking income. She was an expert needle woman and knitter, and necessity turned her skills to good advantage. Our lounge was turned into a fitting room when occasion demanded.

The obvious solution would have been to accept what was then on offer for our father's factory and for the whole family to join the growing exodus. That, however, would not have enabled our parents to meet the cost of our education. They therefore reached the deliberate and painful decision to split up the family at a time when our instincts commanded us to face the future together, and to let us go. They would stay behind in Berlin to continue earning what money they could in the hope that they would be able to join us later. Our parents therefore once again gave up their flat and moved into a small Jewish boarding house in the Schweinfurth-Straße in Dahlem. It became their final home in Berlin.

3

A New Life in England

WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE THE LAST gathering of our family and friends was the celebration of my brother's Bar Mitzva at the Synagogue in the Prinzregentenstraße, under Rabbi Swarsensky, on 13 April 1935. It also turned out to be my farewell to the world in which I had so far grown up. Four days later I set sail for a new life in England.

Before going on to Buxton, I stayed for a few days at the London home, in Regent's Park, of Heinz Glesinger, my old school friend from the Kaiser-Friedrich-Schule. His family had emigrated to London a few years earlier; and his was the name I proudly used to give to my KFS form master when he compiled the lists of his pupils' foreign correspondents for the Gestapo.

Heinz showed me his new home city with obvious pride. One of the odd things which surprised me was the way buses on identical services overtook each other in the turmoil of traffic. They seemed to personify the organised chaos which appeared to govern life here. In Berlin the buses, like everything else, obediently followed each other in strict compliance with their time tables. In wide-eyed wonder I took in the surging traffic, the huge, crowded stores, the Royal Palaces, the great parks, the Tower, the Albert Memorial, Piccadilly Circus, and all the other marvels which impress a 15-year-old on his first visit to a great metropolis. And then there was the famous Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park, where *anyone* could mount a rostrum and tell the government to go to ... anywhere! In Berlin, by contrast, the fearful, furtive look over the shoulder now accompanied every whispered political discussion. Life in Germany seemed menacing and mediæval by comparison. London's image, on the other hand, struck an immediate chord in my mind with the kind of society in which I hoped to live; but not even in my wildest dreams would it have occurred to me, as we were admiring the colourful ceremony of the changing the guard at Buckingham Palace, that thirty-four years later I would enter its portals to be presented with an OBE by Queen Elizabeth.

Life at Buxton

Buxton College was to be my home for only one year – a relatively short time for an educational process which normally occupies a much longer period; but the effect on my thinking and attitude was profound. Finding myself suddenly translated from a public attitude of hate and persecution into what impressed me as a serene and benevolent society was an extraordinary and rewarding experience. Moreover, I found myself instinctively attracted to the habit of deliberate under-statement, to the self-deprecating sense of humour and the aversion against interfering in other people's private affairs, which seemed to mark my new environment.

My new home was situated in the attractive, hilly outskirts of Buxton in Derbyshire, whose hot springs had made it into a favourite watering place for the Romans, and a fashionable Spa for the Victorians. Its comfortable, old-fashioned hotels and boarding houses exuded a sleepy provincial contentment, and the immaculate public gardens and some fine public buildings were evidence of civic pride and the generosity of the local benefactor, the Duke of Devonshire. In the tepid, mineral-laden waters of its Municipal Swimming Pool I earned the Bronze Medal of the Royal Life Saving Society; in its ornate, old-fashioned Opera House I enjoyed my first performances of 'The Arcadians' and 'The Mikado'; and in the luxurious dining room of the Palace Hotel the boys of Buxton College, neatly turned out in their striped school blazers, were entertained to enormous cream teas by visiting parents, and I was not infrequently invited by friends to join in the feast.

Buxton College was one of the local institutions. Founded in 1674, its buildings did not quite go back to its origins, but to my unpractised eye the dormitories in which the boarders were accommodated gave a passable imitation of doing so. Other buildings had been added recently. The teaching block consisted of a most attractive quadrangle of classrooms with folding glass walls set around an open courtyard; the science laboratories were well equipped; there were separate rooms for the use of the voluntary societies; and a 'Tuck Shop' catered for those who wanted to spend their pocket money on supplementing the very adequate school meals with sweets. There was, of course, a football field and a cricket pitch in addition to a set of tennis courts. The boarders had a communal lounge, as well as a large study in which they did their daily 'Prep' under the supervision of one of the masters.

The pupils were divided into four 'houses', each named after an English County. All pupils had to wear the school uniform, consisting of a striped blazer and a matching school cap, while each house sported a distinctive

tie. The boarders belonged to 'Devonshire', the 'day boys' were grouped in the three other houses.

Being plunged into a new linguistic environment at first proved a natural handicap. As far as the outside world is concerned, your mental age is suddenly reduced in proportion to your ability to express yourself and to understand what other people are saying to you. It is painful to find ideas vainly struggling to come out. In the security of the school I fortunately did not encounter those Dickensian types who believe that all you have to do when speaking to foreigners is to shout a bit louder to be understood. With the encouragement of my teachers, the hilarious comments of my fellow pupils and the natural affinity I felt for my new language, my stilted school English soon improved.

A cold shower before breakfast

Our accommodation, in the best tradition of the English Public School, was designed to make us fit for whatever physical hardships life might have in store for us. We slept in large, under-heated dormitories in beds covered in woollen blankets – duvets were still half a century away and regarded as an effeminate Continental habit. In winter as well as summer the morning began with a shuddering cold shower. It was not one of my favourite activities, especially after the onset of winter, but it was undeniable that the shock did wonders for one's circulation.

This ordeal was followed each day by a brisk trot up a near-by hill to a folly called 'Solomon's Temple'. It looked like an ancient tower but had been built only forty years earlier by Solomon Mycock, a benefactor, to give jobs to the unemployed. We were not tempted to ponder on this example of social planning during our early morning encounters. We just wanted to get back to school for breakfast as quickly as possible.

This meal introduced me to a most welcome English tradition. The Continental breakfast I knew consisted of coffee and buttered crisp rolls with jam. It was fine in its own way; but here I was regaled with a cooked menu which included porridge or shredded wheat and unknown delicacies like grilled kipper from Scotland, white buttered toast with marmalade containing crystallised orange peel, specially made for the British market in Spain, and tea, blended for the Empire's mother country in India and Ceylon. Its rich flavour revealed to me why it was a national beverage.

On the Continent, I remembered, tea drinking tended to be a more refined and exotic afternoon affair. Some hostesses brewed their tea in Russian samovars; others used graceful Japanese teapots and delicate cups. Yet others, following a more direct method, placed tea leaves into an oval-

shaped, perforated metal container – forerunner of today's tea bag – which was then suspended on a dainty chain in a tea pot or a glass filled with hot water. The 'tea egg' was removed when the water had acquired a light-brown colour and was then turned into a paler shade when lemon slices were added.

Here, I found, tea was a wide-spread, popular and robust drink. Spoonfuls of carefully selected tea leaves were put into a pre-heated tea pot, freshly-boiled water was added, and the drink was left to draw for a few minutes before being poured into cups or mugs. But there was a long-standing wide-spread and unresolved controversy which was conducted with a combination of traditional courtesy and determination. One important school of thought ordained that tea had precedence over milk in the cup. Others felt that good manners decreed that milk should be poured into the cup *before* the tea. Neither supporter would give way on this important matter of principle. They did, however, agree that sugar should come last, and that a rich, tasty drink could be produced by either method.

Regardless of the outcome, we happily gulped our tea and 'tucked' into the breakfast 'grub' with unrestrained enthusiasm while our masters, wearing their academic gowns, partook of their meal on a raised platform at the far end of the dining hall.

Our domestic needs were taken care of by the headmaster's wife, affectionately known as 'Mo', who created a warm and caring atmosphere among her charges. During the school holidays those of the boys who for one reason or another could not go home, joined the headmaster's family; and so we got to know Blackpool, at that time still the one and only seaside holiday resort for hundreds of thousands of Lancashire's textile workers, and the strongly contrasting palm-studded 'English Riviera' of Paignton and Torquay on Devon's south coast.

A Wink and a Nod

It soon became evident that the entire life of the school was based on an intense competition between the houses in every sphere of our activities, sporting as well as academic; but there was also a communal spirit which embraced the entire school, and which showed itself in such peculiar habits as the winks which the boys exchanged when they met outside the school. This momentary closing of an eye was frequently accompanied by a mischievous and secretive grin. My brother was mightily impressed by the winks which I exchanged with my fellow-pupils when I collected him from the railway station on his eagerly-awaited arrival at Buxton

early in 1936. It showed to an outsider that I was truly accepted as one of 'theirs'. He was soon winking with the best of them.

The feature that impressed me with particular reference to my German experience was the co-existence of a highly competitive spirit on one hand, and the general feeling of tolerance on the other. The opponent's efforts, we were told, deserved to be respected. The cultivation of a feeling for fair play, combined with hard effort, was the philosophy underlying the school's educational aim. It was implemented by a young and able team of masters who enjoyed the respect – and often the friendship – of the pupils without resort to the unquestioning, heel-clicking discipline which marked the German scholastic establishment.

These aims were also underpinned by the various voluntary societies maintained by the school, and run by the boys, to cater for a wide variety of scientific and cultural interests. I took an active part in the Debating Society, which organised regular meetings at which opposing views on issues of the day were debated in accordance with parliamentary rules. I was fascinated, and greatly attracted, by a mode of conduct which was totally opposed to anything I had witnessed in public life in Germany. Expressing one's views with moderation and courtesy, and listening to opposing views with tolerance and an open mind were extra-curricular lessons which proved of inestimable value to me in later life.

Our 'Role Model'

Presiding over this community was the paternal figure of the headmaster, A.D.C. Mason. A Cambridge mathematician, he was a born teacher, a fine administrator, and proved a wise and helpful friend. He encouraged his pupils to seek his advice on any personal problems. I went to see him in his study where he sat, a comfortably rounded figure, benignly smiling at me over his spectacles.

'What can I do for you?' he asked me with genuine interest.

I told him that, like the half-dozen other Jewish refugees who had become his pupils, I enjoyed my life at the College. We also liked the atmosphere created by the Church of England; but I felt it wrong for us to be made to attend the Sunday services and neglecting the Jewish heritage which had been the reason for our flight from German persecution. Would it be possible for us to organise our own equivalent services?

He thought about the suggestion and agreed with it; but no Rabbi was available for our tiny congregation. Would we be able to conduct our own services?

I said that we would have a go. And so I managed to get hold of a

prayer book. We subsequently took it in turn to use it as our guide during our own weekly services.

Dennis Mason was a man of many interests. One of them was his love of classical music, which he tried to share with the entire school in a most original way.

Each day's work opened with a communal Act of Worship. The entire school was gathered in the gymnasium, the boys seated on the floor, the masters, in their academic robes, on chairs around the sides, the headmaster on a throne-like chair, presiding from a raised platform. After a short prayer, we sang a hymn from the English hymnal, 'Ancient and Modern', and so I acquired both a knowledge and a deep affection for these lovely tunes, which had some resemblance to the melodies I knew from my synagogue. The headmaster then briefly described a piece of classical music, producing a record from his enormous private collection which he then played to us on the specially installed multi-loudspeaker gramophone system. Several 78 r.p.m records were usually required, and the wooden needles, which were the last word in sound reproduction, had to be sharpened with each change of record. Meanwhile, the boys sat in perfect silence, waiting for the performance to continue. I have no doubt that many of that attentive audience acquired an abiding love of good music while they were sitting on that hard floor.

Another side of the headmaster's character became apparent on 9 November 1935, when the school, in common with the entire country, commemorated Armistice Day, which marked the end of the First World War. Everyone was assembled in the hall, while we listened on the 'wireless' to the transmission of the ceremonies at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. When the whole country fell silent for two minutes after the sound of Big Ben at 11 a.m., in tribute to the war dead, I noticed unashamed tears running down the headmaster's cheeks. He had himself seen action during the hostilities and probably knew that another great war was about to engulf the world.

My Public Speaking debut

At regular intervals, a senior boy was invited to give a short 'interest talk' on a topic of his own choice to the assembled school. In due course it was my turn. I settled on 'Japan' as my theme and so, in the space of five minutes, with a great deal of trepidation and after much painful research, I tried to describe the similarities which the two island empires on opposite sides of our globe shared with each other.

King George V died on 20 January 1936. The event is etched in my mind because, during the day's English lesson, the master reminded us that the dead monarch had been known as 'the Sailor King', and that he would have wished us to pursue our study of one of our Matriculation text books, 'The Mirror of the Sea', with particular interest. With a glance in my direction he reminded us that the author, Joseph Conrad, had been born in Poland as Konrad Korzeniowski, had joined the British Merchant Navy and risen to command his own ships, and had subsequently shown his mastery of the English language by writing the superbly evocative essays and novels based on his experiences of life at sea.

I have enjoyed Joseph Conrad's books ever since; and I also remember fondly, and can still recite long passages from our other set books, 'Twelfth Night' (*If music be the food of love – play on!)* and Lord Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King'. *(The old order changes, Yielding place to new, And God fulfils himself in many ways, Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.)*

The news from Germany never allowed me, however, to forget that I was fortunate to occupy a privileged position. On the contrary, the widening of my horizon had the inevitable consequence of deepening my understanding of what was happening in the world around us.

Berlin Interval, 1935

During the summer holidays I returned for a brief reunion to my family in Berlin. Jewish children had meanwhile been banned from attending German schools; and Geoffrey, while waiting to join me in England, had been enrolled in one of the Jewish schools which had been set up. As in the case of the *Kulturbund,* the quality of what the Jewish Community was forced to provide from its own resources compared favourably with what had been denied to it, and the children did not feel particularly deprived by the change; but the steady erosion caused by emigration and Gestapo arrests showed that we had passed the threshold of the end of the beginning and had entered the beginning of the end.

Our parents decided to take us on a short holiday to a quiet boarding house in the Mark Brandenburg, near Berlin. It did not quite turn out as planned. Each night we were kept awake by crowds of storm troopers rampaging through the streets and screaming anti-Jewish slogans. The risk of physical attack seemed very real, and so we returned to the comparative anonymity of our flat in Berlin.

My old scout group of the Maccabi-Hazair, the *Kvutza Nesher,* invited me to a special meeting. It was 10 August, 1935, and proved a significant and symbolic occasion: for on that night the Group was officially disbanded. The unit was no longer viable. Our popular Group Leader, Hans Liepmann, delivered a short, emotional address, and that proved to be the end of yet another piece of Jewish history in Berlin. I unexpectedly met 'Hali' 13 years later on a visit to Durban in South Africa, where we celebrated a joyous but nostalgic reunion.

On the evening before my return to England, the family went to see *Die Fledermaus* at the *Kulturbund.* It seemed to me that, once again, the inspiration of the artistes transferred itself to the audience, both yearning for release from a shared agony, and finding it together for a brief moment in an act of artistic creation. The evening formed a fitting end to my visit.

I left Berlin on 8 September 1935, depressed and deeply apprehensive of the future. I felt that I would never see the city again.

4

Facing an Uncertain Future

I LEFT MY ALMA MATER AT BUXTON in 1936, greatly fortified by the experience, and eager and ready to earn my living. Geoffrey left the College a little later.

Living now in the busy metropolis, I continued to be impressed by public conduct in the affairs of everyday life. I was aware that poverty and unemployment existed; but self-discipline and belief in Parliamentary Democracy usually preserved public order without resort to force. Words like 'road rage' had not yet been coined; 'mugger' was defined in the *Oxford Dictionary* as nothing more offensive than a 'broad-nosed Indian crocodile'; committees were still guided by their chairmen – whether ladies or gentlemen – instead of being sat on, as 'chair'; 'politically correct' terminology was not yet regarded as fashionable in the British Isles; and box-like high-rise blocks in depressed areas had not yet been recognised as a vertical path to the breakdown of local communities.

I admired the way in which policemen tended to act as helpful friends, and people lined up in an orderly fashion at places like bus stops. 'Jumping the queue' simply wasn't done. Passengers about to leave a bus usually pressed the fare into the hands of people near the exit when the conductor was busy upstairs. And if you wanted a paper while the news vendor was having a 'quick one' in a pub, you just put a penny in the box and helped yourself to a copy.

It all impressed me as a law-abiding, unhurried pace of life which reflected a feeling of British self-confidence, strength and security.

While awaiting the arrival of our parents, we lived with friends and received a great deal of help and support from various organisations. In particular, we were most hospitably received into the community of the West London Synagogue, a large Reform congregation of which we later became full and active members. Its religious orientation was similar to that of the Friedenstempel in Berlin, and we immediately felt at home there.

Subsequently, we received much help and encouragement from a group headed by Lady Evelyn Jones. Her home was in the remote Norfolk town

of Fakenham, but she visited us quite frequently. She was not only deeply absorbed by the perilous problems facing her country at that time, but also concerned with aiding those who had already been exposed to persecution. When my father's health broke down shortly before the outbreak of war, she helped him with his convalescence by organising my parents' move to a pretty cottage near Wimborne, in Dorset. It seemed to me to be a typical, picturesque county town, whose ancient church and venerable buildings represented the embodiment of English history. The cottage on Wimborne's outskirts offered to my parents was a small holiday retreat owned by her friends, the Low family. They were a prominent local family, who were likewise committed to giving help to refugees. Their hospitality and understanding proved a memorable experience. The elderly Mrs Low and her son Harry became good friends. He had returned as a permanent invalid from the First World War, but had later managed to become a renowned crayon artist who skilfully recreated the mediæval atmosphere of his home city and presented us with some of his evocative pictures.

We were deeply impressed, not only by the physical and material aid we received, but even more by the active protests against Germany's breach of civilised behaviour. British citizens from all leading ranks of society proved to be far more outspoken and active in their condemnation of German iniquity than was evident in the British Government's hesitant and ambivalent public attitude. Many leading politicians were still hoping to reach a peaceful compromise with German's victory-intoxicated dictatorship.

Officially, my brother and I were classified as refugees, granted a residential permit renewable at yearly intervals, and not allowed to work, apart from pursuing approved vocational training. Unemployment was widespread, and positions of any kind were difficult to find – especially for a young and totally inexperienced political refugee.

'Sitting next to Nellie'

Maurice Howard was an old family friend. We had first met him several years earlier during his business trips to Berlin. When I left Buxton College and arrived in London, he offered me a home at his hospitable house in Willesden. He not only introduced me to the West London Synagogue, but also found a training place for me at Omes Ltd. It was an engineering works in Barnes, near Hammersmith, which produced steel forgings for the motor industry in vast quantities. I cycled the seven miles to and from the factory, starting the eight-hour working day at 7

a.m. in summer and 7.30 a.m. in winter. My engineering training consisted in standing behind what was known as a 'burring' lathe, into which I had to insert an endless succession of newly-forged pistons and remove the excess metal from the piston head with a large file. It was a monotonous, repetitive and unskilled operation. Despite the protective gloves I wore, I frequently ended the day with steel splinters in my hands. I learned little about engineering, but a great deal about what makes a British workman – and his management – tick. I developed a considerable liking for my easy-going and hard-swearing workmates, to whom I also became indebted for my introduction to a totally new form of basic English. It was an experience which was to stand me in good stead in the Army a few years later.

Having burred what seemed to me like most of the piston rings which went into British motor cars that year, I came to the conclusion that this was not the way to a progressive career. Training in any systematic way was clearly not regarded as part of the management's function. What there was took the form of what was popularly known as 'sitting next to Nellie' – watching an experienced worker going through the motions. In my case, this could more accurately be described as 'standing next to Fred', since the luxury of sitting was not part of the operation. My entire training process only took a couple of hours, after which I was considered fit to practise the art of burring without supervision.

Engineering design seemed to be the way ahead, and that pointed in the direction of the Drawing Office. But a total lack of qualifications separated me from a transfer to that exalted building, in which employees were called 'staff' rather than 'workers' and were paid 'salaries' instead of 'wages'.

My debt to the British Further Education System

I then discovered the British further education system, which existed in the form of hundreds of technical and commercial colleges up and down the country. Maintained by the Local Education Authorities, they were the direct descendants of the Mechanics' Institutes, set up privately during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These Institutes supplied the world's first Industrial Revolution with skilled labour in a country which had decided, as an act of policy, not to provide a state-sponsored, compulsory education system. In the words of the Bishop of London in 1803, 'it is safest for both the government and the religion of the country to let the lower classes remain in the state of ignorance in which nature has originally placed them'.

By the time I enrolled at the Willesden Technical College for evening classes in Engineering Drawing in 1937, the institutions had for several generations played a vital part in providing an alternative route to vocational qualifications for those deprived of an adequate education, and they were clearly continuing to do so. Having grown up outside the traditional establishment, the Further Education Colleges did not, however, enjoy parity of esteem with the ancient and tradition-bound school system designed to produce candidates for 'the Establishment' – church, state and the law. The Willesden Technical College and Buxton College were two sides of a coin which represented diametrically opposed views of the purposes of an education system. The students of the two rarely had occasion to sample the benefits of the other.

It was my good fortune to be able to do so, and this experience was to have a profound influence on the future course of my working life. As a homeless and stateless refugee, my future at this stage was totally shrouded in uncertainty. I would have found it difficult – in fact, I would never have thought it possible – to believe that, after nearly seven years' service in the British Army, a State scholarship would enable me to become a graduate of the London School of Economics; a lecturer in Economic History at the Regent Street Polytechnic; governor of the Sir Philip Magnus School; and that my entire subsequent career would be devoted to the development and reform of the British vocational training system – and provide the subject of a doctoral thesis. It seemed highly unlikely that my career would be concerned with domestic British problems at a level which was not without influence: I was appointed head of the Education and Research Sections of the Federation of British Industries, and then Director of the British Association of Commercial and Industrial Education and invited to become a member of governmental committees dealing with education and training reforms.

But all these events were hidden in the mist of a war-torn future. This was 1937; and in my search for a path towards self-improvement I discovered that the Willesden Technical College and its peers provided a comprehensive range of courses, from basic remedial subjects to the membership qualifications of the professional bodies. Many courses were offered both during the day and as evening classes; but as employers generally tended neither to pay the fees of their employees, nor even granted day release for educational leave, the evening classes enjoyed great support.

I was one of many who queued to enrol as an evening student, but did not have enough money to pay the fees. The Local Authority therefore

granted me exemption, and so I was able to turn up for my lessons for three hours on three evenings a week. The quality of the teaching was excellent and the atmosphere, both among the students, and between students and teachers was most congenial. The students were obviously there of their own free will and determined to make progress, while most of the instructors were highly competent practitioners, who appreciated the enthusiasm of their students. I was able to put my foot on the bottom rung of the ladder of qualified engineering draughtsmen.

In due course, my employer recognised my efforts by transferring me to the drawing office, and I was able to translate my studies into practice. When I had gained some experience, I decided to try and find a more progressive job, applied to the British Ropeway Engineering Co, Ltd, a medium-sized company in Central London, and was delighted to be offered a post as a draughtsman. Even the Home Office co-operated by granting me a new trainee permit.

Just in time ...

Meanwhile, our parents' existence in Germany moved towards its close. Hitler's triumphant entry into Austria on 14 March 1938 sounded the final alarm. Pictures of Jews being forced to scrub pavements, while jeered by Austrian Nazi supporters, provided a foretaste of things to come. The sudden additional exodus of Austrian refugees had the practical effect of blocking our intended emigration to Australia: the authorities there switched a large proportion of immigration visas from the German to the Austrian quota.

Worse was to come. I unexpectedly received a letter from a former fellow-pupil, Manfred Reich. As a Polish citizen he had been expelled from Germany and was imprisoned in a camp on the German-Polish border, unable to return to his home in Berlin or to enter Poland. He begged for my help to release him from his dreadful position. My inability to do anything for him pursued me like a bad dream.

Hershel Grynszpan was the son of one of the unfortunate 15,000 people who was likewise suffering hunger, frost and desperate fear in these camps. In a frantic attempt to call attention to his father's plight he assassinated the third secretary at the German embassy in Paris on 7 November 1938.

This offence provided the Nazi authorities with the long-anticipated excuse to launch a carefully organised, State-authorised pogrom throughout the whole of Germany. During the night of 9 November, in the course of what the Ministry of Propaganda described as 'an outraged

people's spontaneous demonstration', the Synagogues throughout Germany simultaneously went up in flames, while the police stood by and the fire brigade studiously confined the conflagrations to Jewish properties. Jewish shops were smashed, and rampaging SA troops broke into Jewish homes to beat up and arrest Jewish men.

The broken window panes which littered the pavements throughout the country reflected the flames of burning Jewish shops and Synagogues. This State-organised hooliganism was subsequently given the neutral description of *Kristallnacht* – Night of Broken Glass. The damage amounted to many millions of Marks. A pre-arranged decree ordained that Jewish policy holders were obliged to turn over any insurance payments to the Government while nevertheless having to pay for any repairs; and a penalty tax of 100 million Marks was additionally levied on the Jewish Community.

A rumour had warned our parents of the forthcoming assault; and it had accurately forecast that in this instance Gestapo arrests would be confined to men. As a result, my father was one of many who fled their homes to spend the night hidden by friends.

It so happened that our parents had quite fortuitously arranged their emigration to England for 10 November. The business had been taken over by its 'Aryan' competitor and our parents had paid the various penal taxes, such as the *Reichsfluchtsteuer,* an emigration tax, without which they would not have been given an exit visa. Next day, without returning home, our father therefore met our mother shortly before the appointed take-off at Tempelhof airport. They arrived at Croydon airport – happy and virtually pennyless – to a rapturous welcome from their sons.

The fact that the family was once again united in freedom let every other consideration pale into insignificance for a short moment; but we could not forget the many who had been left behind. Our parents' old fear was now revived that war could remove the last traces of restraint from the Nazis in their declared policy of exterminating the Jews. The full extent to which this fear was eventually realised was, however, beyond their imagination.

Our parents also recoiled in horror at the prospect of the war which they were certain would be caused by further German aggressions. They had very clear personal recollections of what was in store, while their sons viewed the possibility of a war of liberation as a somewhat romantic and amply justified prospect. It seemed that every generation had to feel the pain of its historical mistakes on its own bodies.

A strange message from Berlin

During those twilight days of awaiting the verdict between peace and war, I received an odd letter from the German embassy in London. It was addressed to Joachim Pinschewer and informed me that they had been told by the German Ministry of War that my age group was being mobilised, and instructing me to report to barracks in Berlin forthwith. After recovering from my astonishment, I replied that since the Nazi government had deprived me of my German nationality, I was a Stateless person. I therefore did not consider myself legally bound to serve in the German armed services. I added that, as a Jew who had fled from Nazi persecution, and being deeply opposed to the policies of the German government, I intended to volunteer for service in the British Army in the event of an armed conflict between the two countries.

In due course I received a reply, this time addressed to Joachim *Israel* Pinschewer, in acknowledgment of my Jewish identity – the latest Nazi brain wave had been the additional forename of 'Israel' for men and 'Sarah' for women – and repeating the previous instruction to report for military enrolment. I did not reply.

During the autumn we moved into a small flat in Castelnau, near Hammersmith Bridge, which takes its arterial road across the broad sweep of the Thames. I had first come to know the classical beauty of London's oldest suspension bridge when I cycled across it twice a day on my way to and from my factory in Barnes. It became one of my favourite London landmarks, which turned into an exciting adventure with dense crowds lining the bridge at Easter to cheer the traditional Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race.

It was at Castelnau that my family and I listened breathlessly to the Prime Minister's broadcast at 11 a.m. on 3 September 1939: a state of war with Germany now existed. We recalled that wishful gesture at Croydon airport, on his return from a final meeting with Hitler at Berchtesgaden, when Chamberlain had waved a piece of paper promising 'peace in our time'.

I somehow expected a momentous, instantaneous and exciting change of life to mark the transition from peace to war. In my ignorance I felt strangely elated. Even my father's experienced voice could not totally allay a feeling of youthful bravado. The unfamiliar and chilling sound of the air raid sirens, which penetrated heaven and earth a few minutes after the Prime Minister's broadcast, brought on goose pimples and seemed to confirm my anticipation of instant and irrevocable change. The fact that this frightening noise turned out to be a false alarm somehow caused a

sense of anti-climax. We spent the afternoon in anxious discussion, torn between fear of what war might bring, and relief that uncertainty had at last given way to a clear-cut decision and the prospect of liberation from the evil of Nazism. Our total identification with Britain was never even discussed. The only question was the speed of our expected call-up for service with the British Army.

In fact, nothing much seemed to change. We entered a strange period of apparent indecision, which became popularly known as 'phoney war'. Our song writers urged us to 'Hang out our washing on the Siegfried Line' and we wrote to the Home Office, volunteering for service in the Armed Services. Our names were duly noted, while the authorities tried to make up their minds what to do with us; but nothing dramatic seemed to happen anywhere. There was an abortive attempt at a landing in Norway, but that failure did not seem to impress itself to any great extent upon the public consciousness. The Germans sat quietly behind their Siegfried Line, the British and French were more or less comfortably ensconced behind their 'impenetrable' Maginot fortifications, there was a limited amount of patrol activity along the Franco-German border, and the RAF dropped propaganda leaflets on German towns.

Dunkirk – a traumatic shock

The speed, violence and smashing success of the German onslaught, which ended for the British Expeditionary Force with its evacuation from Dunkirk on 26 May 1940, came as a traumatic shock. As the scale of the disaster became apparent, public concern was fanned by the tabloid press, which saw a German 'Fifth Columnist' under every British bed. They regarded all German-speaking foreigners – most of them refugees from the Nazis – as potential spies, and they urged the government 'to intern the lot', although the real 'appeasers' were known to be influential men occupying high offices of state.

The authorities prevaricated by setting up Aliens Tribunals throughout the country to vet once again the *bona fides* of a group of people who were already closely and continuously scrutinised and monitored by the Aliens Department of the Police. I duly received my summons to attend such a tribunal and was courteously interviewed by a panel consisting of a barrister as chairman and two assessors. It seemed a bit of a farce to me, since the tribunal appeared to know more about me than I did myself. The result was a predictable entry in my grey Aliens Registration Book to the effect that I was a 'Victim of Nazi Persecution', and freeing me from the restrictions applicable to 'enemy aliens'.

This costly and time-consuming procedure did not pacify the tabloids; and so, in the interest of what the authorities conceived to be the public's morale, 'intern the lot' became government policy. There were some protests, but they were of no avail.

In this topsy-turvy situation, our recruitment into the British Army meanwhile followed a parallel and equally erratic 'on-off' course. On 19 February 1940, the Central Office for Refugees at Bloomsbury House sent me a circular letter 'with reference to your registration for National Service', asking me to call on 22 February, 'when the full conditions of enlistment and service in His Majesty's Forces will be explained to you'.

Next, I received a printed invitation from the Marchioness of Reading, inviting me to a meeting in the Stern Hall at the West London Synagogue on 15 May. Colonel J.V.R. Jackson and Mr Ernst Plaut would discuss the terms of enlistment. I was particularly pleased to be invited to a venue which had almost become a second home to me: for the past two or three years I had attended functions and socials of the Synagogue's Junior Membership in that spacious hall. It was now filled with solid rows of tubular stacking chairs; and they were all occupied. We listened with rapt attention to the introduction of military life given by a senior officer, and to an explanation of the conditions which would apply to non-British soldiers.

We went home expecting to be called up at any moment – especially after No. 3 Recruitment Centre at Euston passed me as 'fit for service with the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps' on 21 May and handed me a certificate to this effect. It was a day which coincided with the retreat of the Allied Forces towards the English Channel. Five days later every available ship was evacuating the surviving troops from Dunkirk.

Enlistment or Internment?

On 5 July, I received a duplicated circular letter from the Euston Centre, informing me 'that your application for enlistment into the British Army cannot now be proceeded with'. The tabloids continued to clamour, 'intern the lot'!

At 6.25 a.m., on 19 July 1940, the door bell rang at our flat at Haverstock Hill, Hampstead. A man waved an identity card in front of our sleepy eyes and said that he was a detective officer, under orders to take the men into custody for transfer to an internment camp.

We pointed out to him that the Aliens Tribunal had confirmed our status as 'victims of Nazi persecution'. That was of no consequence as

far as the detective's instructions were concerned; but our father gained exemption because he had contracted a serious heart ailment as a result of Nazi persecution; and the document dated 21 May, confirming my medical fitness for service with the Pioneer Corps, secured my freedom. My brother, however, argued in vain that only his youth had prevented his repeated applications for enlistment from being accepted. He disappeared in a police van which was collecting its harvest of internees that early summer morning.

This turn of events left us stunned. My parents and I felt that this action was surely based on a misinterpretation of Home Office instructions relating to recognised refugees and had to be challenged. That afternoon I therefore visited Hampstead Police Station, a few doors away from our home, and was seen by a Detective Inspector. I drew his attention to my brother's status and to the fact that, according to that day's newspapers, he had now reached the minimum age for enrolment into the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. I was told, regretfully, that the police no longer had anything to do with my brother's internment: he had already been handed over to the military authorities.

When I broke this news on my return home, my parents looked at each other in consternation and despair. The Nazis seemed on the point of launching their invasion of England, and we, their declared victims, were being lined up for easy access once they had reached these shores. The only action we could think of was to send appeals for help to those we knew. On the following day, 20 June, my mother wrote a letter to Lady Evelyn Jones, whose group had befriended us, and to Mr Mason, the headmaster of Buxton College. I translated them into English.

The feelings which we poured into these messages are reflected in the opening sentiment of our letter to Lady Evelyn: 'We are all trying our best to understand and justify the wholesale internment of refugees from Nazi oppression by imagining ourselves in the position of the responsible authorities, but even so we cannot help being deeply upset by what has happened.' Lady Evelyn responded by sending a letter to *The Times,* quoting our message.

The letter to Mr Mason concluded with the request for a testimonial which we could send to the Home Secretary with our appeal. Our feelings were summed up in the final words: 'In common with this country, whose cause is our cause, we are passing through very trying and difficult times and all we can do is to hope and pray that we may emerge victoriously in the end.'

Geoffrey meanwhile found himself with a mixed and stimulating company

behind barbed wire on the race track at Kempton Park. He was fortunate in not being chosen for deportation to Australia or Canada, since several of the ships bound for these destinations were sunk by German submarines, with heavy loss of life.

For our parents this latest development was cruel indeed. As they had indicated in their letter to Lady Evelyn Jones, they dreaded the imminence of a German invasion, knew enough about the logistics of war to fear that it might succeed and that the Gestapo had already drawn up the list of their potential victims in Britain. They were now faced with one son in internment and the other about to meet a powerful enemy while serving as a raw recruit in an army which had lost virtually all its arms and equipment on the French beaches.

Geoffrey and I, by now imbued with traditional British self-assurance, shared a far more optimistic attitude to the situation facing us, especially when he was enlisted in the AMPC a few weeks later. We were both carried along on the tide of quietly-grim confidence and steadfast determination which emanated from Winston Churchill. He personified for us, as he did for the vast majority of the British people, a refusal even to contemplate the possibility of a German victory.

5

How to be a Pioneer

On 29 July 1940, at the crowded Recruitment Centre in Euston, I took the oath of allegiance to 'His Majesty King George VI, His Heirs and Successors in Law', swore 'to obey the lawful commands of the officers set over me', and was paid 'The King's Shilling' which confirmed my agreement to serve, both at home and overseas, to the end of 'the present emergency'.

The Army's Jack-of-all-Trades

Like all 'non-British' recruits, I was posted to the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, the AMPC. It was the Jack-of-all-Trades of the British Army, performing a wide range of unskilled tasks, like building ammunition dumps, erecting fortifications and putting up prefabricated Nissen huts.

I later learned about its background and history from a bulletin called 'War' and published by the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA). It contained confidential, well-written lecture guides for company officers, who were encouraged to lead discussions in their units on selected current topics.

'Hard, useful work and no glory – that is the lot of the Pioneer Corps, yet they are vital to the Army' said a heading above the prominent title, 'The Work of the Pioneers'.

To that extent, our function did not seem to have changed much; but evidently our appearance had altered somewhat: 'In Victorian days', it said, 'they carried axes on parade and wore beards.'

'There wasn't much for them to do then', the article continued, 'but the more technical and all-embracing warfare becomes, the more work there is for them.' That certainly applied to us.

My unit, 137 Company, was stationed at Westward Ho!, a resort on the North Devon coast, whose romantic exclamation mark emphasised its attraction during that exceptionally hot summer. The company was one of those which had been specially set up for refugees from Germany and German-occupied countries. It represented an extraordinary mixture of types and talents.

The officers and senior non-commissioned officers were provided by the Regular Army. They were experts at drilling raw recruits; but nothing in their previous experience had prepared them for the rag-bag of merchants, lawyers, doctors, trade unionists, artists and students for whose military training they were now responsible. The first task, as they saw it, was to instil some military bearing into this undisciplined bunch and to disabuse them of the tendency to counter each order with 'Yes, Sir, *but* ... .'

The language of the NCOs reached heroic heights in their attempts to make soldiers out of us, and my previous experience as a factory worker proved of considerable value to me in this situation. In their quest for variety our NCOs even managed to split up long and complicated words and to sandwich their favourite invective in the middle. The results were spectacular. 'The b.....s have invaded f..... Poland, after f..... Austria and Czecho-f.....-Slovakia', we were informed by one of our sergeants in that kind of stentorian voice which seemed to be the prerogative of senior NCOs.

This outward show of uncouthness, however, hid an inarticulate human fellow-feeling on the part of many of them for the men under their command. They clearly realised that those, especially of middle age, who had lost their homes, and often their families, faced serious emotional problems, and this realisation led to many acts of kindness. As our military efficiency improved and our work began to gain wider recognition, a natural team spirit developed. It was further strengthened by an awareness of the common threat of a German invasion, with all that this implied. These factors helped to speed our integration into the Army in particular, and into British society in general.

Baptism of fire at Yeovil

At the end of August we were posted to our first assignment: the building of ammunition dumps at the Fleet Air Arm Station at Yeovilton, near the attractive small Somerset town of Yeovil. We did not have to wait long for attention from the Luftwaffe: shortly after we started, the air raid sirens sounded, and we retreated into the slit trenches surrounding the work area. Within minutes, silvery dots, tracing delicate lines of grey vapour trails, appeared in formation at a great height in the summer sky. They were German bombers on their way to a raid on the West coast – probably Bristol; but a few of them suddenly detached themselves from the formation in our direction. Gazing up in fearful fascination, we saw the bombs arching from the aircraft and followed them on their way to

earth, as their whistle rose to a threatening scream. They landed with a dull thud some distance away from us outside the perimeter, throwing up debris and great clouds of dust, and we congratulated ourselves on a lucky escape.

When we returned to our quarters in Yeovil a little later, we discovered that the bombs had exploded in the town. Among the buildings they had demolished was Burton's, a large store. We joined the rescue services, and on the following day the local paper expressed the townsfolk's appreciation of our work.

London is burning

These were the crucial days of the Battle of Britain, in which the Luftwaffe came perilously close to knocking the RAF out of the sky and so providing the essential prerequisite for a successful invasion. Following RAF attacks on Berlin, Hitler had made the fateful mistake of swearing to obliterate Britain's towns in revenge. He switched his attacks from the RAF bases to the cities and thereby preserved Britain's badly mauled air force to fight another day. So began the indiscriminate attacks, which became known as 'Baedeker Raids'.

The raid mounted by 500 German bombers on Coventry on 15 November, made a particularly powerful impact on us, although we were by then stationed in London's dockland and used to raids. It killed nearly 600 people, obliterated Coventry's centre and, by starting many fires simultaneously, caused a fire storm which rendered the rescue services helpless. The press reported jubilation in Germany, and the coining of a new verb – *koventrieren*. Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, analysing the German tactics at the British Air Ministry, later commented that the principle of starting so many fires at the same time that no fire-fighting services could get them under control, had been carefully noted. It would be copied by him with devastating effect when he later took charge of Bomber Command.

Many British cities were 'coventrated' that autumn and winter, but London was, and remained, a constant target. Every night, at dusk, the sirens announced the punctual approach of the German raiders. They were followed shortly afterwards by the distinctive deep-throated hum of the bombers high above us in the sky, and then by detonations and conflagrations on the ground. The East End and the vast expanse of the London Docks were regular targets, and the Civil Defence authorities were soon unable to cope with emergencies of this scope and frequency. As a result, units of the armed services were drafted into the stricken areas to help with the work of rescue and demolition.

On 12 October, 137 Company of the Pioneer Corps joined these units. We were quartered in two old schools, in Silwood Street and Suffolk Road, in the immediate vicinity of the Surrey Docks and the Royal Victoria Docks respectively. Situated among the low, grey, jerrybuilt dockers' homes, the buildings were typical of the pseudo-gothic London County Council schools erected in the late 19th century. Their internal partitions were made of glass. They were therefore perhaps not ideally suited to serve as barracks in an area subjected to nightly air raids; but miraculously, we suffered only relatively few casualties in the three months, up to 19 January 1941, during which we shared London's tribulations.

We were not the only persons facing a shortage of protection against air attacks. Air raid shelters had been hurriedly constructed; and Underground stations provided an unplanned but effective protection for substantial numbers. Nevertheless, one of the problems facing the civilian population throughout the city – and especially the densely-populated parts of East London – was the relatively poor availability of protection against air raids.

One hurried answer to this problem was the erection of brick shelters with concrete tops on some street pavements. They provided cover against shrapnel, but were powerless against near hits. They also struck me as claustrophobic and potentially unhygienic.

Some four years later, in Berlin, I was reminded of our shelters by the gigantic fortresses erected at strategic centres, which offered total protection to thousands of Berliners while also serving as powerful anti-aircraft towers.

The saga of the tube dwellers

We occasionally joined our civilian neighbours in nearby tube stations. Like the whole of the underground network, they served as a vital refuge for much of the population. The civil defence authorities had at first refused to permit the use of the deep underground stations during air raids, but the public had simply taken possession of the platforms; and a unique social life began to develop according to a strict time table set by the *Luftwaffe*. With dusk came the air raid alerts; and these were anticipated, with only a few minutes to spare, by an orderly mass migration, down the escalators and onto the platforms. They carried their rolled-up sleeping bags, blankets, thermos flasks, toys, hot water bottles, food and all the other paraphernalia which experience had taught them to bring for a long night's vigil, and perhaps some uneasy sleep, while the underground trains rumbled past. The platforms were eventually marked

by coloured lines which indicated positions reserved for nursing mothers and other special categories of users; and there were first aid posts and all sorts of other voluntary agencies sprinkled along the platform.

Up to about midnight, there was a busy social life available for those so inclined. Card games, sing-songs, even music hall acts were on offer; but after the last train had passed through the station, the lights were dimmed, and an uneasy silence settled over the recumbent figures in the manner so tellingly captured in the drawings of Henry Moore, the famous war artist. Occasionally, one could hear the distant rumble of explosions.

These people were among the poorest in the land, fleeing high explosives and fire bombs night after night. They faced the likelihood of finding their homes shattered and burned as they emerged into the acrid smoke of a new day. I was constantly amazed and greatly encouraged by their optimism, sense of humour, extraordinary self-discipline and above all by their strong sense of identity. My fellow-pioneers and I were happy to see that they gave their overwhelming support to the war against Hitler and all he stood for. I recorded the people's attitude in my diary on 14 October 1940.

'People are marvellous ...'

Extracts from my brief notes reflect the tension of the time, as well as our attempts to keep up our morale:

> *Monday, 14 Oct.* – Demolition at Tower Bridge Rd. District fairly messed up by HEs and incendiaries. People are marvellous and in highest spirits and gave us tea. A very bad night raid. On top floor. No sleep.
>
> *Tuesday, 15 Oct.* – 11.30 a.m. While in Tower Bridge Rd. two bombs drop 1 mile away. Section 8 races to the rescue. 2 dead, 1 house and water main destroyed. 5 alerts during the day. – 7.30 p.m. company party. Impromptu debate. My subject: 'What is courage?' – 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. First mass night raid on London. Sleeping in dining hall.
>
> *Thursday, 17 Oct.* – Work as usual. 5 day alerts. Letter from home, informing me of destruction of house.
>
> *Friday, 25 Oct.* – Work as day before (at Southwark Park Rd, corner Linsey St.) 3 day alerts. 10.15 a.m. 6 bombs dropped in our immediate vicinity. Portner (a close friend, later killed in action in Normandy as a member of the Tank Regiment) says, 'Highly uncomfortable.' Raids continue from 9.45 a.m. until approx. 3.30 p.m.. Night raid proceeding.

Monday, 28 Oct. – 8-5 work near Blackheath. Only 2 alerts. Usual night raid proceeding. – Italy invades Greece. I hope we have learnt our lessons in Belgium and Holland.

Thursday, 31 Oct. – 1 day alert. – 8 p.m. Lecture evening. With 3 others, I tell my life story. Elected with Stern entertainment committee. – 7 p.m. Night raid starts. 9 p.m. all clear!

Monday, 4 Nov. – No day alerts. 8.15 p.m. Gramophone concert by Section 8: Beethoven Violin Concerto No.3. Great success. – Night raid.

Tuesday, 5 Nov. – 6 day alerts. 6.15 p.m. to 8.30 a.m. Longest night raid. – Day of American Presidential election.

Wednesday, 6 Nov. – 2 day alerts. – Roosevelt reelected. A major victory for us. – Night raid.

Friday, 8 Nov. – 3 day alerts. Night raid. 8.15 bomb dropped outside Suffolk Rd. school. Windows blown out; several light casualties.

Monday, 11 Nov. – 8-4.30 work at Briant St. – 5 day alerts. 10.30 a.m. 6 bombs drop nearby. 9 people reported killed. Night raid proceeding.

Friday, 15 Nov. – 2 day alerts. Night raid, terror raid on Coventry.

Tuesday, 19 Nov. – No day alert. 8-9 p.m. Gramophone swing concert by Hene. Night raid.

Sunday, 8 Dec. – Work at Monson Rd. Heaviest night raid so far. Hardly any sleep, but not nearly as terrified as on 14 Oct. Surprising what one gets used to.

Friday, 13 Dec. – Barlborough St. No day alert, short night alert. Offensive in Egypt against Italians from Lybia develops into great victory.

Thursday, 26 Dec. – New Cross Road pub. 28 dead. Awful.

Sunday, 29 Dec. – In Reading (during day). 6 p.m. Heaviest raid starts. Huge fires in City. HEs rock school. Light goes out. Now, at 9.50, it is quiet.

Saturday, 4 Jan. – St. Thomas St., opp. Guys' Hospital, London Bridge. Damage done during raid on 29th simply enormous, and due to fire. Wreckage still smouldering.

Saturday, 11 Jan. – Redlich killed in night raid.

Thursday, 16 Jan. – Night raid. 3 a.m. Incendiaries fell on and near school. Unpleasant.

Early each morning we set off to a new 'incident', armed with sledge hammers, crow bars and all manner of other housebreaking implements, to give what help we could to the rescue services in the grim task they had begun soon after the bombs had fallen, and to demolish what could not be salvaged. We quickly developed a considerable aptitude for knowing just where to push, in order to topple the rickety walls of the poorly-built terrace houses in exactly the direction in which we wanted them to fall.

The City's New Year Celebrations, 1940/41

During one of these attacks, as recorded in my diary for 17 October, my parents' small flat in North-West London was destroyed, just after they had found refuge from the mounting blitz in the hospitable home of Mr and Mrs Cusden, in Reading, Berkshire. She was a former Mayor of the city, where my brother and I subsequently spent several happy leaves. Whenever my off-duty time allowed I went to visit them and then timed my return journey in such a way, that I reported back at Silwood Street just before the air raid alarm sounded.

That is what happened on the evening of Sunday, 29 December 1940. Everything pointed to a 'normal' night. It soon became apparent, however, that this was anything but a normal raid, as the brief entry in my diary shows. There was little attempt at bombing the East End. Instead, the raiders flew on towards the City. From our vantage point we watched how high explosives and incendiaries were hurled into the historical square mile by formation after formation until, by midnight, the light of the fires was bright enough for us to be able to read a newspaper, some four miles away. This was the raid which destroyed much of what had survived the Great Fire of 1666, and in which St. Paul's Cathedral was saved by the devotion and skill of its fire watchers.

Much of our subsequent work now took place in the City of London. The fires had ignited fuel stocks, furs and many other goods stored in cellars and warehouses and continued to burn fiercely for many days after the fires at street level had been extinguished. The outside temperature had dropped below freezing point, and we witnessed the weird spectacle of clouds of acrid smoke issuing from empty window frames, while long icicles were suspended from the ruins.

Our time in London came to an end on 19 January 1941. We began a series of postings which took us to a wide variety of locations. I much enjoyed and welcomed this opportunity to explore the country with a thoroughness, and from a perspective, which would have been impossible for me in any other way. It gave me a welcome introduction to the variety and beauty of the land I was helping to defend. In particular, I valued the chance to meet a wide and representative cross section of people, and to admire the innate courtesy and open-mindedness which I tended to find.

The barriers come down

By the time we arrived at Dumfries, in the Lowlands of Scotland, in September 1941, a major change was about to happen to me. It had now occurred to someone at the War Office that the potential locked up behind spade and shovel in the Pioneer Corps could perhaps be put to better use on behalf of the war effort. An order was therefore circulated to all companies, instructing men with specialist qualifications or experience to provide details. In consequence, I was sent to undergo a trade test and was surprised to be passed as 'Draughtsman-Mechanical, Class 1' and, as one of the first Pioneers, to find myself transferred into a core unit of the British Army on 9 October 1941. In my case it was the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC); and when the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) was formed a year later, my entire unit was transferred to that Corps.

I was now posted to a succession of Command Workshops. In the summer of 1942 I found myself back in London, at the RAOC Workshops in Mill Hill and was surprised and gratified to find myself recommended for interview at a War Office Selection Board (WOSB) for appointment to a commission. While it slowly made its way through the War Office machinery, I meanwhile found myself transferred to the Command Workshops at Kentford, in Suffolk. The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) had now come into existence, and so my rank was converted from 'Private' to 'Craftsman'. My task, I discovered, was to help reorganise the Drawing Office. This evidently met with approval, because the Part I Orders of 6 March 1943 announced my promotion to 'Paid L/Cpl, Loc/Cpl'.

I was also charged with the additional task of running a class designed to improve the staff's mathematical skills. My lessons seemed to be popular: Part I Orders announced that a week later, on 15 March 1943,

the Mathematics Class would be divided into two parts: an advanced section meeting on three days a week, and an elementary one on two days. I not only enjoyed it, but also discovered for the first time that teaching a subject is the surest way of really beginning to master it.

My next posting was to the REME Command Workshops at High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, followed by my move to an anti-aircraft battery at Burnett, outside Keynsham, near Bristol. I found this part of the country particularly attractive. With a few friends from my unit I spent off-duty days exploring the attractive village and its neighbourhood. One afternoon we caught a bus to Bath, explored its classical, Georgian architecture, enjoyed a traditional English 5 o'clock tea in the Pump Room, admired the Roman pool and then spent the evening at a ballet performance in the Theatre Royal in Bristol.

These civilised intervals between busily servicing our anti-aircraft batteries were most rewarding; but at the same time I was getting increasingly dissatisfied with what seemed to me to be a passive contribution to the war effort. The news from Europe contained increasingly reliable indications of the existence of extermination camps, and the war had now reached a crucial stage. All around me vital events were taking shape. The Battle of Stalingrad had been the crucial turning point on the Eastern Front. Africa had been cleared of the Axis, and Italy was on the point of surrendering. A landing had been effected on the 'soft underbelly of Europe' on the Mediterranean coast of France and, most important of all, the long-awaited Second Front across the English Channel was now imminent.

The Army changes our label

At this point, a very minor, but for me important, indication of the planning for the long-expected Second Front was the issue of an Army Council Instruction (ACI 475 of 1943). It authorised non-British Army personnel, who faced the risk of capture by German forces when serving overseas, to change their names. After consulting our parents, Geoffrey and I agreed to avail ourselves of the Army Council's offer, and changed our name to Perry. In my case this was promulgated in the Part II Orders of the REME Command Workshops, High Wycombe, of 6 October 1943.

There was, however, no mention of the far more valuable and significant step of also changing our status by conferring the protection of British nationality on us. We were, of course, concerned at this omission, which later had a number of small but absurd consequences before it was finally rectified.

Meanwhile, the conduct and attitude of those with whom we served was at no time affected by the hesitation of those who determined our fate at the centre. We were treated as comrades-in-arms without hesitation or reservation; and our subsequent careers in the Army amply bore this out.

I was next posted to Scotch Corner, near Catterick. It was here, in January 1944, that the recommendation for a commission finally caught up with me. I was sent to one of the recently-introduced three-day War Office Selection Boards, held at the ancient castle at Winchester in Hampshire. This splendid building, now providing the setting for dealing with a current national emergency, seemed to continue the historic role which it had acquired when Winchester served as the home of England's capital in the 11th century.

Some twenty apprehensive candidates from many different arms of the service gathered here, to be subjected to as searching an examination of body and mind as had yet been devised by the Army. It is a system of selection which, in modified form, continues to be used by the Civil Service to this day. In our case, the historic setting helped to put the proceedings into their proper perspective.

Physical endurance tests and written papers on general knowledge and mathematical aptitude were intermingled with interviews with various specialists. We were divided into a number of sections and, having been allocated a place in the command hierarchy of our group, we were asked to deal with a variety of different situations.

On one occasion, we were taken on a brisk route march, which ended abruptly at a broad, water-filled ditch. Our temporary officer i/c had to devise and supervise a plan for effecting a crossing, using only tree trunks and such other bits and pieces of debris as were scattered about.

I was taken on an 'O' (Order) Group, briefed about an enemy position some distance away, told to work out a plan of attack and then instructed to return to the unit under my command and pass on my own, detailed orders.

One evening, assembled in the lounge after dinner, we were told to start a discussion on a subject of our own choice. At first there was a strained, embarrassed silence; but then we gradually forgot the inquisitorial presence of the conducting officers. We managed to have quite a lively debate on a subject I did not record, but no doubt both the quantity and quality of our individual contributions were carefully noted.

Next day, we were assembled in a study, seated around the officer-in-charge. 'Imagine,' he said, 'that your battalion is about to go into action, and you have to say a few words to your platoon. Perry?'

I swallowed hard and then allowed my imagination free rein for the next few minutes.

So the tests continued without a break. They concluded with an individual interview with the psychologist. Then came the final meeting with the Selection Board. I entered the room with a mixture of hope and apprehension. The chairman, looking impressive and formidable in his uniform with the red tabs of a field officer, told me to 'Stand at Ease'.

'You have done well, Perry', he said, 'but we do not think that your technical qualifications are sufficient for a commission in a technical arm. We are therefore going to recommend you for a commission in the infantry. Any comments?'

I did not have any; and so he wished me 'Good Luck', I saluted, did a smart 'About Turn' and walked out into a future which had taken an exciting and unexpected turn.

6

At the Home of the British Army

NOW BEGAN A PERIOD OF PHYSICAL and mental exertion, the like of which I had not experienced before. First came six weeks on a preparatory course at the 'Pre-OCTU' at Wrotham in Kent.

Its official purpose was to ensure that, before he began his proper course at the Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU), the candidate fully mastered the basic military skills of his new profession; and this included not only competence in the use of weapons, but also a high degree of physical fitness and a practical understanding of the meaning of discipline, as seen from the viewpoint of the recipient of orders.

Everything 'at the double'

In practice, it made some of the cadets wish that they had never been born. Every command had to be obeyed at the double. The only redeeming feature seemed to be that we were kept so busy that we had no time to bemoan our fate. In retrospect, I marvel at the detailed diary notes I managed to keep during most of my time at Wrotham, though towards the end of my stay they tended to fizzle out. At the end of this highly structured purgatory we hoped that, like a *Fata Morgana*, there beckoned the uncertain prospect of a more civilised life at the OCTU.
My diary entry for 27 February 1944 described life in the following terms:

> It has been a most hectic week, and so completely filled that I had no time to make regular entries. Certain things stand out: The continuous marching at top speed; doubling the mile to a barn for various demonstrations and exercises; the cold weather which made life rather a misery; ... the continuous changing from battle dress into denims or Field Service Marching Order or PT kit; the most enjoyable PT periods; my first acquaintance with the obstacle course, where self-confidence counts as much as physical prowess – and my very ungraceful landing in the icy waters of the ditch below the famous 'Swinging Tit'.
>
> This consists of a 10 ft. ditch filled with water. At one end there is a platform, and half-way across the ditch a rope is suspended from a structure. The victim stands on the platform, clenching the rope between nervous

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fingers. Eventually he jumps into the air, whizzes across the icy water towards the other end of the ditch and lets go – if the fingers follow the mind. Quite a number of chaps got their feet wet on their uncomfortable passage. But better was to come: Standing on the far side, the rope was allowed to swing across to us from the platform side, and we had to jump for it as the rope reached the nearest point to us.

That was the beginning of my downfall. I jumped at the right moment and caught hold of the rope alright, but my cold fingers, combined with the wet rope, made me slip. The next thing I felt was a terrific splash: I found myself lying in the ditch with pieces of broken ice floating past my head and heard bursts of hilarious laughter from both sides of the ditch. I hobbled off, dripping and half-laughing and half-crying, to get changed. I wasn't the only one to fall in. ...

On Thursday we went on the assault course. Contrary to my early fears and expectations I found it quite easy, though rather exhausting. But then, everything here is exhausting. ...

That brings me to the escarpment – the nightmare of Wrotham. A steep slope, approx. 300 yds. long, which has probably seen many more slipping, panting, struggling, cursing, sweating cadets than any other spot in Wrotham. Difficult to negotiate in dry weather, it is almost impossible in wet condition.

There was no end to the misery. On 14 March, for instance, my entry reads as follows:

A very strenuous day. Two periods on the assault course in the morning. ... This time a small concentration of choking gas was let loose on us, and grenades went off all over the place. We were thoroughly 'shagged' at the end and coughed violently. Several chaps were sick. Yet we had to double back to coy. lines. In the afternoon we doubled down the escarpment for approx. 2 m and practised battle drill tactically. ... Very tiring.

Another typical exercise took place on 21 March 1944. I noted:

Did the dreaded 'Brigadiers' Scheme' ... We marched to mortar range, opened fire on targets, made right-flanking move under cover of a smoke screen, doubled about 200 yds., made bayonet charge and ran up the Pilgrim's Way, where we consolidated and then doubled up the escarpment, made another bayonet charge while firing from the hip, and again consolidated.

... we were all thoroughly exhausted but soon recovered again.

A few days later we spent a very disagreeable, but as it turned out, most essential time being introduced to German mines. What I then saw,

and later consolidated by practice, both at Wrotham and at OCTU, may well have saved my life in the *Reichswald* a few months later. On 24 March my diary notes:

> Film show on German mines in the morning. They are beastly in their devilish ingenuity, and I hope I shall never come across them.
>
> We then packed our kits in readiness for the night scheme. At 14.00 hrs we marched off in parties of 5 to a given map reference, where we met a sgt., who gave us a new reference. This time we mistook our bearings and finished up, not at meeting point no. 2, but in the final bivouac area. ... Any hopes of being allowed to stay and call it a day were soon dashed when we found ourselves plodding across fields on our way to a neighbouring spur, where we found pt. no. 2 and found our third map reference waiting for us. ... we eventually reached the bivouac area ...
>
> I soon crept into my blankets and quietly shivered for a time which seemed like eternity. I was awakened from my semi-slumber by an air raid warning in the distance. A few minutes later the guns opened up, and wave after wave of Nazis swept over directly above us. The barrage was terrific. ... What worried me were the whistling pieces of shell shrapnel which fell in showers every time the guns in our district opened up.

The exercises were now becoming increasingly realistic. On 28 March we did the 'Quarry Scheme'.

> We ... climbed down a steep, winding staircase into the quarry. A weird-looking place, about 100 ft. below the level of the surrounding ground, and pitted with bomb craters. We started off by being shown what the Hawkins grenade mine can do. We then threw 36 and 69 grenades.
>
> Then started the scheme proper. We raced through the dusty quarry under intense LMG fire and amid amatol explosions, fired at various targets, charged some dummies, took cover, crawled, and generally practised field craft and weapon training under the most realistic conditions yet. ... We then force-marched back to camp.

> *30 March 1944.* Night scheme: Clearing mine field. I hope I shall never have to do the real thing. We were fired on by LMG tracers while we were digging. I was left-hand man, and the fire was uncomfortably close. I found a mine, but in lifting it out I released a firing mechanism at the bottom and exploded a charge of amatol 15 ft. away. It shook me, and quite an avalanche of earth and stones rained down on me.

And then, quite suddenly, the Wrotham experience was over. On 1 April 1944, at 10.00 hrs., we paraded for the last time and, with many a sigh of relief, dispersed to our various OCTUs.

The Royal Military College OCTU, Aldershot

For me, as an infantry cadet, it was the OCTU at the Royal Military College, Aldershot. This enormous aggregation of barracks, parade grounds, workshops and special purpose buildings, known as the Home of the British Army, combined the patina of centuries of tradition with evidence of the skills and tools of 20th century warfare.

The OCTU constituted one small part of this complex, of which it was an integral part. Ours was its 161st course. Our barracks were reasonably comfortable when compared with the Spartan facilities at Wrotham, and our hopes of treatment 'more becoming (future) officers and gentlemen' were at least partly fulfilled: we were now addressed as 'Sir' by the Warrant Officers and NCOs. Our officers were experienced veterans, the WOs and NCOs came from the pick of the Guards Regiments.

My fellow cadets represented an interesting cross section. Most of them came from various British infantry regiments or corps, but a substantial number were battle-hardened Australians and New Zealanders, who had distinguished themselves in action in Africa or Italy. Among the 'Kiwis' there were numerous Maoris – a pleasant, easy-going crowd who also had a reputation as fearless fighters on the battlefield.

What changed as compared with Wrotham was not the amount, but the form of pressure to which we were subjected. We were now expected to apply our total abilities of brain as well as brawn to whatever subject we were taught, in the certain knowledge that correct application was a matter of life and death not only for ourselves, but also for those under our command, and that time was desperately short.

A mountain of a man

The pressure on us was steadily maintained by the WOs and NCOs under the ever-watchful eye of the appropriately named Warrant Officer (Class One) Britain, a giant of a man, almost as broad as he was tall, and the Army's most senior Warrant Officer. Even the officers treated him with a degree of deference. All the WOs and NCOs commanded respect in their immaculate Guards turnout, whether drilling us on the parade ground, with their wooden pacing sticks firmly clamped under their left arm, expertly assembling a Bren gun during a demonstration lesson or putting us through gas drill; but WO Britain outshone them all. He was a master at investing the word 'Sir', when addressed to a cadet, with a subtle derision. It was experienced by those – and they were virtually all,

except perhaps some of the much-decorated 'Aussies' and 'Kiwis' – who were inspected by him during morning parade. Towering four-square above you and looking down at you as if from a great height, he might ask solicitously: 'Am I hurting you, *Sir?*' In response to the expected 'No', he would thunder: 'Well, I should be! I am standing on your hair! Get it cut!!' I fell victim to his eagle eye on one occasion, when he espied my belt fitted upside down, and sent me straight to the guard room at the double, on a charge of being improperly dressed.

It was a bit of a charade, and we knew it; but we also knew that it was part of a deadly earnest process of preparation, in which unhesitating and correct split-second reaction was vital.

In this way the weeks passed in feverish learning activity, which included the whole gamut of an infantry officer's repertory. In the process, I also acquired a range of useful management skills, like logically analysing a problem and framing the solution in a manner capable of efficient execution. The mnemonics, *11 Mai*, have served me well over the years. They stand for *Information* (outlining the problem), *Intention* (defining the object), *Method* (describing the solution), *Administration* (listing the staff, tools and equipment needed) and *Intercommunication* (how to stay in touch).

The course also comprised a modest social element, which took the form of a weekly dinner in our Mess, with us wearing our best battle dress, and attended by the commanding officer and his staff in their mess kit, with silver candelabras glistening on the tables and the regimental band in attendance. On entering the Mess, we were invariably greeted by the playing of 'Lilli Burlero', for whose attractive melody I developed a special liking, and which henceforth came to represent for me the pleasant side of military training. In this way, the signature tune of the BBC World Service continues to remind me of my life at OCTU half a century ago.

Rolling down Snowdon

We were now approaching the end of our stay at Aldershot. What remained was a climax in the form of a one-week battle course in the depths of Wales, whose fearful reputation had been passed down to us by previous generations of OCTU graduates.

We found ourselves in a lush, green and unspoiled countryside, where clear brooks cascaded down the wooded hills and the picture was one of utter peace. Betts-Y-Coed was our destination – a small, pretty village near Snowdon, the Principality's highest mountain; and in this idyllic setting we began to rehearse the lessons we had learned.

The aim was to make our exercises as realistic as possible. This was achieved with the use of live ammunition, fired by our instructors at our immediate vicinity – we hoped, with unerring accuracy. Seeing tracer bullets passing directly over your head or along your flanks and hearing the whine of mortar shells and the crump of their explosions at close range seemed more instructive and memorable than any amount of lecturing.

One of our exercises included an attack on a position on Mount Snowdon. I was acting as Bren carrier when I slipped on the wet grass, and began to roll down the mountain with the heavy machine gun in my arms. Somehow I managed to stop my descent, but found that I had injured my right ankle. A fracture would have meant an inevitable RTU (Returned To Unit). As it turned out, I had only suffered a sprain which healed after a few days, and so my life was able to proceed on its expected course; but this event, like so many others, made me once again reflect on the wholly unpredictable nature of our lives, which depend for their entire future direction on the outcome of seemingly trivial occurrences.

The event which galvanised the entire world, and which was of special significance for us in our role as immediate reinforcements, was D-Day, 6 June. We had nearly finished our training and were within days of being commissioned. We therefore followed the news with even more detailed interest than most.

I had an additional personal concern: Geoffrey had been commissioned several months before me, and was among the first troops to land in Normandy. I therefore eagerly looked forward to hearing from him. His news arrived in the form of a letter to the effect that he was well, enclosed in a small package which contained some of my favourite Camembert cheese. It had been in transit for several days in hot June sunshine, and its contents can only be described as 'ripe' – in fact, it was almost alive.

I was vividly reminded of the character in Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat,* who enters an overcrowded compartment in a train with a similar consignment of cheese, and gradually finds himself in sole occupancy, with new passengers recoiling in horror at each station as they rush into his compartment. I suffered a similar fate in my Mess, as I prepared to eat my Camembert.

An 'Extraordinary Commission' is gazetted

The passing-out parade on 24 August 1944 was a memorable event; but in my wildest dreams it would never have occurred to me that my 'King's

Commission' would turn out to be truly extraordinary. Within a year it would launch me into an active and responsible role in administering Germany's capital city, the place of my birth.

In front of a large crowd of relatives and friends the entire OCTU was assembled. I was proud to have my parents among the spectators, and was only sorry not to have my brother there as well.

I recorded the scene in the following words, which reflected the youthful exuberance and undimmed optimism I felt:

> It was one of those occasions which will remain in my mind all my life, because it was filled with a sense of achievement and satisfaction, of dedication to a new, great and worth-while task and an uncertain future in an uncertain theatre of war.
>
> I shall never forget that feeling of suppressed excitement and exultation as B Company went on parade for the last time, immaculate in their newly-pressed battle dresses, spotlessly white cap bands and shoulder flashes, rifle slings and gaiters blancoed to perfection, boots without a speck of dust. I shall never forget the envious glances from the junior companies, the feeling that this parade was our show, that after six months of the hardest, toughest military training in the world this was the end of one chapter of my life and the beginning of a new one.
>
> I remember my feeling of regret that after this parade 7 Platoon of B Company would cease to exist and that we should all be split up among our regiments and battalions all over the world. The Kiwis would return to Italy, the Canucks to their army and the rest of us would soon be in France, Belgium, Italy, Burma. Some of us would die, some would be injured. The lucky remainder would return and get away with the experience.
>
> Then, as we marched onto the square with the perfect drill which was the envy and admiration of the junior companies, and which was also the result of countless drill parades, gallons of sweat and strained vocal chords, as we halted with crashing precision, flanked by the junior companies and faced the fateful steps and the crowd of spectators, I saw my parents.
>
> The parade went without a hitch – the Royal Military College had no cause to be ashamed of its latest graduates. The general's inspection passed, then the march-past, General Franklyn's address – rather boring and partly inaudible – the adjutant on his horse retiring the parade, the 'About-Turn', the 15 paces in review order, the general salute, A, C and D Companies forming the open square, and then the 'Present Arms' in our honour, followed by 'B Company – Inwards Turn!' and the ceremonial slow march across the square and up the steps to the strains of 'Old Lang Syne'.
>
> Then the rush to the stores to hand in the rifles; then to the billets, the feverish changing into officers' uniform for the first time, the birth of a hundred new Second Lieutenants in their regimental uniforms, the hurried

farewells and the dash with my parents to the station to catch the train to Torquay.

We travelled in glorious weather along the scenic coastal route of the 'English Riviera' to the Osborne Hotel where its owner, Col Partridge, a friend of the family, had invited us to spend my commissioning leave. Situated on a palm-studded escarpment overlooking Meadfoot Beach, it provided an unforgettable setting for a few days' rest and introspection.

7

Return to Europe

NEWLY COMMISSIONED INFANTRY OFFICERS were encouraged to join Regiments with which they had some territorial connection. I opted for The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), because it had a traditional link with London's Jewish community, and because London had become my permanent home.

The Royal Fusiliers

Before being posted for service overseas, officers were required to undergo a further period of some six months' acclimatisation training. I joined the 12th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers at Brentwood in Essex, followed by attachment to the 2/4 Bn, The Essex Regiment in Southwold, in deepest Norfolk. It was a fishing village which time forgot, and far from the nearest railway station at Halesowen. My movement order instructed me to complete my journey from there by taxi – and, in the interest of good order and military discipline, to present a receipt to the Orderly Room on arrival at my destination.

Southwold had a few fine Georgian buildings, which gave parts of it an air of faded attraction. Its broken pier seemed to point an accusing finger at a permanently turbulent North Sea. It was set in a beautiful, wild landscape which formed a natural reserve for wild birds and provided a lonely back cloth for our war games.

Soon it was time for yet one more course, this time at the Divisional Battle School at Norwich, and confined to officers about to be sent overseas. It included the latest information from the European theatre of operations, and special attention was paid to the clearing of minefields. This was generally regarded as one of the most unpopular subjects; but just because of this dislike I was later to feel all the more grateful for the skills I then acquired.

On my return to Southwold, training proceeded along lines with which I was by now well familiar. The only difference – and it made *all* the difference! – was that I now had a 'pip' on my shoulder, was genuinely in command of my own platoon and had to set an example. This was not

always easy. Our standard route march, for instance, covered an average of 30 miles per day in full field equipment, with weapons and ammunition. We followed a standard pattern of marching for 50 minutes, followed by ten minutes' rest, for hour after hour, with the exception of one hour breaks for meals. In between, we had a number of exercises.

The new officer was the subject of constant and highly critical appraisal, not only by his superiors, but also by his NCOs and men. It was here that I began to appreciate the value of an experienced platoon sergeant as a link, mediator and advisor. I also found through personal experience what I had known but not fully appreciated before: that the officer was not the all-powerful, privileged superior who features in the minds of frustrated privates, but is beset by his own range of problems and responsibilities, which increase with his seniority. On the other hand, there was the inestimable advantage of being treated as a thinking and reasoning individual within the large and often unwieldy machinery of the Army.

As our training period was approaching its end, we followed the progress of the Allied armies in Western Europe and tried to guess where and when it would be our turn to make our contribution on the ground. Before it came to that, however, we became witnesses to yet another example of German ingenuity: the long-promised V1 began to appear over southern England. On the Norfolk coast we were strategically placed to witness these attacks, as the missiles approached our coast with a raucous, rattling noise like a badly-tuned motor bike, leaving a trail of exhaust smoke during the day, and a fiery tail at night.

It took our defences a little while before they had devised a workable form of defence. Anti-aircraft fire did not seem to be particularly effective, but fighters succeeded in shooting many of the flying bombs into the sea, and even managed to perfect a technique whereby a skilful pilot would fly alongside a V1 and, with one of his wings, give it a nudge to upset its balance and cause it to crash harmlessly. Nevertheless, those that got through managed to cause much indiscriminate death, injury and damage.

A Continent too far

Apart from serving as a training unit for newly-commissioned officers, the 2/4 Bn of the Essex Regiment also provided a pool of reinforcements and replacements for units fighting in all parts of the world. Every day, therefore, posting instructions appeared on the official Notice Board. It became my unexpected and highly emotive introduction to Army administration.

Returning from a training exercise on 15 November 1944, I found to my astonishment that my name was included among a list of officers who had volunteered for service in the Far East.

I recalled having seen a request for volunteers a few days earlier, but had naturally ignored it. In accordance with the rules, I therefore wrote a formal Memorandum to the Adjutant on 16 November. This protest was couched in words of formal politeness, but coupled with determination – and a good deal of trepidation. I concluded:

> 7. In view of the principles involved, I regard this matter with great personal concern.
>
> 8. I shall be glad if you will ensure that my name is removed from the list of volunteers.

The Adjutant was unmoved. He claimed that the original request had asked officers *not* wishing to be posted to the Far East to notify their Commanding Officers to that effect, and that I had not done so. The posting instructions had already been drafted.

I had taken the precaution of obtaining a copy of that Notice and produced it. As I had pointed out, it contained a request for opting *in*, rather than for opting *out* of the Far Eastern posting; but I was outgunned in this unequal engagement.

I realised that I was facing one of the most crucial decisions of my life. If I did nothing, I would be on my way to India within days. The only alternative open to me was to protest at the way in which I had been manipulated into a false position against my will.

Fortunately, King's Regulations, which governed military discipline, offered a remedy: as an officer I could apply for an interview with the Military Secretary at the War Office, to present my complaint in person. It was a daring thing to do, especially for a brand-new officer; but I decided that I had to do it. I therefore wrote an appropriate letter to the Adjutant, applying for such an interview. I tried to justify the boldness of my request by quoting paragraph 534 of King's Regulations, with which all cadets had been acquainted at OCTU.

In his reply – using the customary abbreviation of our rank – he informed me:

> Your attention is drawn to A.C.I. (Army Council Instruction) 1535 of 1943, para 4, which is repeated below for easy reference:-
>
> '(4) Except in case of great urgency, interviews will not be granted unless

a written application for an appointment has been made and approved beforehand. In every case, the application for an interview must embody the points which the offr wishes to raise.'

I answered the next day, in the following terms:

1. In reply to your note dated 22 Nov 44 with reference to my application for an interview with the Assistant Military Secretary, under K.R. (King's Regulations) 1940, para 534, and A.C.I. 1535 of 1943, I have the honour to state the following reasons for desiring the interview:

2. I was selected for a commission largely on account of my perfect command of the German language, and my knowledge of Continental affairs.

3. This was made clear to me at WOSB, OCTU, and at 47 Div Battle School, where I was recommended for employment as an Intelligence Officer.

4. There is, however, a great likelihood of my being posted to the Far Eastern Theatre, as the Commanding Officer told me that vacancies for all theatres were filled from this unit in rotation and that he could not, therefore, assure my posting to any particular theatre.

5. I am quite certain that I can render infinitely greater service to the country in the NW European theatre, where I know the language, the country, and have a personal score to settle with the Nazis.

6. This is a matter affecting my service in the most profound manner, and I therefore believe that it merits the attention of the Military Secretary.

The Adjutant's reply reached me on the very next day. It said:

1. Ref. your application for interview with the Military Secretary.

2. It has been decided that when you become available for posting, you will be sent to 21 Army Group.

3. I think this will obviate your seeing the Military Secretary.

By way of putting his own records straight, he concluded,

4. In view of Bn order No. 246/44, para 9, the procedure in (2) is quite in order.

My relief was enormous; and my respect for the British system of military justice increased greatly as a result of this episode. I wondered how I would have fared under similar conditions in almost any other Army.

Birthday in Belgium

On 3 January 1945, my 25th birthday, I disembarked from a troopship at Ostend, to join the British Second Army almost ten years after my escape from Nazi Germany.

Not in my wildest dreams would it have occurred to me that on my return to the Continent I would wear the uniform of a British infantry lieutenant. I also found it hard to realise that, of my ten years in England, I had already spent half my time in uniform; and that soon the length of my Army service would exceed the duration of my civilian life in the country of my adoption.

While I was on my way to join a Reinforcement Holding Unit in the ancient city of Louvain, a major offensive launched by the German Army out of the snowy depths of the Ardennes forests caught the Allied troops largely by surprise. It was a final, massive attempt to delay the coming defeat. Led by English-speaking troops in American uniforms, the Germans tried to thrust towards the port of Antwerp in an effort to stall the invasion, and so to delay the invasion of Germany itself. It was accompanied by air raids on the harbour and diversionary attacks on the larger liberated towns, including Brussels itself.

A new, fearful German weapon now made its appearance. It was the much-vaunted *Vergeltungswaffe V2* – the Revenge Weapon, Mark 2. This rocket could be neither accurately aimed, nor could it be intercepted as it descended at ultrasonic speed from a height of some 150 km. It caused considerable damage in Antwerp and other Belgian cities, as well as in Southern England – especially London and the embarkation ports on the South coast feeding the invasion. The V2 was able to continue its assault on these bases during a crucial time. Soon after the start of the Second Front, the British Second Army – which I had now joined – failed to capture the crucial bridge at Arnhem. This delayed the capture of the V2 launching sites in the Northern Netherlands which kept London and south-east England within the missiles's range.

One of the first devastations caused by the V2 occurred in London's Hampstead on 17 March 1945. My parents' experience was typical. Up to that time the Borough had suffered relatively little war damage. Now,

without any prior warning, debris was flying into the sky and, to the accompaniment of a deafening explosion, a great cloud of dust rose above the point of impact. Dead and injured littered the scene.

My father, incapacitated by heart disease, saw the column of dust from our flat in near-by Goldhurst Terrace, while my mother was queuing for his special rations in Hampstead's Finchley Road. She had had a narrow escape and was badly shaken by the horror. When she returned home after the usual delays, she found my father in a state of near-collapse. The fear of never seeing his wife again had reduced him to tears.

The only permanent defence against this fearsome weapon was to overrun the launching sites and to demolish its underground factories. The Allied troops finally captured the launching sites on 27 March and entered the extensive 'Dora' tunnels, hewn deeply into bomb-proof mountain sides by slave labour. Not many of them were found to be alive at that time. The skeletal corpses which littered the entire area deeply shocked the troops.

These events accompanied my arrival on the Continent. Everyone was looking at everybody else with suspicion during the Ardennes offensive. The direction of the attackers' thrust was not clear at first. Our commanders therefore ensured that we were able to go into action at a moment's notice. The failure of the Germans to capture the encircled American garrison of Bastogne a few days after my arrival in Louvain looked like the end of the German offensive as a whole. Operations soon continued in accordance with Allied plans, instead of being dictated by German designs.

My brother was now stationed in Brussels and so, while waiting for an onward posting, I obtained a short leave to visit him. I caught one of the inter-city trams which had just been restored and travelled, on rails laid parallel to the road, along the dead-straight tree-lined avenues inspired by Napoleon's military engineers. Brussels was still caught in the euphoria with which it had received the liberating troops. The British Brigade of Guards had celebrated its entry by covering the chubby nakedness of the little statue of *Mannequin Piss* with a resplendent, tailor-made regimental dress uniform, suitably adjusted to enable the new recruit to continue his historic function of replenishing his fountain. The city provided a wonderful backdrop to our first meeting since the Second Front.

Having now completed my six months' probationary service as Second Lieutenant, I was promoted to Full Lieutenant.

The Crossing of the Rhine

My unit was part of the Second British Army, which punched its way rapidly through Belgium into Holland and then paused on reaching the Rhine, while it gathered its forces for the crossing. We were dug in on the German-Dutch frontier, on the edge of the *Reichswald,* one of the State-maintained German forests. In peace time it served as a home for a multitude of wild animals, a place of recreation, a cleanser of polluted air and a replenishable source of wood. When we arrived, it had been transformed into a minefield, crisscrossed by slit trenches.

We were located near the small towns of Goch and Cleve, both of which had become victims of fierce fighting. I wondered what had happened to such historic mementos as remained of the unfortunate Anne of Cleve, the fourth wife of Henry VIII, but I never managed to find out. At that time I had other urgent calls on my time. One of them was to help clear the mine fields, and I was thankful for the unpleasant hours I had been made to spend at OCTU and the battle school at Norwich. The *Tellerminen*, large anti-tank mines, were not too much of a problem if one approached them with due respect and was not in too much of a hurry; but the smaller and much more sensitive anti-personnel mines, which were often linked to the anti-tank mines, frequently held nasty surprises. The whole operation was too much of a game of cold-blooded Russian roulette for my liking. When it went wrong – as it invariably did from time to time – the consequences were ghastly; but we had been well trained, and my team seemed to be more fortunate than some neighbouring units. These were nerve-racking days, during which I gave myself the solemn promise that, if I survived, I would regard the rest of my life as a heaven-sent bonus. I was most fortunate, and such equanimity as I now possess is the result of this vow.

By this time, most of the German Army had been thrown back across the Rhine and was now entrenched beyond the eastern shore. Its empty slit trenches on our side contained masses of equipment and gave out a pungent scent when wet or damp. It was apparently caused by the synthetic material of which German uniforms were made.

The Allied build-up which we now witnessed, and of which we were an integral part, was overwhelming. It continued for days on end, and the Germans vainly tried to disrupt it with their artillery and their few remaining aircraft. Just south of my unit's position the only foothold still in German hands on the west bank was a bridgehead which was rapidly being demolished by the Canadian and American troops facing them; and

further down the river, the Americans even managed to capture the railway bridge at Remagen intact and were able to throw the first Allied troops across the Rhine at that point. I still have a copy of a news-sheet distributed to the troops, informing us of the latest position.

Eventually, everything was ready for the major assault. The guns were in position; the mountains of shells had been assembled; the collapsible boats for the initial crossing were parked at their assembly points; the steel girders for the Bailey bridges, which the Royal Engineers were going to throw across the river after the initial assault, were stacked ready for use; the air forces were poised to assist with split-second attacks; and the troops who were going to carry out the whole, meticulously-timed operation were in their start positions. It was one thing to contemplate such an operation in a TEWT (Tactical Exercise Without Troops) on a course; it was quite another to see it unfold in all its baffling perplexity and unpredictability under battle conditions in real life.

The preparatory, ear-splitting barrage, when it finally came, seemed to go on for ever. It was an awesome example of destructive power, and I tried to put myself into the position of those at the receiving end. I felt sorry for them, despite the fact that they had been meting out untold suffering to innocent multitudes for years. It seemed impossible for anyone to survive such an assault; and the scene of utter devastation which awaited us on our arrival on the east bank seemed to bear this out.

The prisoners we now had to interview represented a strange mixture. It included captives from the Baltic, the Balkans and other countries subjugated by the Germans, who had been conscripted into what had become a Nazi Foreign Legion. Many of them could not even speak German. There were Fascists of various nationalities who had volunteered for service in special SS-Units. Others turned out to be little more than shell-shocked, bewildered and terrified schoolboys who found it hard to believe that for them the war was over, and delighted to gain the security of a prisoner of war camp. Mixed up with them were members of the regular German forces whose attitude ranged from relief to sullen resentment.

A house fit for a General

Dealing with them was not to be one of my tasks. In April, I was appointed second-in-command, under a South African captain, of a detachment which was specially formed to take over a large estate in rural Westphalia and prepare it as headquarters for the general commanding the Second British Army. We were provided with motor transport and duly set off

into what had in peacetime been a most attractive countryside, pinpointing our destination by means of its map reference.

The roads were lined with the debris of war and crowded with refugees. Most of them were heading west: the ragged French, Dutch, Belgian forced labourers and former prisoners of war in the direction of home, their long-suffering Soviet counterparts roaming in any direction which appeared to offer food and shelter. Looking equally pitiful were the German refugees from the eastern provinces, who were escaping from the Russian armies flooding across Western Poland into Posen, Silesia and East Prussia.

Our function had suddenly assumed the role of policeman. The newly-freed prisoners of war and foreign slave labourers looked to us as liberators, while many Germans appealed to us for protection from those now seeking restitution and revenge. I spoke to many of them and had the distinct impression that those Germans begging most vociferously for our help against their former slaves were those who had previously been most active in asserting their status as members of the 'master race'. There were others, however, who were beginning to concede that the *Machtergreifung* – the seizure of power by the Nazis – on 30 January 1933, which laid the foundation for the annexation of Austria, the rape of Czecho-Slovakia, the attack on Poland, the conquest of Denmark and the invasion of Russia had been the true causes for the hostile armies sweeping across Germany from East and West; and that without these unprovoked German attacks no one would have dreamed of crossing any German border.

The newly-appointed Military Government had a full-time job on their hands. I did not know that I would be joining their ranks before long.

On our way we passed an abandoned train consisting of tank wagons filled with a petrol-substitute derived from coal, which smelled to high heaven. The *Wehrmacht* had used it extensively in the latter stages of the war, when their supplies of natural oil had dried up. We decided to fill up our vehicles and jerry cans. Our engines protested by knocking loudly, but were nevertheless coaxed into continued function with a little persuasion and some adjustment to the ignition; and so we reached our destination.

The farm turned out to be a prosperous-looking, undamaged stately home in its own extensive grounds. Its generous allocation of the usual slave labour force of mixed nationality ensured its German occupants of the comforts to which they considered themselves entitled.

My brief diary notes recorded a sad state of affairs:

> Contacted the woman in charge. She complained of Russians (prisoner of war slave labourers) taking food! Had manager in, ordered him to assemble freed labourers, and then German personnel.
>
> Toured estate. German evacuees living in greatest comfort. But found disgraceful conditions among prisoners. Baby of slave labourer dead, family of 4 in damp room, no food. Severe charges made by slave labourers of brutality. Arrested manager ... Spoke to freed prisoners in foyer. New dining hall will be provided for them, waited on by German staff ... Spoke to ... (woman in charge) again. Hypocrite. ... Called us 'deliverers'!

Our orders were obeyed with alacrity in the knowledge that we represented the assurance of law and order at a time when the Germans were right to expect a violent reaction from their former victims and had apparently already had a slight foretaste prior to our arrival. In any case, the locals had clearly expected the occupying army to proceed with a great deal more ruthlessness of the type which was typical of Nazi behaviour in enemy territory. Our concern for the welfare of the local population was shown by the instructions we had been given not to use any local supplies of food, but to rely entirely on Army rations. Food, in fact, did not seem to represent a problem on this largely self-supporting estate.

Facing the horrible truth

Already in January the Soviet Army had liberated what was left of Auschwitz, and more camps were overrun in the succeeding weeks and months. The full horror of what was discovered there did not seem to penetrate to the West until, on 15 April 1945, the concentration camp at near-by Bergen-Belsen was liberated by the British Army and our newspapers published the first appalling pictures of scenes which, despite everything we knew of Nazi bestiality and all the rumours about the existence of extermination camps, none of us had believed to be possible.

My commanding officer agreed with me that the local population should be forced to face the facts. We therefore arranged a display of the photographs in the farm buildings, mounted an armed guard next to the exhibits and ordered the local population to file past slowly and deliberately.

As the crowd emerged at the far end, I asked them what they thought about the pictures. Some were speechless and in tears; some disclaimed any knowledge of the existence of these camps, or what had been done

in them; yet others murmured something about such things happening in war; but none doubted the veracity of the photographs or of the scenes they depicted, or tried to belittle the unspeakable truth. That was left to a later generation of apologists and quasi-historians.

A message from the Senior Chaplain

A few days later, all Jewish soldiers received a message from the Rev Isaac (Harry) Levy, the British Army's Senior Jewish Chaplain. It was addressed 'To all ranks of the Jewish faith'. We already knew of the appalling discoveries the Allied Armies had made in the concentration camps and were deeply grateful for his contribution to rescuing the surviving Jewish victims. I was able to renew my friendship with him a few months later, when I attended his service celebrating the Jewish New Year in September. Meanwhile his message brought us up to date with the following words:

> No doubt a large number of you have been asking the old question, 'What has happened to the Jewish chaplains and why have we not seen them for so many weeks?' Several complaints have actually reached me that the chaplains have not 'been doing their stuff' lately.
>
> The purpose of this circular therefore is to clear the air and to bring to your notice a number of points which I know will be of interest.
>
> The name of Belsen Concentration Camp has been on everyone's lips since it was liberated some six weeks ago. It is the largest camp in Germany from the view point of its Jewish inmates. When the chaplains arrived there shortly after it was liberated we found some 20,000 Jews there. The last relics of European Jewry. Their condition was too appalling to bear description. Need I therefore assure you that they have claimed pride of place in our affection and attention? As you know there were only two Jewish chaplains in 2nd Army and one serving with the British increment of the Canadian Army. To whom were we to devote our attention – to the soldiers who, thank God, were healthy or to these poor unfortunates for whom we brought the first Jewish greeting they had heard in years? You know the answer.
>
> But with the elimination of that Hell camp we are still faced with the problem of serving those who have survived. Throughout the British Zone of occupation we have found groups and camps containing Jewish victims. All of them require our aid and spiritual attention. I am sure that we are voicing your sentiments in this direction too. You would not want us to do anything else, I am certain. We came to Europe to liberate the oppressed and we have found our long lost brethren.
>
> The time has come when you can help us too. You may find groups of

Jews in areas in which you are serving. Contact them in our name and give them comfort. Collect their names and first names, the date of their birth and place of origin and send me the information. This is invaluable in that thereby we may help to trace their families. Would you like to make some material contribution too? We want to give them comforts which will help them to maintain their morale during the period of waiting for repatriation. The men need just those things which you would need in the army. Cigarettes, sweets, chocolates, tooth brushes and tooth paste etc., etc. You can participate in this work by sending any contribution you care to make to me and I shall be happy to deliver it to the people who need it so much. By this gesture you can feel that you too are helping to alleviate their suffering. I shall not thank you for it since I know you will not ask for gratitude. The knowledge that one helps is its own reward.

May the day of complete liberation soon come and with it the end of their long and bitter suffering.

8

Life at 21 Army Group

I DO NOT THINK THAT THE GENERAL commanding the Second Army ever moved into the splendid headquarters which we had prepared for him in Westphalia. The war in Europe reached its climax with such speed that Hitler had committed suicide in his Chancellery on 30 April and the German forces had signed an instrument of surrender in Field Marshal Montgomery's tent on the Lüneburger Heide on 4 May. The Army had to find new outlets for our talents.

On 20 May, I was posted to the Information Section of the Military Government Staff at Second Army, and three weeks later to Main Headquarters, 21 Army Group at Bad Oeynhausen. This attractive spa, set in unspoilt countryside, was the centre of operations of what now became the British Zone of Occupied Germany. For the next three months I enjoyed a varied life dealing with a multitude of economic intelligence enquiries as my main duty, while at the same time being given an extraordinary variety of regimental assignments – from being Defending Officer to a soldier accused of desertion, President of a Court of Inquiry, Fire Officer at Main HQ, British Army of the Rhine and official interpreter at high-level official proceedings. I even found time to go to numerous concerts at the local *Kurtheater* and to make the most of the fine weather in a large and luxurious swimming pool belonging to Army Group headquarters.

An interview with the Assistant Military Secretary, to which I was summoned on 9 July, tended to complete this unreal impression of post-war bliss. My diary records:

> He filled in a form ... recommending me for appointment to SO III (Staff Captain). ... Since the recommendation was backed by Maj.-Gen. Templer and I had been labelled as 'indispensable' he thought the odds were in my favour.

They were. My promotion was confirmed a few days later. It seemed to me that I had been pleasantly and effectively cocooned from the misery of the big world outside. I therefore took an early opportunity to seek

out the latest information about the situation of the refugees in general, and the Jewish survivors of the newly-liberated Concentration Camps in particular. I noted in my diary:

> At 15.00 hrs. went to Herford ... to see the Senior Jewish Chaplain – the Rev. I. Levy – and fortunately found him in. His three years in the Middle East have not changed him at all. He was full of beans, and obviously very pleased to see me. He told me of the desperate urgency of catering for the physical and mental needs – and in increasing measure the latter – of the 100,000 Jewish DPs who cannot be repatriated, and whose future is dark indeed. He told me his whole time was now taken up trying to look after these people, scattered in many camps all over the British Zone.

Scenes from a Home Leave

My third 'pip' opened up new and challenging vistas of military, economic and even political issues. It also enabled me to observe critical developments during an unexpected duty visit to England. I found myself posted to the Military Government Information Section, which was faced with urgent post-war questions. It needed people able to process a great variety of German data – from geography to industrial organisation. It also required access to the latest data processing techniques in order to carry out these tasks.

The first need of my new unit, I was told, was access to information data equipment. I was asked to attend a meeting at the War Office in London on 20 July 1945. My task, according to my written instructions, was to see representatives at the War Office *'re* allocation of office machinery for the Information Section.'

This equipment turned out to be a revolutionary innovation called 'Hollerith'. It represented the height of technological ingenuity. The large, solid machine promised to supply us with information sorted at unprecedented speed. I was charged with the task of arranging the delivery of these remarkable punched card-operated forerunners of modern computer installations. They were demonstrated to me, and I was fascinated by the way in which the piles of punched cards flashed through the machines, and by the small, rectangular holes which caused the cards to drop into their predetermined slots with bewildering speed.

It never occurred to us that this technological marvel would, in a relatively short time, become a massive and totally obsolete piece of equipment. In the meantime, the brief experience I then gained was to stand me in good stead.

My new Commanding Officer had granted me an extra few days' leave, following my discussions at the War Office. The reunion with my parents was therefore an unexpected mixture of joy and thankfulness for our merciful survival amidst the carnage through which we had passed. Geoffrey and I had always harboured the youthful illusion that disasters only happen to other people. It was not very clever, but on the other hand it had enabled us to face the various dangers which we had encountered with a degree of equanimity. Our parents, after experiencing two world wars and the ultimate obscenity of Nazi persecution with the disadvantage of hindsight, could not share their sons' optimism. For them the relief was a blessing beyond measure.

My parents insisted that I should spend a week enjoying myself on my own, and so I went off to my favourite resort.

> *21 Jul 45:* I am lying in bed at the Osborne Hotel, Torquay, and consider myself most fortunate to have got a room. I left Paddington on the 09.30 this morning, having been shepherded round enormous queues by MPs (Military Police) ... On arrival at T. saw Col. Partridge, who immediately put a room at my disposal.

Soldiers on home leave were given a few clothing coupons. After years in uniform this was a useful prerequisite for a civilian existence, even if only of a week's duration; but my quest was doomed to failure:

> *23 Jul 45:* During the morning I went into Torquay to collect the 20 clothing coupons for which I had an authority from 21 A.G. First of all I went to the Post Office, where I was told to go to the Town Hall. I was wearing my grey flannels and sports shirt at the time. At the Town Hall I went to the Enquiry Office and said: 'I've come to collect 20 clothing coupons. Where can I collect them?' The porter looked me up and down with an expression which clearly said: 'The man's mad!' and curtly informed me that there was no such thing as walking into the Town Hall and asking for clothing coupons. So I calmly produced my authority, which had the desired effect. The old boy became most helpful, explained that he had no coupons, but would I be good enough to go to the Food Office 'just around the corner'? They dealt with such queries.
>
> At the Food Office, after a similar softening-up process, I was told that *they* had no coupons for me. But there was the Army Recruiting Office just across the road; they might be able to help. The Recruiting Sgt. probably thought he had a new customer when I called in. But I soon disillusioned him. He was very anxious to be of assistance, and gave me the address of the local SSAFA (Soldiers', Sailors' & Airmen's Families' Association) in Market St. I went there, but they had no idea, of course. So I gave it up as a bad job.

Election surprise

On 26 July, the result of the General Election was announced. A Labour majority of 160 seats was the astounding verdict. The conservative people of Torquay were seriously shaken. I, too, shared some of their misgivings. To change horses in mid-stream, while the heads of government were engaged in crucial negotiations at the Potsdam Conference, seemed a highly risky undertaking; but at any rate, the country's change of power took place with the usual decorous courtesy.

I was much impressed by the way Winston Churchill acknowledged the invaluable tradition of peaceful change when he addressed the Commons in his new, unaccustomed and to him obviously distasteful role as Leader of His Majesty's Opposition on 16 August 1945. He contrasted our method of political change with continuing political intolerance and violence overseas: 'A friend of mine ... was in Zagreb, when the results of the late General Election came in. An old lady said to him, "Poor Mr Churchill. I suppose now he will be shot." '

The result of the election did not entirely take me by surprise. As a regimental officer in Germany I had taken a particular interest in running the weekly sessions under the auspices of ABCA, the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, aided by their excellent little booklets on matters of current concern. It was always a matter of regret to me that participation was on the low side, although I infinitely preferred this to presence enforced by political commissars and their fascist equivalents. I had, however, had my hand sufficiently on the political pulse of ordinary soldiers – both as an 'other rank' and as an officer – to realise that there was a strong undercurrent in favour of change.

It had been my duty to ensure that all my soldiers were duly entered in the electoral roll for their postal vote. I am sure they would have had a good laugh if they had realised that their platoon commander was the only one amongst them who was still denied a vote.

As I was queuing for my train at Torquay Station to return to London, I recorded the following topical postscript in my diary:

> The platform was crowded, and when the train drew in there was considerable, and occasionally rather forceful, competition to get into the carriages. I managed to find a 1st class compartment, the door of which was blocked by an enormous ticket collector who examined all tickets before letting passengers get in. Topical remark made by a man next to me after an unsuccessful attempt to get a first-class seat with a third-class ticket: 'Thank God Labour's in!'

Shortly after my return from leave I witnessed the beginning of the nuclear age:

> *6 Aug 45.* I am sitting in my room. It is 23.30 hrs, and I am trying to sort out in my mind the salient features of this day. The last few hours seem to overshadow the rest. On the news at 23.00 hrs the first use of the Atom Bomb on a Japanese target was announced. I have forgotten the figures given of its destructive powers. They do not matter. The mind stands still and refuses to picture the consequences and implications of this latest achievement of human endeavour. But for the grace of God this weapon might have been in German hands.

Information galore

On my return to Bad Oeynhausen, I soon discovered the need for the modern information processing equipment which I had helped to obtain. I joined a team analysing German industrial organisation. Teutonic thoroughness in the compilation and preservation of records proved of great help in this, as in other information-gathering tasks. The industrial index used in Albert Speer's slave labour ministry proved most useful to us. I became Number 2 to the Major responsible for this task. We got thoroughly involved in it, as my diary shows: 'Still working on the Speer index. It will keep us busy for months to come. Millner and I worked on till 23.00 hrs. We must be nuts or something.'

At any rate, we were dedicated to the task of providing the essential basic data required by Government for deciding what, and how much, of Germany's industrial plant should be restored, and how much should be allocated as reparations to Germany's victims.

These decisions were, of course, far beyond our scope, but we keenly followed the political debate which accompanied our efforts during that time. Our thoughts could not help but return to the image of terrorised slave labourers, some of whose survivors we had managed to save – but it was equally clear that the victors now had to think about the structure and inter-dependence of our collective future existence. The prospect of world peace was obviously linked inseparably with our leaders' decisions.

The Potsdam Agreement had just been signed. Millner and I realised that some of its terms were highly relevant to the work we were doing, and so we studied them with great interest. I continued to concern myself with them in Berlin, where its practical implications became increasingly apparent to me.

On the subject of restitution it had been agreed in Potsdam that

'payment of reparations should leave enough resources to enable the German people to subsist without external assistance.'

That seemed reasonable; but the Agreement went on to introduce a concession to the Russians. They were entitled not only to unlimited reparations from their Eastern zone, but also to 25 per cent of industrial equipment from the Western zone; and this claim was to take precedence over the needs of German livelihood. This, we felt, would lead to economic collapse and political chaos, which would rapidly spread from Germany to the rest of Europe. We therefore studied Parliamentary Reports with much interest.

Another task I was given by 21 Army Group was the preparation of a gazetteer of the British Zone. It greatly improved my knowledge of German geography and kept a small group of typists busy in my department. When the list was finally completed it filled a little booklet whose title page bore my signature and was tastefully decorated with the crossed sword emblem of 21 Army Group.

But my life at 21 Army Group was far from being all work. I had many enjoyable social encounters with my fellow-officers and colleagues at Bad Oeynhausen. We often sat up until late at night, talking about our experiences:

> ... had haversack rations plus coffee and wine in my room, and Jack (Hayes) amazed and delighted us by telling us of his adventures in France and Spain, when he was parachuted into France in 1941 to organise the Resistance. We talked – or rather listened – till 02.00 hrs.

Speaking for the Defence

I was reminded of a serious aftermath of the war when 21 Army Group Court Martial Centre appointed me Defending Officer to a soldier accused of desertion. The Charge Sheet said it all:

> When on Active Service Deserting His Majesty's Service, in that he, in the field having been warned as one of a draft proceeding for service in the forward area, and with intent to avoid so proceeding absented himself from ... until apprehended by the Military Police at Brussels on ...

Attached to the charge sheet were the minutes of the evidence submitted by the prosecution.

I knew that, in theory, this was a capital offence. I also knew that, in practice, this sentence had not been passed in this war; but I nevertheless

felt the greatest misgivings about the awesome responsibility which had been thrust upon my shoulders. There was nothing I could do about it, and so I visited the offender in gaol. He was a pathetic heap of misery, who merely confirmed everything alleged against him.

To my great relief I was advised that the accused was nevertheless not allowed to plead guilty, and so this is what I told him to do when he was brought before the sombre surroundings of the Court Martial.

The only chance I could see of upsetting the prosecution's case was to discover a flaw in their evidence. I found it in the written statement submitted by the accused's sergeant. Added as an obvious postscript it said that he was producing the draft warning order. I could not find it among my papers; and in response to my questions the sergeant admitted that he had failed to bring this document to court.

It was good enough for the moment. The case was adjourned; and by the time it came before the court again I had been posted to Berlin.

Why had a junior officer without any legal qualification been appointed to defend a soldier accused of just about the most serious offence in the book? The answer seemed to be the prosecution's foregone decision not to find the accused guilty.

A Court of Inquiry

My next excursion into the field of judicial activity arrived a little later with Camp Routine Orders issued by HQ British Army of the Rhine. It appointed me President of a Court of Inquiry to investigate a soldier's illegal absence – no doubt as a prelude to the proceedings for desertion in which I had just taken part.

The Orders included precise instructions to the effect that 'A copy of "Notes for the Guidance of Presidents at a Court of Inquiry" will be collected from the Camp Commandant's Office and returned after use', and 'The Court will record an opinion.' An SQMS (Quartermaster) completed the composition of the Court.

This, to my relief, lacked the high drama of a Court Martial. What I had not bargained for was the result. As I reported in my diary:

> President of a Court of Inquiry this morning to investigate illegal absence of a man. Proved his absence alright but found that his 1157 was not signed. Man responsible: The Member of the Court, the SQMS (Quartermaster)! So I adjourned the Court, pending the appointment of a new member.

In case of fire ...

On 22 August, Pat Carney, the Camp Commandant, told me after lunch, quite by the way, that I had been appointed Fire Officer for Main HQ, BAOR, and that I was going to have a sergeant to help me. I knew there was no point in telling him that my knowledge of fire fighting was somewhat elementary, and that I therefore felt particularly flattered to be entrusted with so valuable a piece of Army property as the Headquarters of the British Army of the Rhine. I did not know how far his sense of humour would stretch. In any case, OCTU had drilled an awareness of an officer's almost infinite adaptability into me, and here I was being given a further opportunity to prove my mettle.

Some of my brother-officers might have given way to the temptation of treating this job as yet another purely formal assignment, and to have relied on the hope that nothing untoward would happen. I did not think it wise to trust to luck. Fires do break out occasionally, and I preferred to attend Courts of Inquiry as President rather than as the subject of investigation. I therefore asked to see the Camp Fire Orders and, going round the camp with my sergeant, compared theoretical requirements with practical implementation.

The gap between the two was as wide as I had expected. I therefore sat down and, in my latest capacity as Mil Gov Fire Officer, wrote a memorandum on the subject of 'Fire Prevention', addressed to 'All Branches, Mil Gov, Main HQ, BAOR.' I covered every precaution I could think of – from the maintenance of fire points and the display of fire instructions to ordering the regular inspection of all premises by the duty NCOs after dark. I also discovered that the fire fighting equipment available did not comply with the specified quantities and asked for the missing implements to be urgently requisitioned. I was applying an important lesson which the Army had taught me: any future accident would be an infringement of reasonable and properly promulgated orders, and not due to any failure on the part of the Fire Officer.

Luckily, my theory was not put to the test during the remainder of my stay at Main HQ.

Making sense

In addition to my ordinary work, all these different assignments provided a constant source of stimulating variety. I never knew, from one day to the next, what further tasks were going to come my way. I was therefore not surprised to find that my linguistic qualifications would be utilised in yet another way. This was one example:

At 10.30 I was rung up and asked to report to Brig. Cowley's office at 11.30 hrs for interpreter duties. That was rather unusual, but I did not mind. These high-level conversations are always of considerable interest, and my rank ensures that I am not used for mere routine duties.

Two Germans were waiting outside the Brigadier's office when I arrived – one an enormous, bulky figure with bulldog eyes and fat, hanging cheeks ..., the other a slim, middle-aged man, immaculately dressed in a grey, double-breasted suit. ... I did not like his eyes. ... The fat man was head of *Wirtschaftsgruppe Kleidung und Wolle,* the other man probably his secretary.

Brig. Cowley, in the presence of a colonel, a lt.-col., several majors and a Control Commission officer told them that they would have to produce a specified number of articles of clothing by a certain date, so that the remainder of the *Wehrmacht* could be adequately clothed during the winter.

Musical interludes

The *Kurtheater* at Bad Oeynhausen provided an attractive and acoustically excellent cultural centre at which I enjoyed many concerts and plays. Being at that time the most important British centre in Germany, many artistes of international renown came to perform. Three of them impressed me particularly: the famous pianists Pouishnoff and Solomon, and the Taylor String Quartet.

... went straight on to the *Kurtheater* for a concert by Pouishnoff. ... The theatre is a most pleasant, intimate place with a fine stage which imparts a feeling of pleasant anticipation. ... Part II was entirely devoted to Chopin. Some preludes and waltzes and then an overpowering and breath-taking rendering of the Polonaise. ...The applause was terrific.

... Solomon gave a recital at the *Kurtheater* tonight. It was scheduled to start at 20.30 hrs, and so I went there shortly before 20.00 hrs with 3 other chaps from the Mess. There was not a single seat left. Eventually I climbed into the orchestra pit, where I sat on the floor during the whole performance.

... The Taylor String Quartet at the *Kurtheater* turned out to be a very pleasant surprise. All four members are other ranks, and excellent musicians. ... I was rather amused by the boots and gaiters in which they appeared on the stage. (The officer who required these artistes to wear heavy army boots – and gaiters to boot! – while performing chamber music must have had a strange sense of what creates the right kind of artistic atmosphere in a concert hall!).

'The World's Birthday'

I often had a sense of guilt at the way I was savouring the fruits of victory while all about me there was hunger and despair. This feeling was brought home to me most poignantly on the occasion of Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year.

7 Sep 45. Millner gave me permission to attend the service at Hanover, and so I found myself in charge of a party of 30-odd 'bods'. ... At 33 RHU (Reinforcement Holding Unit) I was surprised and delighted to see Levy (Dr. Isaac (Harry) Levy, OBE, Senior Jewish Chaplain to the British Forces) and his colleague (the Rev Leslie Hardman).

The evening service ... was attended by the amazing number of 500. It was a fine service.

8 Sep 45. The morning service was taken by Harry Levy's colleague (Leslie Hardman). ... After lunch a crowd of us got into Levy's jeep and 15 cwt and set off into Hanover in search of Jewish patients in German hospitals. We eventually found six women and one man at the Krankenhaus Ricklingen. Their misery and misfortune is so great, it is so evident, so overpowering, that I feel I cannot face them. There is so little I can say, I am so conscious of the lack of real, essential help. I know that all my words of hope and encouragement cannot really be supported by facts. But for God's infinite mercy, I myself would be a corpse among many, or at least I should be one of those wretched, hopeless skeletons in a German hospital bed without hope of recovery, without status, and yet struggling to keep alive with a hope that defies all reason.

I sat on their beds, my heart in my mouth, feeling that I wanted to cry, but wishing them a Happy New Year, giving them cigarettes and sweets and I felt a wave of gratitude and new courage sweep through those dismal, smelly rooms – the gratitude of being remembered by someone, of being given a token of a better life – a cigarette and a bar of chocolate.

I spoke to a little girl, who looked about 12 years of age. She bared her right arm, a pitiful, skin-covered bone, and showed me the number, indelibly engraved in her skin at the Concentration Camp. She showed it to me merely as a matter of interest; there was no effort to create sympathy, no begging for anything, no emotion of any kind. It was just a relic of a terrible time, and that was all. It upset me, but the greatest shock came when I was told that she was 25 years old.

9 Sep 45. During the morning service Levy delivered a magnificent sermon. This, he said, was the world's birthday. It was up to us to see the pangs of birth which this war represented should not have been in vain. He spoke with sincerity, eloquence and feeling, and was obviously moved.

A week later I received some totally unexpected news:

15 Sep 45. Homfray rang me up in the course of the morning and asked me to come across to his office. As soon as I entered it I felt that he was ill at ease and considerably embarrassed.

'I am afraid I have bad news for you, Perry', he said without looking at me. 'You have been posted to Berlin as a Liaison Officer. I have just had a telephone call from Lübbecke to that effect. I have known about it for about four days, but we were trying to get it changed. There is nothing we can do about it; it is a War Office posting. ... I wish to assure you, Perry, that I have nothing whatever to do with your posting. We are badly understaffed as it is and simply cannot afford to lose officers – particularly one like you, who has been in this from the start. Your work here has been entirely satisfactory in every way, and I am very sorry to lose you.'

9

Back to Berlin

THE WAY MY SUPERIORS AND FRIENDS at 21 Army Group tried to reverse my War Office posting to Berlin filled me with much gratitude. We were a good and harmonious team doing an important job, and the four months I had spent at Bad Oeynhausen had not only been pleasant and stimulating, but had also provided me with a range of challenging and unusual tasks.

For some time, however, my feeling of unease, bordering on a sense of guilt, had grown in the face of the appalling news about the concentration camp survivors, and my inability to provide any help to them. My work, while stimulating and congenial, had been concerned with paper rather than people. The job in Berlin – whatever it turned out to be – promised to bring me closer to the real world; but, above all, as I confided to my diary:

> I cannot say that I am in the least sorry about this development. This war for me started in Berlin, and I could not wish for anything better than to finish it there. I felt quite elated at the prospect of a Berlin posting.

On 17 September 1945 I left Bad Oeynhausen with mixed feelings of exhilaration, regrets and a good deal of apprehension at what I would find in my former home city. I wondered how I would react emotionally to what was bound to be a nostalgic and bitter experience.

'To Berlin and the Far East'

My diary records my first day:

> I was fortunate to have a Humber 4x4 all to myself for the trip to Berlin. We left Bad Oeynhausen at 09.15 hrs and went via Minden, Nienburg and Hanover, where we got onto the Autobahn. From here onwards the territory was new to me. ... We just carried on at a steady 50 mph, refuelled at Helmstedt and reached the Anglo-Russian Zone frontier at about 14.30 hrs. So this, I thought, is where East now meets West. For the first time I would be in a position to see for myself. I got out of the car while the driver reported to the British control, and looked across to the Russian

post, gaily decorated with red flags and pictures of Stalin and Russian generals. A few minutes later we continued on our way, crossed the Elbe at Magdeburg and sped on towards Berlin.

I noticed a certain amount of Russian horse-drawn traffic, with officers sprawling all over the back together with their men. A striking contrast were the Russian traffic policemen and women standing smartly and rigidly at all Autobahn junctions, red and yellow flags in their hands. As soon as our car came into view, they would start waving their yellow flag about. The driver, thinking it was a signal to stop, slowed down to walking pace when we got to the first post. But the Russian merely put his yellow flag into his left hand and gave us a very smart salute. Now we knew, and just sped along, with odd Russian policemen waving their yellow flags and then jumping to attention as we flashed past. To this minute I am mystified as to the reason for the presence of these traffic policemen. The construction of the *Autobahn* eliminates side road interference with the traffic flow on the main road.

Yet at one point where a policeman was really essential there was none. It was a demolition, only partly removed, and since it was below the level of the road it was practically invisible until we were almost on top of it. Only violent braking saved us from a severe jolting which, at 50 mph, might have thrown us right off the road. A Russian officer with a few men was standing by the road, watching the proceedings with considerable interest. I suppose they laid odds on how the various vehicles would get across the obstacle.

The Russians have removed all German signposts (near Berlin) and substituted Russian ones instead. As a result, I could not read the names of places as we went past them until English signposts began to appear. 'Potsdam' they said, 'Berliner Ring', 'British HQ Berlin', and then I suddenly realised that we were travelling on the *Avus* (a racetrack on the outskirts of the city). Next, the Funkturm (radio transmission tower) appeared in front, a huge Union Jack waving from its top. As we left the *Avus,* a scene of terrible destruction unfolded itself in front of our eyes. The great exhibition halls are in ruins.

I could not recognise the Reichskanzlerplatz at all. After some enquiries I found my way to 'C' Mess and was given a large, sparsely furnished room on the fourth floor of a block of flats in the Reichsstr. But to my amazement I found not only two batmen waiting to unpack my kit, but also discovered that my small flat contained a lovely little bathroom, tiled and with constant running hot and cold water. That was too good to miss. While the batmen were unpacking my kit I dived into a luxuriously hot bath, followed by a complete change of clothing. I felt like a new-born babe. ...

It was beginning to get dark by the time I had finished my dinner, but an irresistible urge made me go for a walk. I had no conscious destination, but I now know that deep down I had decided to go to the Mommsenstraße. I

walked down the Reichsstraße, across the Reichskanzlerplatz and down the Bismarckstraße. I could not definitely identify a single feature of this desert of broken brick and aimless humanity. Presently the only source of light were the rays of the moon, glitteringly reflected by splinters of glass which filled the cracks between the pavement stones. Eventually I came to a broad cross road, the name of which I deciphered with much difficulty as Wilmersdorferstr. I walked down it: the same, uncanny, hollow skeletons of walls, gaping holes, heaps of debris and rubble, and silent, slow shadows apathetically moving about amid this chaos. I recognised nothing until I came across a road junction which looked very familiar. It was the Mommsenstraße.

Mommsenstraße 40

I can still see myself standing, as if spell-bound, in front of the fine residential building which had somehow escaped virtually undamaged. Suddenly I was transported back to my early childhood. Behind me were the ruins of my father's barber shop, and next to it the bakery which had supplied our fresh, crisp breakfast rolls. For a while I gazed up to our old flat on the second floor. Suddenly I became aware that the present occupants had appeared on the balcony and were looking down with some alarm at the uncertain outline of a soldier contemplating their residence in the moonlight. I should have gone in, introduced myself and used the opportunity once again to see the place where I was born and spent a happy childhood. Unfortunately, I missed that chance. It was much too late, and at that hour I could not expect them to let me in.

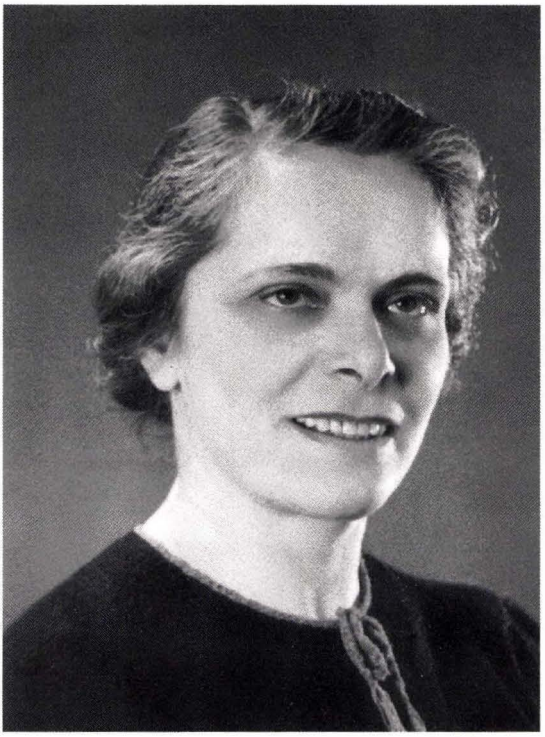
It was very late by the time I got back to my Mess that night.

Next morning I reported to Military Government Headquarters. It was some time before they discovered my official existence, but when they did I was informed that I had been appointed Food and Transport Officer of Charlottenburg. I wondered whether this particular posting was due to accident or design. Whatever the cause, I was well satisfied with the decision.

I was told to report to my new unit next day. Meanwhile I had another day to explore my surroundings. I wandered vaguely through a ghost city which seemed familiar and yet was dreadfully strange and disfigured. Its ruins differed from those of English cities in that here I was surrounded by the additional evidence of street fighting in the form of burnt-out tanks and blown-up artillery pieces which still littered the city's streets four months after the end of hostilities – the result of a senseless and wasteful last-minute resistance to the Russian assault. The area of devastation therefore seemed to stretch as far as the eye could reach.

The centres of most of the main roads had been cleared, but the





Our parents Leo and Herta Pinschewer in 1946 and at the time of their wedding in 1914







Our paternal grandparents, Joseph and Bertha Pinschewer





and our maternal grandparents, Carl and Emma Krall

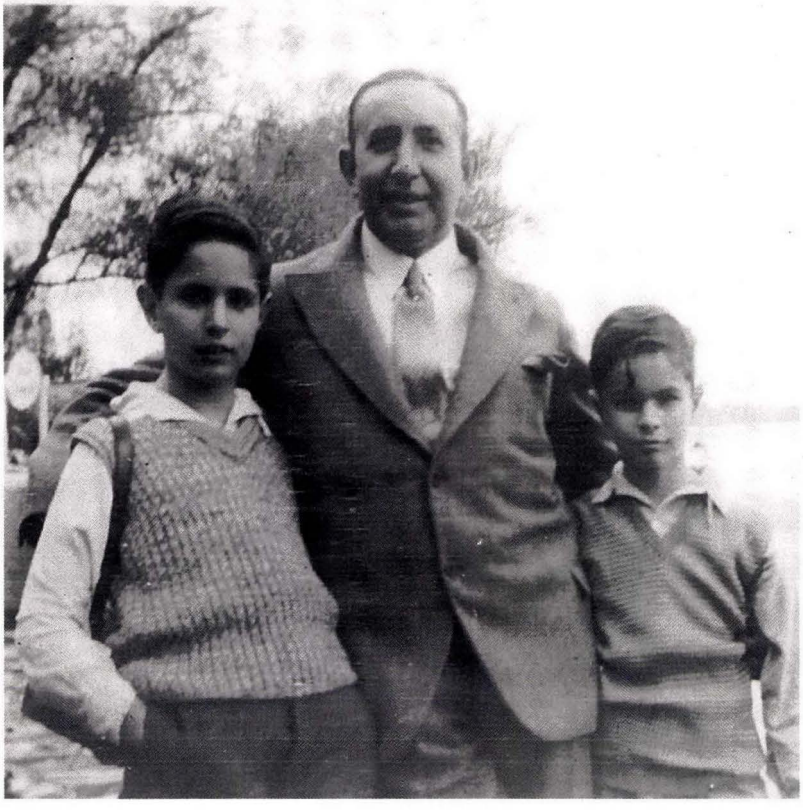


Aunt Rosie Wassermann and her daughter, Anne Epstein

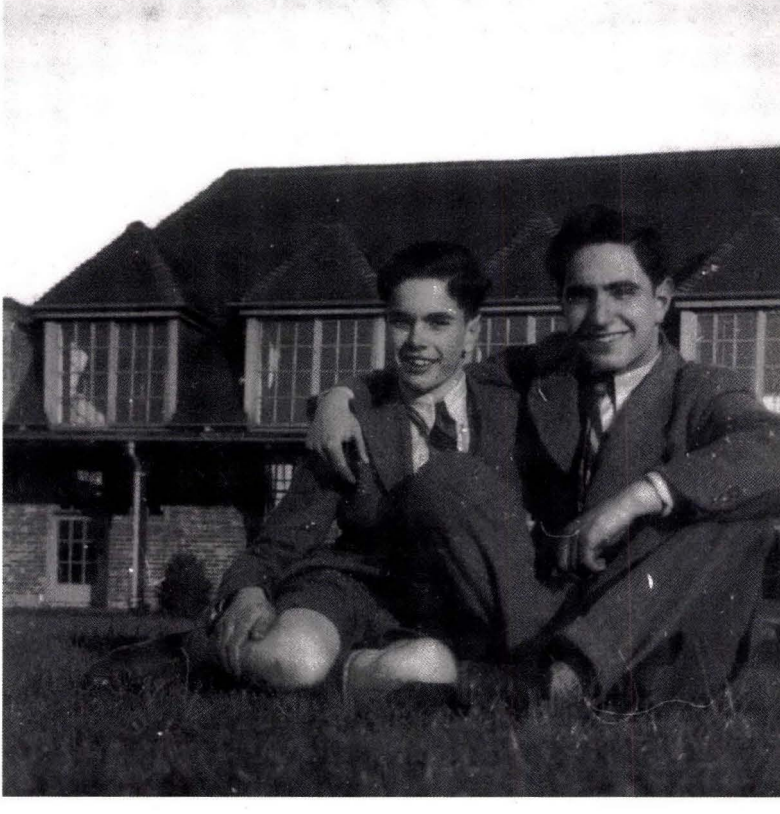


Uncle Julius Pinschewer, Aunt Lotte and Cousins Henriette and Michael during our meeting in Berne in 1946





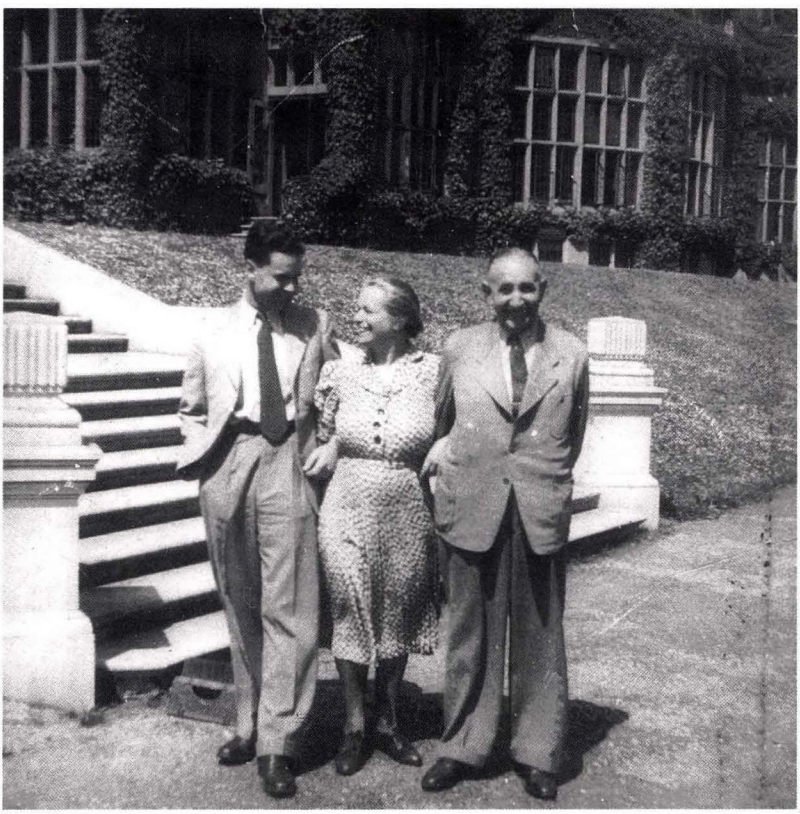
On holiday in May 1931.....



.....in the quadrangle at Buxton College in 1936.....



.....on leave in Denmark in 1946.....



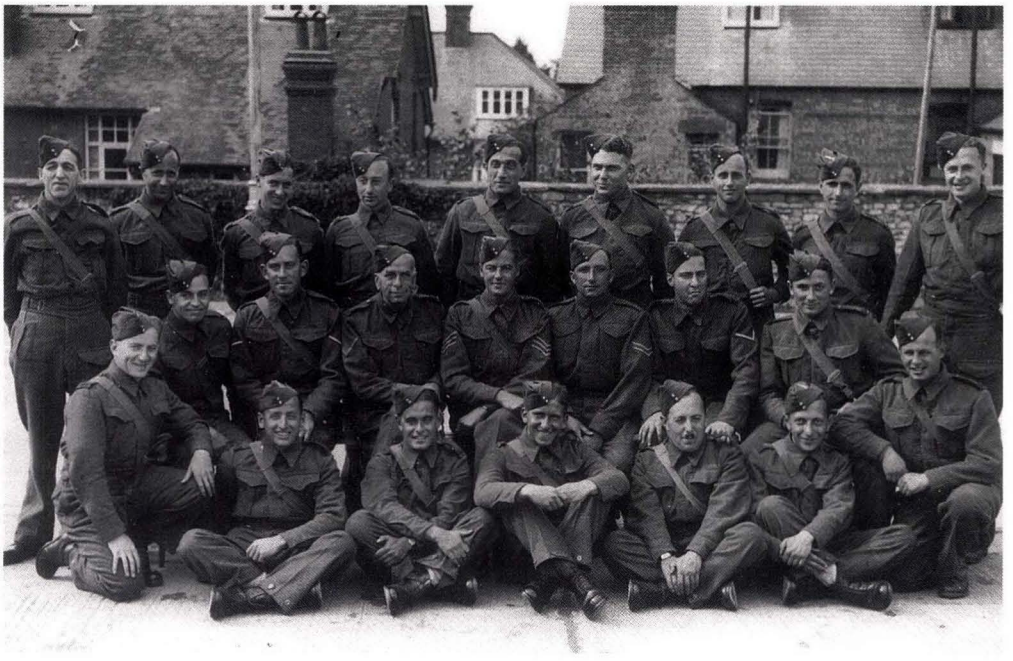
.....and celebrating our mother's birthday at Selsdon Park in 1947



'Herr Fricke was a giant man and a strict disciplinarian.' I am standing on his right in the courtyard of the Elementary School, Sybelstraße, 1926.

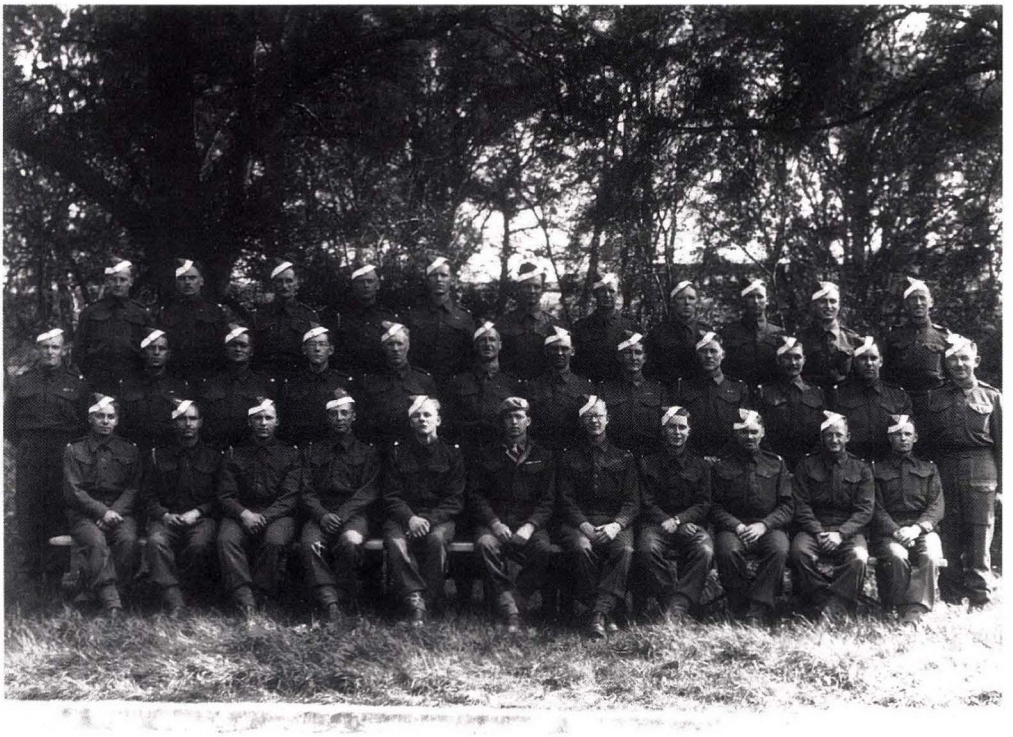
'Our Jewish scripture teacher, Mr Schwarz, was a kind, diffident man with a black, pointed beard. ...I would meet both these men again, among the ruins of Berlin.'

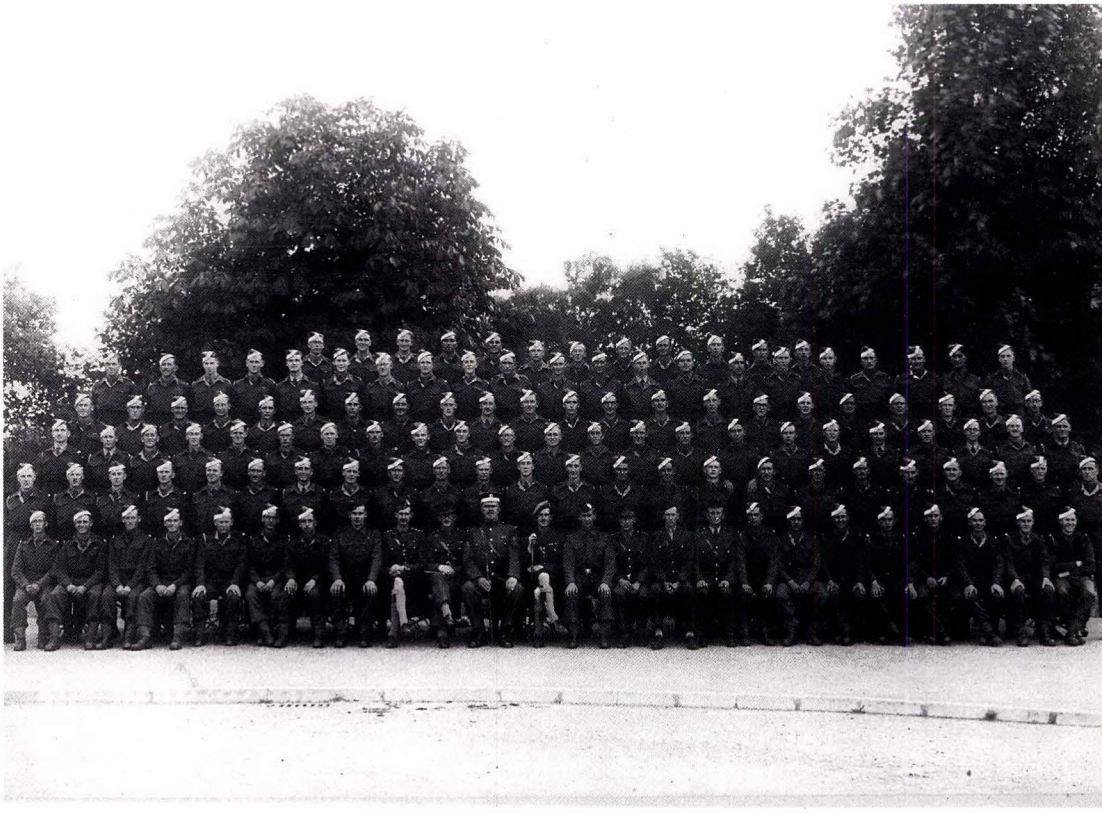




In Section 8 of 137 Coy, AMPC, in 1940. The names are listed in the 'Documents' section *(p.197)*

.....and second from the left, front row in No.7 Platoon of 'B' Coy, 161st (RMC) OCTU





"B" Coy., 161st (R.M.C.) O.C.T.U., Aldershot, August, 1944.

A picture taken shortly before our Passing–Out Parade on 24 August: 'It was a memorable event, but in my wildest dreams it would never have occurred to me that my King's Commission would turn out to be truly extraordinary. Within a year it would launch me into an active and responsible role in administering Germany's capital, the place of my birth.' *(p.56)*



The Anglo–Soviet frontier at Helmstedt, 1945: 'So this, I thought, is where East now meets West.'

.....and this is the sight which awaited me





1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. Lietzensee, our favourite playground in the 1920s, amidst the ruins in 1945

2. Alexanderplatz – the very spot described in 'Ellen's Chronology' under '3 February 1945'

3. Living conditions in Gesundbrunnen, July 1946

4. Fishing for supper

5. One of the many virtually indestructible 'Bunkers'





2.





4.

1. The Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtnis Kirche

2. Brandenburger Tor

3. Entrance to the Reichskanzlei

4. Soviet Mil. Gov. HQ at Pankow Town Hall

5. 'The Tiergarten was now a desert. The trees had been felled for firewood. The lake had turned into a muddy swamp.'



5.



A view of the Siegesallee from the Tiergarten. In the distance one can see the platform from which the Allied Commanders took the Victory Salute in September 1945 *(see p.127)*

All that remained of the fashionable Adlon Hotel, and below, general impressions of total destruction and back-breaking recovery





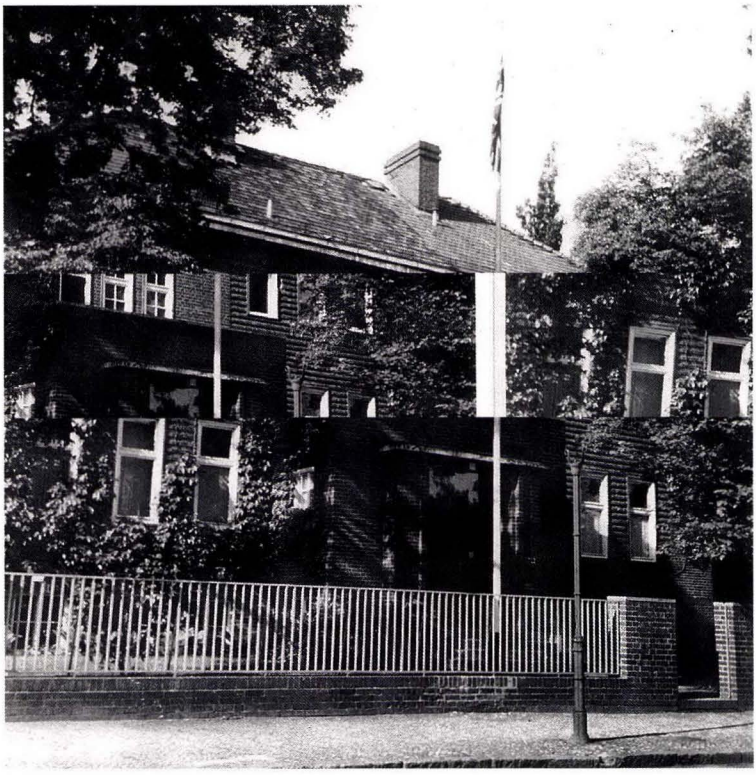




Mommsenstraße 40:
'Suddenly I was transported back to my early childhood.'

'Not far from my office the "Desert Rats" of Montgomery's 8th Army had erected a memento of the long trek ...'



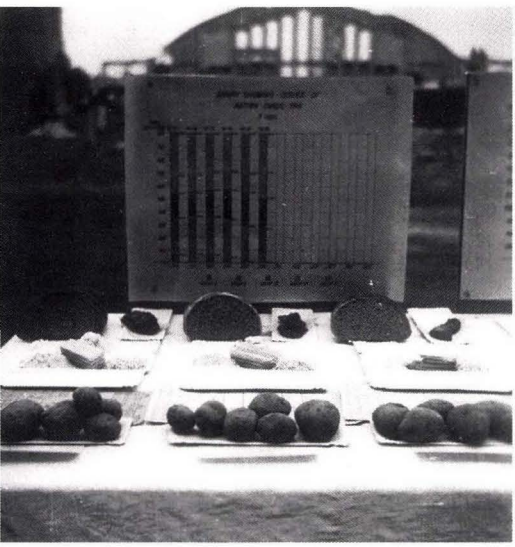


'We were billeted at No. 18 Ulmenallee. As if to remind mo of the difficult task ahead, I found, among the odds and ends left by the fugitive German occupier, a high-ranking Nazi party official's uniform hidden in my room.'

'Some of the administrative buildings belonging to the exhibition complex had survived. It was here, at Messedamm 8, that my offices were located ... at the foot of the Funkturm.'



he Charlottenburg Mil Gov. team in front of its offices at Ulmenallee. The C.O., Lt Col Parkin, is second from
e left in the front row, I am second from the right.





n June 1946, a British Parliamentary delegation visited Berlin on a fact-finding mission, and I was appointed con-
ucting officer dealing with the food situation. I decided to base my briefing on exhibits displayed on tresle tables,
nowing the actual weekly amounts of food distributed, against a background of cracked outer walls under an open
:y.



A meeting with the Rev Dr Issac (Harry) Levy, the Senior Jewish Chaplain in Hanover, 1945



A reception for the BACIE delegation at the British Embassy in Moscow, May 1963. (*l.to r.*) Dr James Welch, Dr (later Dame) Kathleen Ollerenshaw, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan (the British Ambassador), myself and Don Chappell

The official opening of BACIE's new Training Centre at 16 Park Crescent, London W1. l. to r.: Myself, Roy Hattersley, MP (Dept. of Employment), Lord Jackson of Burnley, FRS (the Association's President) and Jack Brosgall (Chairman of Council).



pavements were still largely impassable. Many side streets were still totally blocked by debris. Among the bare walls, *Trümmerfrauen* – teams of women conscripted by the Russian Army with the promise of special rations – had begun the herculean task of sorting bricks from the rubble, passing them from hand to hand down a long queue, hacking away the remaining traces of mortar, and then stacking them in preparation for reuse.

Tattered pieces of paper on notice boards fixed to the ruins appealed for news of missing relatives and friends, and some people had given vent to their anger and despair by painting angry slogans on the walls. One of them read: 'The dead who lie buried here thank their *Führer.*'

'No. 7 VBK'

Next morning I reported to the Military Government headquarters of Charlottenburg's Administrative District, known as 'No. 7 Verwaltungsbezirk', – *VBK*. This unit, together with Wilmersdorf, Tiergarten and Spandau, made up the British Military Government's sector. It was located in a restored villa at Ulmenallee 8 in a secluded, tree-lined road close to 'Mil Gov HQ'.

My new Commanding Officer, Lt-Col John Parkin, turned out to be a delightful chief, who ruled his team with efficiency and paternal good humour. He supervised the administration of Charlottenburg with firmness and humanity. If he had a weakness, it was a difficulty he shared with the great majority of Britons: they were used to a relaxed political atmosphere which tended not to interfere in personal or professional relationships. He therefore found it hard to reconcile the moral degradation which the Nazi system had inflicted on the Germans, and the barbarism which they had supported or tolerated, with their contribution to European civilisation. He therefore tended to be taken in more easily than I was, by protestations of political rectitude.

Colonel Parkin frequently consulted me about German attitudes; but many of our informal conversations also ranged over a much wider field. On one occasion we talked about our future careers. He told me that he had been offered an appointment as Governor of one of H.M. Prisons. I remember an amused smile flitting across his face when I said that I had no intention of ever becoming an inmate, but if the unthinkable were to happen, I would ask to be put in his care!

Following my return to London after my demobilisation, I received a charming card containing his greetings for Christmas and the New Year. It bore the inscription 'H.M. Prison, Bristol'.

This reminder of a happy relationship, however, lay in the future.

Meanwhile, it was the task of the team of officers under Colonel Parkin in Charlottenburg to separate the genuine from the phoney and to administer their various departments with these considerations in mind. We were billeted at No. 18 Ulmenallee, a few houses down the road from our local HQ. As if to remind me of the difficult task ahead, I found, among the odds and ends left by the fugitive German occupier, a high-ranking Nazi party official's uniform hidden in my room. This building, I was told, had been requisitioned by the Nazis from its previous Jewish owner.

While Colonel Parkin was my regimental Commanding Officer, I was responsible for my departmental work to the heads of the specialist services at headquarters. Here, too, I was fortunate. One of them was Lt-Col Frances Cammaerts, DSO, the Assistant Director of Military Government for Food and Agriculture. He was over 6 ft tall and radiated a charisma and sense of quiet confidence which made me feel that I could not have wished for a finer man as my superior. I knew that he had fought with the Maquis, but it was only much later, when reading the Official History of the Special Operations Executive, that I discovered the full extent of his bravery. A teacher by profession, bilingual in French and English, son of a noted poet and Professor of Belgian Studies at the London School of Economics, he was recruited to the SOE and became one of the select team of colonels who had been dropped into Occupied France and played a leading part in organising the Maquis. The Gestapo captured him shortly before the end of the war and were on the point of executing him; but with the Allies at the gates, the captors changed their minds at the last minute and released him and his assistant, Odette Churchill, in an attempt to save their own skins. Francis Cammaerts became a good friend and supporter of my work in Berlin. He later acted as a generous referee when I applied for a job after my graduation from the London School of Economics.

My transport chief was Col T. E. Clarke, a genial communications expert, who awakened my interest in this field, and so influenced my choice of special subject for the degree I later took at the LSE.

Through these three colonels I was responsible to British Military Government for the supply and distribution of food to the population of Charlottenburg, as laid down by the Four-Power Allied *Kommandantura* (a word which, like several others, we adopted from the Russian), and for the licensing and administration of the VBK's civilian road transport.

Some of the administrative buildings belonging to the exhibition complex had survived. It was here, at Messedamm 8, that my offices were located, adjacent to the bomb-damaged exhibition halls, the

Messehallen, at the foot of the Funkturm. Two signs near the entrance announced that here was *Stadtverwaltung Charlottenburg, Zentralmagazin,* and as a subtle piece of advertising, *Ohne Transport keine Wirtschaft!* (No Trade without Transport).

Not far from my office, the 'Desert Rats' of Montgomery's 8th Army had erected a striking memento of their long treck from Alamein to Berlin. Their emblem, the little Jerboa desert rat, decorated the corners of their board and also gave its name to the British Forces' Club.

From my desk on the first floor I could see the contemporary outlines of Berlin's Broadcasting House in the Masurenallee. I remembered its modern concert hall to which my mother had occasionally taken me, in what seemed like another life, to listen to broadcast recitals. On the other side I looked out over a great expanse of concrete, now open to the sky, on which not long ago German industry had displayed its products to the world. Its ruins now served as a repository for supplies which went on to feed the population of Charlottenburg.

To this office, throughout the following year, came a regular succession of Charlottenburgers, from the Mayor downwards, to report, consult, complain, and suggest on important aspects of their lives.

Taking over from the Soviets

Berlin had fallen to the Red Army on 2 May 1945. The Soviets had immediately flown in teams of Moscow-trained German communists, who had taken up their predestined work without delay. Many of the mayors and councillors found by the Western Military Government Officers two months later were therefore hand-picked communists, and so were many of their officials.

The Soviets had used the time lag to conduct a skilful delaying action in their long drawn-out negotiations with the Western Allies about the future status of Berlin, coupled with the final delineation of the inter-zonal boundaries. It was not until the first week in July 1945 that the Americans finally agreed to evacuate Saxony and Thuringia in favour of the Soviets. This had cleared the way for the entry of British and US troops into their sectors of Berlin. The French did not take over their sector – carved out of those of the other Western powers – until 12 August.

The Soviet Military Government had faced two tasks: firstly, to ensure the removal of Nazi influence and its replacement by an administration loyal to its new Communist masters; and secondly, to meet the population's material needs.

Their methods were brutal, prompt, and generally effective. The

Germans had reacted with panic and fear, many of them with good reason. The Soviets had rounded up Nazi suspects without ceremony, using methods and choosing places of incarceration which must have seemed dreadfully familiar to some of their prisoners. Some Germans had used the general atmosphere of confusion to settle old scores by denouncing neighbours for reasons which had nothing to with Nazi politics or war crimes. As a result, some innocent victims had joined the guilty in the prison camps. A few of them had disappeared without trace and were never seen again.

The second objective – of meeting the vital needs of the inhabitants – had been achieved by direct confiscation and redistribution of essential supplies; a rationing system which provided a compelling incentive for the recruitment of a labour force to restore the city to a habitable condition; and the initial supply of food from the Red Army's own stores.

Problems facing British Mil. Gov.

Our preparations for the assumption of the military administration seemed to me to be neither as detailed nor as single-minded as those of the Soviets, who were guided solely by Communist doctrine. Our problem was compounded by the fact that those Germans suitable for filling the vacancies, and who at the same time were politically acceptable, had nearly all perished in the concentration camps or had emigrated. Our De-Nazification Units did their best, and everyone applying for public office had to complete the Military Government's questionnaire, or *Fragebogen.* This succeeded in catching many minor and insignificant party members, but proved of doubtful value against the more sophisticated Nazis.

Some hard-pressed Military Government Officers found it difficult, in the absence of qualified applicants, to resist the temptation of appointing experienced administrators with a Nazi background. In any case, so many people claimed to have always been fundamentally 'against it', to have helped Jews and to have known nothing of atrocities, that the Nazi party appeared to be a figment of our fevered imagination. The questionnaire proved to be a blunt instrument for identifying the criminals we were really seeking.

I encountered this problem at the very outset of my work in Berlin. It brought me face to face with the crucial question of how I saw my function in the relatively influential role into which I had been cast. It seemed to me that Military Government Officers were allowed a fairly wide margin of discretion in the implementation of their duties, and so I tried to clear my own mind on this important point.

I quickly came to the conclusion that I would not – indeed, could not – act as an avenger. I felt too much sympathy for the magnitude of the suffering that surrounded me on all sides. Revenge for its own sake was demeaning and self-defeating. My priorities, I felt, were the eradication of all traces of Nazism wherever I might find it; and the seeking out of the surviving victims of Nazi persecution and the alleviation of their physical and mental agony. Within these guidelines I saw my duty in the fair and equitable distribution of the food supplies and transport services for the 206,000 inhabitants of Charlottenburg, who were relying on the integrity of the administration which I now represented.

To the extent that the food and fuel supplies we distributed came from Allied stocks, I acted as a trustee for the donors; but in the main I was concerned with German stocks being distributed to German consumers by a German administration. The rules which I had to enforce had therefore been framed in order to ensure a fair share for the whole of the German population at a time of acute shortage. The breaches of these rules represented an offence, not so much against the Allies, as against the welfare of the German public at large.

The probity of the Allied, as well as that of the German administration was therefore essential in order to prevent hardship, not to the Allies, but to the citizens of Berlin.

When I arrived, the position was not very satisfactory. I was handed a circular, signed by Brigadier Hinde, the Deputy Director of Military Government, and addressed to 'All new officers on arrival', on the subject of 'Monetary exchange and barter transactions with German civilians or Allied Military Personnel.' He summed up his message in the following words: 'The success of Military Government depends on the highest standard of integrity of its members, and I will not tolerate it being brought into disrepute by the wrongful behaviour on the part of any of its members.'

Getting to know the Russians

In the autumn of 1945, Berlin must have been one of the most fascinating and cosmopolitan cities on earth. Despite the ruins which surrounded them, the victors found themselves living in relative comfort and plenty. They also found themselves thrust together in unaccustomed proximity, trying to find a common approach across a gulf of conflicting ideologies. Their ranks were swelled by hordes of Military Missions from countries around the world.

The various occupying forces on the whole tended to restrict their

social life to their own compatriots. The exception were the officers serving on the Allied Kommandantura, which met regularly in the imposing building of the *Kammergericht,* the former Prussian Law Courts, off the Potsdamer Straße. With each change of the monthly chairmanship came a change in the menu, provided by the presiding nation. The catering seemed to attract as much attention as the rest of the Kommandantura's activities. The Russians were reputed to provide the most exotic, the French the most exquisite, the Americans the most plentiful and the British the most pedestrian menus. As a departmental staff captain I was never invited, and so I cannot speak from experience. From a purely culinary point of view I did not particularly regret this; but it would have been interesting to take part in the discussions. I suspect that the carefully phrased off-duty conversations, complicated by linguistic confusion, did not greatly add to international understanding. We did, however, attend occasional social gatherings at the Messes of our colleagues, where a similar pattern of generous hospitality and somewhat superficial cocktail-type conversation developed; but there were no restraints on those of us who wished to develop closer contacts.

Our relations with the Red Army were subject to special restraints. During my time in Berlin attempts were made to establish some forms of social contact with our opposite numbers in the Soviet Military Government. This topic aroused a good deal of interest, well beyond our limited circle. During Question Time in the House of Commons on 9 October 1945, a Member asked the Secretary of State for War 'if it is the policy of the military authorities to encourage fraternisation between British and Russian troops in Berlin and other places where they occupy adjoining zones; and what has been done to bring this about.'

In a Written Answer the Government replied: 'It is the policy of the military authorities to maintain friendly relations between British and Russian troops wherever zones adjoin. ... The entry of troops to each others' clubs is permitted by invitation.'

Our experience on the ground showed that these efforts were largely unsuccessful. 'Other ranks' did not seem to feature at any social meetings. We met Russian officers mostly at the official level, during which they generally displayed a firm command of their subjects. They tended to fight their corner skilfully and stubbornly in accordance with inflexible instructions, but often also with the subtle intelligence befitting a people who revere chess as a national sport. Our contacts were guardedly cordial, and I had the impression that many of their officers would have liked to mix more freely with us; but such attempts were firmly suppressed by their higher echelons.

On the few occasions when they invited us to their headquarters, their absorptive capacity for vodka filled us with disbelief. It released an ability of child-like enjoyment of life which manifested itself in their famous athletic dances and beautiful, sad songs, sung with instinctive sensitivity by voices which were reminiscent of Welsh male choirs, and accompanied by the inevitable balalaika.

A light-hearted interval

I came across one exception to the rules governing social life which illustrates the childlike and playful side of the Russian character. One day, a Russian captain arrived at my office on some minor official business. He seemed to like the look of me and in fairly fluent German began to extol the beauty of his home in the Crimea.

'I shall be going home next week', he told me, and his face was aglow with anticipated pleasure. As an afterthought he added: 'Why don't you come with me?'

My expression of utter surprise made him try again: 'Are you married?' he asked. When I said that I was not, he triumphantly predicted total bliss for me in the arms of beautiful Crim maidens, who were apparently just waiting for a British officer to complete their happiness.

'But don't you understand that I have a job to do here? Surely, as a soldier you must know that you can't just go off into the blue? Desertion is a serious offence in your Army as well as mine!'

He was not to be put off: 'By the time your Army discovers that you have gone with me, we shall be far, far away!' I was beginning to wonder whether this was a joke, or whether he was trying to persuade a potential informer to join the Soviet intelligence service. It seemed absurd.

Whatever the reason, my Russian visitor left me empty-handed; and I hope that those beautiful Crim maidens did not wait too long before seeking their happiness among more local talent.

Causes of distrust

The reasons for Soviet suspicion were self-evident. Added to the inborn Russian distrust of foreigners and their fear of spies, there were the effects of decades of propaganda which depicted us as 'capitalist hyenas'. Closer acquaintance would have revealed their claims as over-simplification of Western shortcomings, while exposing the failure of Communist dictatorship. Their leaders had banned social contacts because they clearly realised the risk. I had the impression that many Russians regretted this

embargo. They would have liked to discuss our mutual concerns and to discover why there are no simplistic answers to human prosperity and happiness, either in Communist or Capitalist terms. They were perplexed by the contrasts in our standards of living with which their actual experience of life in the West now faced them, despite the vast destruction which surrounded them.

Even without close contact I became acutely aware that the Red Army's service atmosphere presented an extraordinary contrast to ours. Theirs was an army subjected to hardships and losses on a scale which we had never experienced. They had seen their vast country ravaged, their population wantonly murdered and their painfully achieved living standard destroyed. They had traversed a continent living off the land, and were toughened by a climate which we could barely imagine, carrying their meagre supplies on their backs. They were burning with hatred for the invader. Their discipline was ferocious as well as capricious. We were told that summary executions for relatively minor offences were common.

Nazi attempts to exploit the conflict between their enemies had united East and West in battle. Vanquished Germany now tried to come to terms with the defeat of the 'Master Race'. I found that the more enlightened ones among the Berliners called it 'capitulation', others regretfully referred to 'collapse'. For some of them, the Allied Occupation represented the confirmation of a long-suspected, but also long-suppressed, awareness that they had been the silent partners in the commission of monstrous crimes, and that the disaster which had now overtaken them was not altogether undeserved.

10

'No Trade without Transport'

THIS SLOGAN, WHICH I FOUND AFFIXED above the door to my offices in the Messehallen, neatly summed up my task as Transport Officer of Charlottenburg; but one of the first requirements, it seemed to me, was to establish a level playing field, on which Military Government and the German administration could play according to the same rules. Such rules seemed to be unknown, or at any rate largely ignored, by the civilian staff in the Transport as well as in the Food Departments.

The first session as Food and Transport Officer which I held in my office illustrated the gap which I had to bridge. The folder, handed to me by my new personal secretary, contained official papers for my attention and decision. They came from the *Magistrat Berlin-Charlottenburg.*

The shortage of stationery which afflicted the civilian administration was demonstrated by the green cardboard folder in which the papers were enclosed. The title, inscribed on the cover in coloured crayon, proclaimed in German: 'Items from the Ration Card Head Office for Decisions by Capt Perry'.

I placed the folder on my desk. The reverse side happened to be facing up – and I looked with surprise at its original imprint: *Der Reichsminister für Rüstung und Kriegsproduktion, Amt Bau-OT.*

The Minister for Armaments and War Production, and his subordinate Labour Department OT *(Organisation Todt)* were notorious for record arms production and the merciless use of slave labour. The current German policy documents, now handed to me for my decision as a Military Government Officer, were enclosed in a folder recently used by the German War Ministry. At the bottom of the cover I found precise instructions for maintaining their high levels of performance. A small imprint below it revealed that 12,000 copies of these forms had been produced as recently as December 1944.

As I opened my folder, it occurred to me that its changing uses and layout seemed to have a symbolic meaning: when holding the cover with my official designation in its proper, upright position, the *Reichsminister* was standing on his head! *(See front endpaper.)*

First priority: reliable staff

I soon discovered that the information supplied to me tended to be based more on guesswork than on fact. I therefore found it virtually impossible to make my regular weekly reports to Headquarters with the sort of confidence which I regarded as essential. In the words of my report to the Transport Department of Headquarters on 15 October 1945, shortly after I had taken up my duties:

> It has become evident that the German staff are quite prepared to supply any information asked for, irrespective of whether they are in a position to supply the facts. I have, however, made it quite clear to all concerned that in future they will be held personally responsible for the truth and accuracy of information supplied to Military Government.

My parallel report on the Food Department came to the conclusion that:

> The 10-daily food report submitted to me was wrong, and two further versions which have been submitted have also proved unsatisfactory. This has caused a delay in my report, but I consider that no report is better than a wrong one. ...

Later I noted:

> The problem of finding men possessing both the professional and moral qualifications required, is still unsolved. It seems to be impossible to find persons possessing the necessary integrity to come forward, while the Germans select candidates for purely administrative appointments on the basis of political considerations. In addition, every official is the subject of frequent and anonymous denunciations which continually reach this office. While some may be founded on facts, no concrete evidence is ever supplied, and it would appear that their prime motive is not the cleansing of the administration, but personal hates and political manoeuvres.

The following actual example was typical of many with which I had to deal:

> Various accusations against P. have repeatedly been investigated by the examiners of the Food Office, but could never be substantiated. P. was properly appointed as trustee by *Fachgruppe Handel & Handwerk* in May 45. He is a butcher. 2 years KZ. (Concentration Camp).

In an effort to improve communication between my office and the Transport Department, I introduced a new procedure:

> As a first step towards the reorganisation of the Charlottenburg transport system Routine Orders have been issued to the Fahrbereitschaftsleiter, which have had the effect of clearing the air of many misunderstandings and giving him a clear line of action by laying down the law in clear terms. These orders are now becoming effective. Copies have been sent to the other three VBKs, and HQ intend to call a conference of all VBK Transport Officers in the near future to discuss problems in the light of recent experiences.

I also gave instructions for all Standing Orders to be displayed on notice boards in all offices and garages used by the *Fahrbereitschaft Charlottenburg.*

Parallel instructions to the Food Department and the Trade and Industry Department stated:

1. W.e.f. the date of this letter you will submit weekly reports to Military Government to reach this office by 12.00 hrs every Monday.

2. These reports will form a comprehensive account of the week's activities of every department of the food sector.

3. Particular attention will be paid to the following:
   (a) burglaries,
   (b) losses and deficiencies,
   (c) discrepancies in the allocation of food between VBK Ernährungsamt and Haupternährungsamt,
   (d) licensing, opening and closing of all food shops and restaurants in the VBK,
   (e) details of all prosecutions before the German Courts and their results in connection with offences against the food and rationing laws.

Both Departments readily co-operated in the new arrangements. They responded favourably to a firm lead, especially as they soon realised that the Food and Transport Officer literally spoke the same language and could not easily be fooled; and that their objectives of providing a fair distribution of scarce food and transport resources were shared by the military administration.

As a result, I found myself invited to many social events held by a various of German administrative organisations. The *Bezirkslager* – the

Charlottenburg Food Store – for instance, invited me as a Guest of Honour to a celebration of the 'First Peaceful Christmas' event at the Students' Residence, Taberna, in the Hardenbergstraße, on 18 December 1945.

Soon afterwards, the Employees' Association of the Charlottenburg Food Department sent me a cordial invitation to a get-together on 16 March 1946. It was at the Town Hall, Witzlebenstraße, under the motto: 'We take care of your food, we take care of happy hours', with two bands and accompanied by cold sausage (with food coupons for 50 grammes) and full-strength beer!

The District Manager of the Charlottenburg Association of Hoteliers, Heinz Klaussner, sent me a cordial letter, inviting me to a charity event at the *Taberna* held on 10 April 1946. 'May I be permitted', he wrote, 'to send you two tickets as our Guests of Honour for the evening. I hope that, as the Food Officer responsible for this district, you will be able to find the time to join us, and look forward to being able to welcome you at this meeting.'

One of the last invitations which reached me before my demobilisation came from Mr Vogel, the Manager of the allotment settlement 'Golfplatz'. It was carefully typed in English and German, and said: 'Would Captain Perry please come along to our children's party. We thank the Military Government for their past help, and hope the Captain will come as guest. The party will begin 1. Sept. 1946 14 h.'

My work was greatly assisted by my secretary, Dr Lotte Hefter, who combined efficiency with discretion. Her excellent command of English enabled her to produce all my communications to the German administration in the required bilingual version with a minimum amount of help. The result was a marked improvement in operation and performance.

Needed: a 'Propusk'

The task of a Transport Officer was relatively simple. The rules governing the issue of licences for motor vehicles were quite straight forward and did not lend themselves as readily to inspired circumvention and modification as did the food regulations. The remarkable thing was the fact that after the destruction caused by the fighting there were any vehicles left to license; and that those which were presented for this purpose actually had an engine and the necessary number of wheels, and that each of these wheels had a tyre.

This combination of fortunate circumstances could, however, easily be

upset by a moment's careless parking. Wheels and tyres could disappear with the same mysterious ease with which they had appeared, and even more extensive cannibalisations were quite common; but the unfortunate loser could be fairly certain that his loss would rapidly benefit the reconstruction of another deserving part of the city.

The ability to improvise on the part of Berlin's motor mechanics was remarkable. Somehow, the road transport system got moving again. Their mobile scrap played an important part in the resuscitation of a mortally wounded city; and before long the Volkswagen factory at Wolfsburg began to turn out new vehicles.

There were, of course, also the horses: 316 of them featured in the returns which the Transport Department supplied to me at one stage. I was never quite sure whether those which appeared in my transport statistics one week might not reappear under the meat ration in my Food Report next time.

The Soviet Army had begun the process of regeneration immediately after their conquest of Berlin. In the field of road transport they had introduced a system of permits; and the Russian word for 'Permit' is 'Propusk'. The Soviet-appointed German civil administration had adopted this word, like many other Russian terms and customs. Their colleagues in the Western sectors continued to use it, not only in speech, but also in their documents. 'Propusk' therefore penetrated into English usage in Berlin by a process of osmosis which has always enriched the language from many sources. But for the 'Iron Curtain', it might have crossed the English Channel – with unpredictable reactions in the Ministry of Transport. As it was, propusks were confined to Berlin and especially to its Transport Departments, for the duration of Military Government.

By the time I arrived, the Charlottenburg transport pool consisted of 390 motor vehicles and the 316 horses already mentioned. That was modest in terms of the job the department had to perform, and these responsibilities continued to grow, as the following note shows:

Routine Transport Order No. 5, Feb. 46.

1. The creation of a Special Road Fleet for the Building Department of the Magistrat Charlottenburg has become necessary on account of the withdrawal of British Army Transport.

2. The Fahrbereitschaft Charlottenburg will, therefore, put at the disposal of the Bauamt (Building Department) Charlottenburg a fleet of 25

lorries and tractors which will be used by the Bauamt under the overall direction of the Public Works & Utilities Section, Military Government House.

Applications for propusks were submitted to me for final approval. Their demand greatly exceeded the supply of vehicles, and so the *Fahrbereitschaft* (the Charlottenburg Transport Office) graded them in accordance with current Military Government regulations. The officials kept in regular touch with me, and so I was able to confirm their recommendations in the great majority of cases.

A wrong note from a conductor's baton

While going through these piles of applications, I occasionally came across some interesting individuals. One day, for instance, I received a letter from Leopold Ludwig, the newly-appointed conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. He needed a lorry to transport the orchestra's instruments, and wanted a Propusk.

I was a regular visitor to the concerts of this world-renowned orchestra, which the *Magistrat* of Berlin had restored to life with admirable speed and the active help of the Russians, within two weeks of the capitulation. I therefore wanted to make Ludwig's acquaintance and asked him to visit me in my office.

After a pleasant conversation, and having got his licence, he invited me to be his guest at one of his forthcoming concerts, devoted to Wagner, and to join him at a reception at his home after the performance.

'Well, Captain Perry', he said over a drink in his comfortable residence in the Rüsternallee after the concert, 'how did you like my performance?'

'I found it very impressive', I replied, 'although I must confess that some of Wagner's music is a little too noisy for my liking. But I am always greatly impressed by the way the conductor of a great orchestra manages to convey his interpretation of a composer's intentions to an army of hand-picked players, who no doubt have their own ideas of how the composition should sound.'

Ludwig's memorable reply was: 'I am sure you have never yet heard a wrong note come out of a conductor's baton!'

Shortly afterwards I was sorry to learn that a very wrong note indeed had emerged from his *Fragebogen* – the Military Government questionnaire – in which he had failed to reveal his former membership of the Nazi party. Ludwig was dismissed, and replaced by the brilliant

young Sergiu Celibidache who, I was told, had been freed from a Rumanian concentration camp.

It became a common experience that people who had hoped to obtain advancement in their careers by joining the Nazi party, now tried to preserve these advantages by withholding the truth from the authorities. Many undoubtedly succeeded.

Meanwhile, the wheels of transport continued to speed Berlin's recovery.

II

Food from East and West

MOST OF MY CONCERNS WERE DEVOTED to the provision and distribution of food to Charlottenburg's population, which at that time numbered just over 200,000 people. To a large extent, these supplies depended on Berlin's hinterland in the Soviet zone of occupation which surrounded us on all sides. They consisted in the main of fresh vegetables, fruit and potatoes.

The details had been agreed in Four-Power discussions at the *Kommandantura* and, on the whole, the system worked reasonably well within its terms of reference. But occasionally there were delays and stoppages which were serious, even if the interruptions were of short duration. The basic rations were so limited that any hold-ups caused additional hardship to those least able to bear it.

Causes of food shortages

These problems were largely due to disruptions caused by the continuing flow of enormous numbers of refugees displaced from East Germany and moving painfully slowly and often without a fixed destination towards the West, blocking the highways. Mixed up with this mass migration were freed survivors from the concentration camps and released prisoners of war. I had seen the vanguard of this migration a few months earlier in Westphalia; now I had moved considerably closer to the source in the East and was directly involved with its consequences.

Throughout the war, Nazi Germany had imported whatever it could confiscate in the conquered territories, often with criminal disregard for the needs of the local populations. In addition, the fertile farm lands in its Eastern provinces had formed Germany's bread basket, and imported slave labour had kept German farms and factories supplied with ample and cheap replacements for those conscripted into the armed forces. Despite rationing, food therefore presented few problems for the Germans – as long as they were winning.

All this changed with the final, overwhelming offensive of the Soviet

Armies, when 225 infantry divisions and 22 armoured corps began to steamroller towards Berlin on 12 January 1945. The populations in East Germany were expelled from their homes with a ruthlessness inflamed by the conduct of the SS, Gestapo and extermination squads during the Nazi invasion of the East. The farms in the territories which remained German lost their forced labour; many German farmers and their workers had not yet returned from prisoner-of-war camps or had become casualties; and transport for those supplies which were available was seriously disrupted. The territories of the Soviet Zone themselves were now suffering from considerable shortages.

In addition, the Soviet authorities were able to exert pressure on the Western allies by arbitrarily regulating the flow of supplies to the Western sectors of Berlin whenever they felt so inclined. The prospect of the approaching winter in 1945, with minimal reserves of food, made us therefore feel apprehensive.

It was against this background that I took up my duties as the Food Officer of Charlottenburg.

We tried to compensate for any shortfalls by importing supplies from the Western Zones into Berlin; but in parts of Western Germany, too, food was dangerously short. The danger of famine in Europe, especially in the event of a severe winter, seemed very real. The Western Allies therefore began to import substantial quantities from their own domestic supplies.

In Britain, this resulted for the first time in the rationing of bread, which had been freely available at controlled prices throughout the five years of war.

Food rationing in Berlin

The rationing system divided the consumers into five categories. The first and highest applied to heavy manual labourers and professional workers, like doctors; the second to workers; the third to clerical employees; the fourth to children; and the fifth to what was called the *Normalverbraucher* – the normal consumer.

In my report to Military Government HQ of 15 October 1945, shortly after my arrival, I noted:

The distribution of Ration Groups is as follows:

I	3.954 %
II	27.262
III	17.261
IV	14.980
V	36.543

In accordance with instructions from HQ, efforts will be made to reduce Group I issues to the authorised 3% exclusive of policemen on outdoor duties.

When the *Ernährungsamt* (Food Office) supplied me with the figures quoted in my report, I wondered whether it would have occurred to any but a German bureaucracy to calculate percentage figures to three places of decimals. My skepticism was not lessened when the *Kommandantura* invited the *Magistrat* on 26 October 1945 to explain how it came about that a recent census showed a population of 2,807,405 inhabitants, while the Food Office had issued 3,007,870 ration cards.

The food supply situation remained precarious during the following months in view of the uncertainty about the coming winter. As a necessary precaution, the *Kommandantura* therefore ordered a reduction in the rations issued to adults. In the reports submitted to HQ on 3 June and 2 August 1946, I noted:

In accordance with Kommandantura Orders, a new ration card distribution scale came into effect on 1 May 46. This measure has yielded some far-reaching results. The following figures show comparative numbers of ration cards issued:

	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group V
March	13,503	58,935	40,914	55,461
April	10,217	58,713	44,878	55,464
May	3,971	53,641	51,729	58,679
July	3,638	55,790	54,248	60,414

The Group IV ration card for children was not subject to curtailment and, in July, was issued to 32,183 children. Charlottenburg's population in the first half of 1946 therefore fluctuated at just over 200,000 people.

Group V – and I

Complaints about the adequacy of ration card V were widespread. I therefore decided to put the matter to a personal test and to live on the rations provided by the basic card for one week. The cook in our Officers' Mess in the Ulmen Allee thought I had taken leave of my senses, and it took me a little while to convince him that I meant what I said. Eventually he went to the local Food Office with my authority to collect a week's ration on card number V, and I spent seven informative days, closely watched by my colleagues, gradually shedding some weight and gaining some understanding for the feelings of my correspondents.

At the same time I tried to visualise the appalling fate of those who had had to exist in indescribably worse circumstances by living illegally, without any ration cards or legal means of support of any kind, as a result of Nazi persecution. They were totally dependent on help from friends and even strangers, who thereby risked not only their own lives, but also those of their families. Infinitely worse even was the fate of the millions in the concentration camps. For them the security of a legal existence, with a ration card number V, would have represented an unimaginable heaven.

These, of course, were no criteria to be applied to the population in an emerging post-war democracy, but they ensured that I did not lose my sense of perspective. It was also quite evident to me from my own brief dietary experiment that the lowest rations were barely adequate for a normal adult, and that, in any case, it was mostly the innocent who had to suffer undeserved hardships.

My scope for remedial action was clearly limited, but I tried to make myself as accessible as possible and to interpret the *Kommandantura* regulations flexibly and liberally in deserving cases. I did so always in consultation with the Charlottenburg Food Office, since it was our intention to give maximum discretion to the local administration by intervening as little as possible in their work.

'Sehr geehrter Herr Keppenperrie ...'

My post bag from members of the public with real and imaginary grievances was considerable. The striking feature about them, which they nearly all had in common, was the obsequious style. Their inbred respect for authority had been reinforced by twelve years of ruthless dictatorship. It was now reflected in the population's attitude towards the Military Government.

The majority of the letters explained that the rations they received were inadequate, and respectfully requested their transfer to a higher category. Many of these letters had obviously been carefully composed in consultation with the writer's entire family, and had then been painstakingly written with the traditional German respect for the *Obrigkeit* (authorities). They tried to explain their hardship to me in graphic detail and often with unconscious humour. My rank and name became inextricably mixed up in some of my correspondents' minds, so that some letters were addressed to 'Herr Keppenperrie', and one, apparently from a Francophile, even to 'Herr Keppencheri.'

One of the few exceptions to respectful subordination which I received was headed with the challenging word, 'Protest!', written boldly across the top of the page and came from an orthopædic practitioner, who justified his complaint in the following terms:

> What justification is there for withdrawing from me the workers' ration card? As shown above, I work my 48 hour week in full, and more. Only because of the little word orthopædic? One doesn't seem to attach any importance to orthopædic care any more. Orthopædic care is essential for the whole of the body. It is incredible that the orthopædic practitioner is not mentioned in your check list.
>
> All my customers, starting with professors and doctors, are astounded about this discrimination. They say that I should receive an extra reward for my beneficial activity, because it is not only important, but even vital, especially at the present time. The patients come to me in pain and leave me full of gratitude and satisfaction. I can, if desired, provide you with hundreds of letters of recommendation.
>
> On the strength of this I request the workers' card now and in the future, so that I may remain fit for work at my advanced age. Because he who cannot work becomes a burden to the State.
>
> Hoping that my comments will satisfy your requirements, I sign
> *Hochachtungsvoll,* (signed) .... ,
> 'Specialist for Foot Complaints'
> – as it says on my front door.

I quite liked this direct and honest approach.

The letter of a 60-year-old caretaker of a block of flats was clearly the result of agonised drafting. The careful schoolboy handwriting on graph paper torn from an exercise book was evidence of unaccustomed effort. In awkward and ungrammatical German he explained that he and his

wife were responsible for the maintenance of a badly damaged residential block, and that they needed more substantial food to enable them to carry out their heavy physical work. 'This damage is responsible for the fact', he wrote, 'that the cleaning of the building is now the responsibility of my wife, with four entrances.'

Another letter came from a retired *Polizei-Obersekretär* which contained his suggestion, 'to allocate to me and my wife a small portion of the leftovers of the troops' daily meal.' Evidently with the intention that his neighbours should not get wind of his enterprising scheme, he would 'collect the food in a closed container at an agreed time each day and undertake to keep this arrangement confidential.' To confound any suspicion of previous Nazi sympathies on the part of so senior a police officer, my correspondent assured me with an ambiguity which he apparently did not appreciate: 'I do not belong to the Nazi party, but stand on the ground of democracy and am a member of the Christian party.'

Vox Populi, 1942

The next document put the whole issue into perspective. I looked transfixed at the letter on the desk in front of me. It had been left by a visitor for my personal attention. The document was obviously genuine, had been carefully typed and bore the date 8 February 1942. Its sender identified himself as a *Blockleiter,* responsible to the Party for the morale and discipline of the block of buildings allocated to him. The letter was marked 'Strictly confidential' and addressed to one of his constituents, a baker.

The Nazi boss wrote:

> In conversation with the *Ortsgruppenleiter* (Area Group Leader) today I discovered that it is intended, in view of complaints received from various quarters that you continue to sell to Jews (allegedly Jews come from distant quarters to your shop because they are no longer supplied in their area) to advise you to stop selling to Jews. I myself received a reprimand, because it was my duty, as *Blockleiter* of the party, to inform the party of the above-mentioned facts. My personal observations in this matter are such, however, that in this matter I could do no more than keep silent. From time to time whole swarms of Jews crowd the space in front of the adjoining houses, waiting for 4 o'clock, when it is time to make their purchases in your shop. You yourself will hardly be able to see what is going on, since you are then particularly busy inside your shop. I have so far kept silent, because I did not want to spoil our good personal relationship, but also because I did

not think that so many of our compatriots would complain to the *Ortsgruppe*, of which fact I became regretfully aware today.

In view of the fact that the *Ortsgruppe* is at present preparing to supply a nearby military hospital for the severely wounded with cakes, etc, this would offer a suitable opportunity to announce a temporary suspension of sales to Jews by displaying a corresponding notice at the entrance to your shop, which could provide a suitable transition to a total suspension of sales to Jews. I regard it as regrettable that you, who has to work hard from early morning to late at night has to do this to a considerable extent for Jews, who are not worth the sweat of your brow.

I am sure you will readily sell your goods to German *Volksgenossen* many of them will probably prefer to buy from you if you do not also sell to Jews.

In any case, I should like to be able to inform the *Ortsgruppe*, even before they decide to take action against you, that you have now ceased selling to Jews. ...

Meanwhile, I would urge you to act in accordance with my confidential advice, it can only be to your advantage.

And please do not take this interference in your business affairs amiss, I considered it my duty.

Heil Hitler.

The letter not only confirmed the active policy of the Nazi party right down to its lowest echelons, but also the fact that this policy clearly enjoyed a measure of support from the general public. This much was known, of course, from all the information we had received from many sources; but it was still a sobering experience to find it so vividly confirmed in one's own birthplace, where the people seeking food might well have been one's relatives and friends.

I found it impossible to penetrate the mentality of those who actively demanded that starving fellow human beings should be turned away when they were trying legally to buy food for their families and themselves: the sale of food to Jews was allowed between the hours of 4 and 5 p.m., even according to Nazi law as it stood at that time. This letter confirms that some food shops had taken the law into their own hands by going beyond the requirements of the draconian law as it stood.

This support, abetted by the silent acquiescence of a significant part of the population, evidently convinced party and government that they would not face any major opposition to the total annihilation of the remaining Jews. They therefore proceeded with 'The Final Solution' even at a stage when it was evident to many Germans that the war had already been lost.

It was perhaps an extension of Hitler's insane insistence that, quite apart from the Jews, the rest of the German people had forfeited the right to continued existence by losing the war. What is remarkable is that, right up to the last days of the fighting, German units were abetting this madness by destroying their own city and inflicting casualties on their own people; and that there were still fanatics roaming the streets on the eve of Germany's final surrender, hanging alleged deserters and 'traitors' on the nearest lamp post. The penultimate issue of the *Panzerbär,* dated 28 April 1945, which I found in Hitler's *Reichskanzlei,* was evidence of the Wagnerian Walpurgis Night atmosphere of the final days.

My elementary school revisited

I had fully expected to experience some nostalgic encounters during my stay in Berlin; but nothing had prepared me for the extraordinary meetings with my past which actually occurred, or the far-reaching influence on the rest of my life of those I was destined to meet again. The first two encounters brought me face to face with my distant childhood in a manner which seemed almost unreal.

I took a particular interest in the school meal service and therefore visited numerous schools in Charlottenburg. I never announced my intended arrival and usually came unaccompanied, so that no special preparations could be made. It was not surprising that sheer curiosity made me choose my old *Volksschule* for an early inspection. From the corner of the Dahlmannstraße one used to be able to see the prominent clock tower which rose high above the massive red brick school building in the Sybelstraße, but I expected to find a pile of hurriedly patched-up ruins to match the rest of the street.

To my surprise I found the school virtually undamaged, with the clock tower continuing to dominate the neighbourhood. Nineteen years after my first visit I entered through the massive doors, almost feeling six years old again. I walked past the speechless school janitor, who stared in amazement at a British officer making his way to the Director's office.

Now it was my turn to stare in amazement at the person who rose to welcome me. It was Mr Schwarz, who had been my Jewish religion teacher at the school in 1926. I recognised him instantly, but now his black beard had grown snow white, his face was deeply lined and he was a shadow of his former self, a sick and emaciated man. He told me that he had survived incarceration in a concentration camp. There were no Jewish children left for him to teach now, and the world he had known

and cherished was in ruins; but he was grateful for his deliverance and considered himself fortunate to have been enabled to return to work.

This visit turned out very differently from what I had expected.

'Operation Stork'

Another surprise awaited me while supervising the implementation in Charlottenburg of a major rescue mission for children. In the aftermath of war, supplies of food were short throughout a devastated Europe in which dislocation of transport added to our difficulties. In Berlin our problems were further increased by the dependence of the Western sectors on some food supplies from the Soviet Zone. Experience had taught us that this dependence was liable to be used by the Russians to exert political pressure when it suited them.

The coming winter of 1945/6 was likely to prove critical – especially if it turned out to be severe. The Western Allies therefore decided to evacuate to West Germany those children likely to be most at risk from a potential food shortage. I was made responsible for supervising the arrangements for Charlottenburg.

The *Ernährungsamt* carried out the planning and implementation of *Aktion Storch* with typical German thoroughness. Children were selected, lists were prepared, teachers were detailed to accompany the convoys on their long journey, fleets of buses were organised, rations for the journey were assembled, luggage was collected, and everything was carefully recorded.

And here was I, ever mindful of another type of evacuation which had taken place with equal German thoroughness and efficiency, but with the official objective of mass murder on an unprecedented scale. Its perpetrators had experienced no sense of pity or wrong-doing while pushing their desperate victims into cattle trucks. It had ended for most of the deportees in gas chambers. Only a little more than a year had passed since that nightmare. It was a fate whose impact on a typical family is described in 'Ellen's Chronology'. By sheer good luck I had escaped being a victim of that fate. Nor was there safety in flight: we now knew what had happened to Jews in Occupied Europe and had seen the meticulously compiled Gestapo lists of refugees in England who were due for 'processing' as soon as operational conditions permitted.

Yet I endorsed the important and humane gesture of 'Operation Stork' and was happy to be an active participant. Anything else would have seemed a negation of all the values in which I believed and for which I had fought.

On 26 October 1945, the day of Stork's departure, I went to the Charlottenburg assembly point off the Kurfürstendamm, to make sure everything went according to plan. The manager of the operation reported to me. His bearlike physique and features seemed vaguely familiar. When he introduced himself as Herr Fricke the years fell away, and once again I was a six-year-old, facing my primary school form master: I remembered him as a good teacher with occasional sadistic tendencies. He had punished one of my early escapades by locking me up in the form cupboard. I had never forgotten the claustrophobic fears I then suffered, or the hilarity with which my class mates had greeted the spectacle. Now Herr Fricke had acquired a middle-aged spread and his blond mane had grown thin and grey, but he seemed as active and busy as ever; and the convoy naturally departed exactly on schedule.

Many months later I found a vivid description of the operation by the Member of Parliament for Coventry West, Maurice Edelman, who had just returned from a visit to Berlin. On 16 November 1945 he reported to the House of Commons:

> We know that our own military authorities, in conjunction with the Control Commission, are doing miracles in order to help the civil population in the cause of humanity and also in the cause of our troops who are occupying the country. I was able to see the tail end of the Operation Stork. ... These children, for the most part orphans, all of them otherwise destitute, have been cared for by our military authorities, and the large part of the 25,000 who were to be evacuated have now been sent out into the Hanover region and into other rural parts of Germany, where they will be kept. That has been carried out under the supervision of the military authorities.

Food for concern

The weekly Food Conferences which I attended with other officers from Military Government convey a vivid picture of the topics which confronted us, and the steps we took to deal with them. These meetings served two purposes: to inform the departmental officers in the VBKs of quadripartite decisions made in the *Kommandantura* for the whole of Berlin; and to co-ordinate policy between the VBKs. The notes of these meetings were supplemented by my regular progress reports to headquarters and by diary notes, which conjure up the hectic atmosphere of that time.

The Black Market, and its associated problems of thefts and burglaries, naturally featured prominently in our list of concerns; but we also dealt with an extraordinary range of other issues.

In order to preserve local supplies, we prohibited the purchase of

domestic foodstuffs by all soldiers, and the food offices were in turn instructed to forbid the sale of food to allied personnel by German shops. We tried to block a source of temptation by ordering municipal food inspectors not to remove confiscated food themselves, but to have this done by the police, who had to deliver these goods to my *Zentralmagazin.* We arranged for the issue of special ration cards to diabetics. We gave instructions for the expiry dates of ration cards to be prominently displayed in all shops selling rationed goods. Both the food and transport departments were called on to cooperate in specific projects, such as helping with the travel arrangements of Displaced Persons from their camps to their new homes overseas.

We discussed the ravages caused by rabbits to the vegetables on our allotments and authorised rabbit hunts. We noted that the inmates of Plötzensee Prison produced respectable quantities of vegetables on their prison allotments and discussed a suggestion that this output should be added to the supplies made available to the *Ernährungsamt* for general distribution. (This prison was notorious as the place where the leaders of the 20 July 1945 plot against Hitler had been brutally hanged on meat hooks.) In the end we decided to let the inmates keep their vegetables.

In July 1946, we distributed 35,000 Pacific Packs and 100 tons of American C rations, and in September 1 million tins of curried fish were received for distribution to holders of ration card 5.

No exit visas for Russian vegetables

Meanwhile, our practical problems and difficulties continued. My notes for 2 August 1946 contain the following entry:

> While supplies during the first two decades (i.e., 10-day periods) showed a considerable upward trend, supplies for the third decade were completely stopped by order of the Russian authorities. No allocation has since been made to the Non-Soviet Sectors, and the Russian order has now been extended to cover Free Market supplies. An instruction has also been received by the VBK Food Offices from the Association of Berlin Vegetable Wholesalers ordering VBKs to hand over all white cabbage, cucumbers, tomatoes and fruit grown within the VBK. On instruction from HQ, Military Government, VBK Food Offices of Wilmersdorf and Charlottenburg have been instructed to ignore this order.

I cannot recall the reason for this Russian action. It was a reprisal taken by them to indicate their displeasure at something done by the Western Allies, placed us in considerable practical difficulties and served to illustrate

our reliance on their help. At the same time it was designed to impress the Berliners with the extent of their superiority. In this it did not succeed – at any rate in the Western sectors. Nevertheless, it was a serious blow, and we had to take immediate action to alleviate the effects. My notes continue:

> A central fruit and vegetable market has been formed in order to ensure that the supplies produced in the market gardens and municipal allotments reach the population quickly and with as little loss as possible. The market will be run by the *Bezirksamt* as a municipal concern. The *Gartenbauamt* (Gardening Department) will be solely responsible for supervision, production and planning, while the Food Office will be responsible for the collection, transport, allocation and distribution of the produce.

Our Food Conferences reflected these concerns. We produced an assessment of all agricultural ground in the city and laid down a target output of 8 tons per hectar. With the exception of grain and potatoes, this produce had to be sold to the Food Office at the official fixed price. Any surplus could be sold on the free market. Holdings of up to half a hectar were not subject to any control.

The Russian prohibition was still in force on 3 September 1946, when I wrote my last report before being demobilised:

> This VBK, in common with the remainder of the British Sector, had to make do with its own produce, amounting to approx. 32 tons, during August. An improvement on the July situation was effected by the pooling of the resources of the British Sector. This resulted in additional supplies reaching the VBK from Spandau. The situation is, however, still very unsatisfactory, and it is hoped that city-wide distribution will soon be resumed.

12

The Cigarette Economy

WE WERE THE APOSTLES OF THE FREE MARKET; but such a market could only function when supply and demand of essentials were roughly in balance.

Among the ruins of Berlin, in 1945, such a balance was nowhere in sight. We could only aspire to it as a long-term target, in opposition to the Communists for whom the planned, centrally controlled economy was the ultimate goal. Berlin was the only place in the world where the victorious allies found themselves in immediate and uncomfortable proximity as well as in an unfamiliar relationship: they were facing each other across a board room rather than the customary conference table. At the level of the *Kommandantura* their primary task was to deal with the practical problems of administering a great city; but they were fighting the political propaganda battle as well. It soon developed into a rivalry for the support of the population, which was later to culminate in the creation of the two Germanies.

Meanwhile, we had to share out what was available, and I found myself in a crucial position between the policy makers of the Allied *Kommandantura* and the newly-appointed German administrators who were directly responsible to me for the daily survival of our civilian population. This chapter therefore reflects my concentration on detailed implementation. It may well contribute facts and figures to past history which may not be readily available in present records.

A thriving Black Market

The quest for extra food during what the Germans called 'the Year Zero' was universal. It inevitably led to a thriving Black Market. Cigarettes assumed the nature of a desirable and easily negotiable currency. Their acceptance was not by any means confined to food alone!

'Lucky Strike', 'Chesterfield' and 'Camel' dominated a market in which American supplies easily led the field. British 'Player's Navy Cut' and similar cigarettes were less plentiful, but there was no shortage of customers for them. The strong, dark French 'Gaulloises' catered for a

clientele who regarded a chronic cough as fashionable; and Russian cigarettes, mounted on their distinctive cardboard tubes, gave their smokers the illusion of holding an exceptionally elegant cigarette between their lips. They tended to circulate in the East, but also had their devotees in the Western sectors – especially among the ladies. They reminded them of the coloured Turkish cigarettes which I remembered from my childhood, and which had been fashionable before the War.

The German cigarettes which gradually appeared on the market were dismissed by Berliners, with their wry and cynical humour, as *Handgranaten* – hand grenades: *'Anzünden und fortwerfen'*, they said – 'Light and throw away!' Among the less affluent, cigarette papers and 'roll-your-own' gadgets enjoyed wide popularity. Their supplies of tobacco came from discarded 'fag ends' – locally called *Kippen,* which were eagerly picked up from the pavement.

'Oriental carpets in cowsheds'

Most other commodities also found ready takers in this return to a barter economy. This market assumed many forms. Householders with goods to exchange set out into the country, laden with articles which they wanted to barter with farmers in exchange for food. A story made the rounds among Berliners to the effect that many farmers in the neighbourhood of the city refused to accept oriental carpets, because even the floors of their cowsheds were by now covered with them.

As Food Officer it was one of my tasks to help the Military Police and the civilian authorities in their strenuous but largely vain efforts to stop something which had the force of a natural phenomenon. It was clear to my colleagues and me that only a return to more normal economic conditions could, and eventually did, radically cure this sickness.

Meanwhile, the *Kommandantura* tried to counter this situation by authorising the establishment of official 'Exchange Markets', where people could barter their possessions. It was not an unqualified success and attracted criticism from many quarters. The head of the *Magistrat's* Price Control Department was not far off the mark when, in December 1945, he described the arrangement as providing an official excuse for the black market.

In my first report, on 12 October 1945, I tried to sum up the situation in the following words:

Charlottenburg VBK is particularly exposed to black marketeering in foodstuffs on account of the large number of restaurants, cafés, bars and similar establishments within its perimeter. Restaurants are willing and capable of paying enormous sums for food from any source. But the remainder of the population also consider trading on the Black Market as a normal and, indeed, essential means of implementing their rations. ...

The Russian authorities permit the unrestricted sale of foodstuffs after their stated requirements have been met, and it would appear that the majority of supplies from that source find their way into the Black Market.

On 27 October 1945, I repeated what every street-wise Berliner had long learnt by practical experience:

The principal Black Market RVs are:
(a) Brandenburger Tor
(b) Lehniner Platz (off Kurfürstendamm)
(c) Alexanderplatz

Prices vary at each place and therefore offer possibilities of considerable profits to Black Marketeers who buy articles at one place and then sell them at a profit at the next RV. This 'Stock Exchange' seems to have reached considerable proportions.

Below is a list of prices, in Marks, charged on the Black Market for some commodities:

Chocolate:	75 per pound
Coffee:	550 per pound
Tea:	450 per pound
Butter:	500 per pound
Margarine:	300 per pound
Meat:	90 per pound
Sugar:	65 per pound
Flour:	40 per pound
Bread:	100 per loaf
Milk Powder:	150 per pound
Onions:	900 per cwt
Potatoes:	250 per pound
Vegetables:	300 per pound
Pepper:	200 per pound
Liqueur:	550 per bottle
Coal:	700 per cwt
Petrol:	40 per litre
Suits (second hand):	2,500

Overcoats (do.):	3,500
Cloth	1,000 per metre
Silk Stockings:	150 per pair
Shoes (second hand):	1,500 per pair

I have since puzzled why cigarettes, the highly mobile commodity which formed the basis of the black market, was not included in this official list. I can only surmise that the price, which fluctuated around 10 Marks per cigarette, was so well known that it did not require special mention.

Whenever I could, I accompanied the military and civil police on their rounds. It gave me an impression of life as it was, not as it appeared in other people's reports.

In my report of 4 February 1946, I noted:

> The general stocktaking of food which took place on the 30 and 31 January throughout Berlin provided a good opportunity for a check on some of the popular Black Market restaurants with which this VBK is particularly afflicted. ...
>
> When I called at 16.00 hrs I found the examiner vainly trying to gain access to the locked cupboards containing the files and accounts of the restaurant. The proprietor at first denied having received the circulars (containing the instructions concerning the inspection), until they were found lying on the kitchen table! ...
>
> (In another restaurant) the owner took great pride in showing me round the premises, and in evident ignorance of my appointment confided that he had recently bought a considerable number of rabbits, 'shot in the Grunewald', for 200 Marks each ....
>
> One can obtain a meal without coupons for approx. 300 Marks in this restaurant. In order to give these transactions some appearance of legality, it is said that the waiters ask the guests whether they have coupons. If the answer is in the negative the waiters regretfully inform the customers that 50 Marks would have to be paid for every missing coupon 'as a deposit'. ...
>
> The examiner was found in the manager's office, assisted in his efforts by a half-empty bottle of liqueur, and did not altogether appear at ease.

Burglary – a profitable underground profession

Chronic shortages led to the perpetual problems of burglaries and pilferage, which in turn were essential sources of supply for the black market.

In my report on 27 October 1945, shortly after taking up my new post, I found that:

Theft and pilfering of foodstuffs is on the increase. Fourteen burglaries from food shops occurred during the period covered by this report. The following list shows the quantities involved (in kg).

Fat:	90,455
Flour:	604,200
Sugar:	379,360
Cereal:	172,950
Coffee:	30,830
Coffee Subst.:	88,700
Potatoes:	3,350,000
Milk Powder:	59,750

The position became progressively worse. Six months later, on 16 April 1946, I wrote to the head of the *Ernährungsamt*, the Food Office:

The burglaries of food shops in this VBK continue to increase. A comparison between the figures of food lost to the population during January, as compared with the corresponding figures for March, shows the following increase expressed as a percentage of the January figures:

Sugar:	225%
Fat:	345%
Flour:	614%
Cereals:	242%
Tinned milk:	582%

The *Kommandantura* became seriously worried about the effect of these losses on the general supply situation. The VBK Food Officers were told to act. I therefore continued:

This upward trend will be stopped. W.e.f. the date of this letter any food shop or restaurant which loses food through any cause will be closed automatically. Every case will be reported to this office forthwith.

The onus for preventing losses of foodstuffs rests with the shopkeepers. Burgled shops will remain closed or transferred to trustees unless shopkeepers can prove that they had taken every reasonable and possible precaution to prevent the burglary.

In addition, Charlottenburg set up a Burglary Commission, which I reported on 3 June 1946:

In view of the constantly rising number of food thefts, this Department

> ordered the immediate closing down of all burgled food shops w.e.f. 16 Apr 46. Instructions were issued to the Bezirksamt to form a commission to investigate all burglaries, and to forward their findings and recommendations to this Department for final decision. The Commission is composed as follows:
>
> 1. Chairman: Bezirksrat Carlbergh, Trade & Ind. Dept.;
> 2. Bezirksrat Lindenberg, Food;
> 3. Representative of the food shop-keepers, Herr Lindner;
> 4. Representative of bakers, Herr Kikow;
> 5. Representative of butchers, Herr Kaiser;
> 6. Representative of the trade unions, Herr Beckmann;
> 7. Special Investigation Department, Herr Sammel.
>
> The Commission is meeting every Tuesday and held its first meeting on 21 May 46. Its work so far fully appears to justify its existence.

One difficulty which caused me much concern was the fact that such successes as we managed to achieve were frequently frustrated by the slow and ponderous progress of cases through the German courts. The judges had of course been instructed to adhere to the hallowed principle that an accused was innocent until found guilty. Nowhere was the enforcement of the supremacy of the rule of law more vital than in post-Nazi Germany. On the other hand, the legal system was still in an early state of reconstitution, the judges were uncertain and sometimes inexperienced, and the defence lawyers were not slow to exploit a highly profitable situation. As I commented in my report to Headquarters on 3 June 1946:

> The time lag between the commission of an offence against the food laws and the trial of the offenders by the German Courts has led to consultations between this Department and the Chief Public Prosecutor, Dr Dalibor. As a result a special court under Amtsgerichtsrat Bahro, dealing exclusively with food and Black Market offences, has been instituted in this VBK. It will sit weekly, and it is hoped thereby to achieve a considerable improvement.

Our Military Government Courts, dealing with cases involving Allied personnel, naturally followed the same stringent criteria concerning the admissibility of evidence as we demanded from the German Courts. I pointed out their consequences in the following words:

> The acquittal of the (Allied) proprietors of the ... restaurant, accused of

various Black Market offences, has considerably prejudiced the effectiveness of the measures taken to combat this evil. The charges were dismissed on account of conflicting evidence by German witnesses, who created doubts as to the legal maximum prices for certain commodities. The ... restaurant had been under close observation for more than six months, and was known to be one of many large-scale Black Market concerns in the VBK.

One result of the acquittal is the strong reluctance of the VBK Price Control Office to initiate proceedings against offenders, since the ... , having been accused of similar offences, was acquitted by the British Intermediate Court.

It is recommended that the position regarding maximum prices be clarified as soon as possible.

In July 1946, these all-pervasive Black Market problems helped to persuade our Military Government Headquarters to launch an official Public Opinion Survey into the food supply situation; but this investigation was conducted in what I thought was the mistaken belief that, after twelve years of a régime in which children had been rewarded for spying on their parents, the public could be persuaded to give honest answers to official interrogators to the following delicate questions:

Do you obtain food in addition to your ration card?
(Yes: 53.4%, No: 45%)

Do you have confidence in your shopkeepers?
(Yes: 80.0%, No: 9%, No opinion: 10.2%)

Do you have confidence in the fair distribution of food in restaurants?
(Yes: 8.6%, No: 22.6%, No opinion: 68.8%)

Do you think that the authorities are combating the Black Market successfully?
(Yes: 46.2%, No: 33.8%, No opinion: 20.0%)

Can you suggest any additional measures which might help to curb the Black Market?
(Yes: 41.0%, No: 35.3%, No opinion: 23.7%).

We did not ask the 41 per cent who claimed to have new ideas on dealing with the Black Market to give us the benefit of their views. Perhaps it was just as well.

Despite all difficulties, a modest degree of success attending our efforts was demonstrated by the fact that on 2 August 1946 I was able to report the following results:

Only four burglaries of food stores have been reported for the period under review. This compares with burglaries in the previous months in 1946 as follows:

March: 34; April: 34; May: 15; June: 7; July: 4

This confirms the effectiveness of the measures taken to reduce the number of burglaries in the VBK, viz. automatic closing down of burgled shops and the formation of the Burglary Commission.

In my last report before demobilisation, on 3 September 1946, I was able to record that only two burglaries had taken place in August.

13

A Parliamentary Purview

ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE AT 21 ARMY GROUP – which had involved me with questions dealing with the redistribution of German industrial equipment to countries devastated by Nazi invasion, and the assumption of the victors' responsibilities for the feeding of former enemies – had accompanied me to Berlin. This time, however, I was not simply sitting in an office, dealing with statistics. Now I had come face to face with physical problems which could only be solved by political decisions. They were not mine to make; I had merely become responsible for implementing food and transport policies at the ground level, and in the face of emerging differences between East and West. But I continued my efforts to remain in step with the trend of opinion among the British public, while Members of Parliament increasingly tried to cope with a complex post-war situation, and came over to see for themselves.

What about our future policy?

In May 1946, I received an order from the Head Quarters of British Military Government, addressed to 'All Officers, incl. Kommandatura', headed 'Object of Military Government, British Sector of Berlin.' It seemed a highly desirable attempt to reexamine our policy on the basis of the staff officers' practical experience. In the words of our chief:

> The first anniversary of our entry into Berlin will soon be here, and it is time that all officers take stock of the situation and reorientate themselves wherever necessary.
>
> Our object on initial entry was to effect the necessary supervision and control.
>
> That was a short term policy and the DDMG (Deputy Director of Military Government) now desires to redefine our object so that every officer is clear concerning our intention. ...
>
> To make the maximum use of the experience gained by officers of this HQ and, also, to differentiate between sections, whose objects are not entirely the same, the DDMG has decided that every officer, military and civilian, will express his or her ideas.

To do this, every officer will – within a maximum of 200 words and as an individual effort – submit his or her conception under the following headings:

(a) factors or information

(b) object or intention.

In my section on 'Factors or Information' I expressed the view that 'Nazi ideology still exerts a dominating, often sub-conscious, influence on the majority of the population', and that the Nazis were blamed by a significant number, not so much for having started the war, as for having lost it. In my experience, the co-operation of the present German administration with Military Government was good, and often sincere, but they tended to rely on us for too many minor decisions.

My section on 'Objects or Intention' therefore came to the following conclusions:

Political: The primary object of Mil Gov must be the eradication of the mentality which allowed the German people to create, support and tolerate the Nazi regime.

The German Administration: Requires firm, exemplary and sympathetic guidance. It must be taught to work more independently along the lines laid down by Mil Gov.

The Food Situation: Adequate feeding of the population, particularly of the children, is the physical counterpart of reeducation. Maximum German food production must be encouraged.

Black Market: Maximum control is essential.

While I welcomed the opportunity of putting my ideas on paper, and giving them direct access to the policy makers, I regretted that I was limited to a maximum of two hundred words. It made for over-simplification of a highly complex subject.

It would have been interesting to see my colleagues' recommendations and the Military Government's resulting conclusions; but that was obviously too much to expect. At any rate, I knew that my highly-condensed views were largely shared by fellow officers with whom I discussed the subject.

Members visit the 'Zentral-Magazin'

In the summer of 1946 I was informed that a British Parliamentary delegation was due to visit Berlin. I was appointed to be among the

briefing officers. My visiting team would be conducted to the *Zentral-Magazin at the Funkturm*, 'to inspect Charlottenburg Food Distribution Centre', at 10.45 hours on 21 June 1946. The visitors would include Messrs A.E. Baxter (MP for Wood Green, Middlesex), R. Ewart (Sunderland), Lord Halden, H.M. Medland (Drake, Plymouth), A.H.E Molson (High Peak, Derby), F/Lt D.J.P. Parkin (Stroud, Gloucester), I.L. Thomas (Keighley, West Riding) and T.E. Watkins (Brecon and Radnor). My task was to brief them on the food situation in Berlin.

I was issued with a copy of the delegation's programme. It showed that I had just forty-five minutes before they had to return to Lancaster House on the Reichskanzler Platz in order to meet the Deputy Military Governor.

How, I wondered, could I demonstrate to Parliamentarians the reality of life in a capital city trying to recover from a devastating defeat, in which the staple foods were strictly rationed to minimal quantities? In which supplies were subject not only to physical limitations, but also to political influences? In which virtually everybody regarded resort to the Black Market as an essential supplement to their meagre, and usually inadequate, diet? In which burglaries of food shops and stores had reached prohibitive proportions?

A conventional lecture supported by masses of statistics was not likely to be effective in the short time available for a group facing a busy round of visits. I decided to base my briefing on an exhibition in the famous exhibition hall, much of it now reduced to ruins, showing the actual weekly amounts of food distributed to the various groups of ration card holders. I displayed the exhibits on a row of trestle tables, silhouetted against the background of cracked outer walls, on a concrete floor under the open sky. The information was supplemented by coloured block diagrams, erected behind the actual food rations. They illustrated the set targets as well as actual supplies received and distributed. Fortunately, the visit took place on a dry day. On being ushered into the *Zentral-Magazin,* the delegates were clearly shaken by the setting in which our meeting had to take place.

They inspected the displays with keen interest. As I had hoped, the exhibition immediately helped to trigger off a lively discussion. The Parliamentarians were intrigued by the fact that I had sampled the Group V ration for a week. An unprecedented and controversial bread rationing measure had just been introduced in Britain in an attempt to alleviate world-wide hardship. The evidence they now witnessed somehow seemed to confirm the justification for this post-war sacrifice.

In the ensuing discussion we all agreed that we now had to come to

terms with some radical modifications of our attitudes. We could not, and certainly should not, forget the crimes committed in the name of the German nation, which we had just revealed in all their horror. We were engaged in the difficult task of eradicating the evil elements; but at the same time we had inherited survivors of all descriptions for whose government we were now responsible. We were doing our utmost to safeguard their – and our – future.

Our forty-five minutes were soon up. The escorting officer reminded my visitors that the Deputy Military Governor was looking forward to welcoming them at Lancaster House. An interesting meeting had come to an end.

Reactions in the House of Commons

> I have had the privilege of being a Member of the Select Committee of this House which recently visited Berlin and the British Zone. ... We returned from Germany late at night on Friday, 5th July, and by last Thursday this Report had been produced. ...
>
> This Committee, which visited Germany, will certainly achieve fame or notoriety, if for one reason only. That is, we have brought before Parliament and the people of this country the astounding fact ... that we, the victorious nation, are, 12 months after the cessation of hostilities, subsidising some kind of Government organisation in Germany. That has never happened before. *(Hansard, Vol. 426, Col. 589).*

These are W/Cdr Hulbert's words about his delegation's report during a major debate in the House of Commons on 29 July 1946. The report disclosed that the estimate calculated by the Control Office for Germany and Austria reached a net cost to the British taxpayer of £80,554,310 for the year 1946-47. The report went on to comment that it was probably without parallel in history that, twelve months after the end of a war, Great Britain should be paying £80 million a year towards the upkeep of her principal adversary. About 16 per cent of the total to be imported during 1946 would be taken from the United Kingdom.

As predicted, the Report revived a considerable split. The Rt Hon Oliver Lyttleton commented from the Opposition benches:

> The Report of the Select Committee uses strong language, but hardly strong enough, about the great paradox of a victorious nation subsidising its conquered enemy to the tune of £80 million a year, more than a year after victory has been won. The Committee describe the situation as probably without parallel in history. ...

> I think the best way to describe the nature of the great paradox is to say that this country is now spending a little under £2 per head of the population per annum on the direct support of the German people who fought against it with such ferocity and such cruelty, and a little over 5s. per head of the population per annum on the support of its Colonial Empire and the Colonial subjects of the Crown, who fought for us during the war. *(Vol. 426, Col. 530).*

Replying for the Government to Mr Lyttleton's criticism, the new Minister of State, Mr Philip Baker, put the issue succinctly:

> We could not in the future afford to have Germany in a state of economic misery and depression ... because it is our interest and the interest of the world that Germany should make her proper contribution to the wealth which the whole world must share. *(Vol. 426, Col. 541).*

This current view represented a major change of policy. Mr Lyttleton's attitude had evidently been shared by the incoming Labour Government in August 1945, when the newly-appointed Financial Secretary to the War Office, F. J. Bellenger, had stated in a Written Answer:

> No supplies from UK food stocks have been sent to Germany for consumption by German civilians, and it is not anticipated that any such supplies will be so sent. *(Vol. 413, Col. 639).*

Only five months later, on 30 January 1946, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, John Hynd, who had been put in charge of the Control Commission, confirmed in the House of Commons that a rapid change of policy had taken place. He had, no doubt, been strongly influenced by the news received from Military Government. Food imports from the UK into the British Zone, he said, had amounted to 78,865 tons between 1 September 1945 and 15 January 1946. A further 280,000 tons had been bought by the UK from other countries in order to prevent disease and unrest. *(Vol. 426, Col. 589).*

Statistics quoted by the Lord President of the Council, The Rt Hon Herbert Morrison, only five months later, on 31 May 1946, showed further substantial increases in essential food supplies sent from the UK to the British Zone in Germany *(Vol. 423, Col. 589).*

I discussed this subject with a number of individuals representing a spectrum of views. I found that Parliament's changing opinion was gradually gaining acceptance even among people who found it impossible

to forget the horror they had seen or suffered. Most observers, however, also combined their view with the depressing belief that this policy would impose major sacrifices on the victors for at least another 25 years. Lt-Col Rees-Williams, the Member for Croydon South, expressed this widely-held opinion during a debate on 18 March 1946. He predicted that we would have to garrison Germany for at least 25 years, and emphasised that we would have to make up our mind about that. *(Vol. 420 Col. 1621).*

It was left to Walter Fletcher, Member of Parliament for Bury, who had spent years of his business life in Germany, to predict a rapid recovery, with all its benefits as well as its potential dangers:

> We are going to see in Germany an enormous economic recrudescence such as was seen after the 1914 war. ... There is no doubt that the competition from German industry, working gradually up to a full scale, will be felt enormously in the markets of the world. *(Vol. 427, Col. 1555).*

His lonely prediction, made during a lively and controversial Commons debate on 22 October 1946, was fulfilled more quickly, and with far greater impact on economy and politics than was expected. Events were soon to prove how even the best-informed politicians misjudged the pace and direction of history in the aftermath of the war; and how such views continue to influence the heated debate on Britain's future place in Europe.

I was able to witness these developments at first hand. Twenty-six years after this Commons debate, in June 1972, I returned to Germany with a British delegation to study the vocational training system. I recalled Fletcher's forecast of Germany's rapid recovery as we toured the Rhineland and visited government departments and employers' and trades unions' headquarters in Bonn, Cologne and Düsseldorf. Britain was now on the point of belatedly joining a European Economic Community in which the Federal Republic of Germany was the leading economic pace-setter, and on the verge of gaining a dominating influence on European policy.

By a strange twist of fate, which is recounted in the Epilogue, I would find myself back in Berlin in the 1970s and 80s. Once again I would be in a position to witness an epoch-making transformation of Europe's fate and to play a minor role in its implementation.

14

Contrasting Capitals

THE GERMANS OFTEN REFERRED TO THE END of the war as the start of 'The Year Zero'. It aptly summed up their feeling. My arrival in the shattered capital shortly after the end of an appalling past, and at the start of an impenetrable future, gave me an opportunity which could never be repeated. I found myself in a fortunate position to explore a rapidly changing situation on which the world's attention was focussed.

I was also enabled to compare Berlin's conditions with two other European capitals: in November 1945, my brother and I paid a memorable visit to Copenhagen; and our second excursion was made possible by the permission given to British troops to spend a 'privilege leave' with relatives living outside the United Kingdom. In the summer of 1946, we therefore headed for the capital of Switzerland, that isolated sanctuary of European peace. It made me realise that I had almost forgotten the image of a city which had suffered neither physical nor mental damage. The comparisons were staggering.

Berlin's lost oasis

My varied duties as Food and Transport Officer of Charlottenburg were interspersed, and often combined, with a succession of explorations of my former home city. On one occasion I drove from West to East – both in a geographic and a political sense – which took me right through the ruins from new Berlin to what was left of its origins across the River Spree. From the Reichskanzlerplatz my way led me in a dead straight line along the Kaiserdamm and the Bismarckstraße to the circular Große Stern with its Siegessäule – the Victory Column commemorating Prussia's victories of 1864, 1866 and 1871 over the Danes, Austrians and French. It was now perforated by Soviet shrapnel.

The road continued in a straight line along the triumphal route of the Charlottenburger Chaussee (renamed *Straße des 17. Juni* in memory of the East Berlin uprising against the German Democratic Republic in 1953). It led me through the Tiergarten, which I remembered as an oasis of trees, lawns, flower beds, and a restaurant with an 'English Garden'.

My parents told me that during their engagement they used to meet each other here. It adjoined a pretty lake, called *Der Neue See* – the New Lake – where one could hire rowing boats.

The Tiergarten was now a desert. Here and there, small allotments were now trying to produce vegetables for a hungry population. The trees in the park had been felled for firewood. The lake had been turned into a muddy swamp. The earth had been churned up by tanks and ploughed up by shell craters. Many of the heavy statues of Prussian monarchs and generals lining the demolished Siegesallee were lying, smashed, where violent explosions had hurled them. The western end of this wasteland was dominated by one of the enormous, sky-high, heavily steel-reinforced concrete air raid shelters which were strategically situated around the city and offered protection to thousands of Berliners. It was called a *Bunker* and had proved to be impregnable, even to direct hits.

Overlooking this apocalyptic scene was a large wooden structure in the Charlottenburger Chaussee. Three towers, commemorating the Potsdam Conference and displaying pictures of Truman, Stalin and Churchill, rose from it like warning fingers into the sky. From this platform the Allied generals had taken the salute during the combined Victory Parade in September 1945. This temporary structure was later dismantled. In its vicinity the Russians had erected an impressive war memorial, constructed of rocks and marble recovered by Russian engineers from the ruins of Hitler's near-by Chancellery.

A few hundred yards further along the road I reached the border between the British and the Soviet sectors, where the Tiergarten District rubbed shoulders with Berlin-Mitte. The Brandenburger Tor was its unmistakable hallmark. A red flag waved from the lop-sided quadriga, which looked as if it had been perforated by a surrealistic sculptor. To the left stood the burnt-out and battle-scarred ruin of the Reichstag. The wide open space in between had become one of Berlin's most prominent Black Market *rendez-vous.* During its 'busy season' it tended to stretch into the Tiergarten; and British Military Police, as well as newly-recruited Berlin policemen tried to pursue their respective suspects.

The Unter den Linden avenue, beyond the Brandenburg Gate, opened a way into the Communist sector. The avenue's famous double row of lime trees had disappeared, together with its prestigious buildings. An empty shell was all that was left of Berlin's most exclusive hotel, the *Adlon.* The historical buildings – museums, the Humbold University, churches, royal residences – created by generations of classically-inspired architects along the Unter den Linden, lay in ruins. Crossing the river Spree, I noticed several men, standing on the banks near the ruins of the

Royal Palace, patiently trying to catch fish in the dirty and polluted river in order to supplement their meagre rations.

Past the ruins of the Palace and the burnt-out Berliner Dom, I continued into the Alexanderplatz. I remembered it as a pulsing, crowded centre of commerce and trade, where I had occasionally visited my father's factory. I now found a vast expanse of ruins in which people moved listlessly.

A visit to Hitler's Chancellery

A visit to the ruins of Hitler's Chancellery was part of a Parliamentary delegation's mission which had to be cleared with the Soviet Army. I was appointed liaison officer and accompanied the group. It included Leslie Hore-Belisha, a former British Secretary of State for War, later raised to a peerage. Hore-Belisha happened to be Jewish, and so attracted the special venom of Goebbels' press. I remembered that they tended to pervert his name by calling him 'Horeb-Elisha'.

This was my first opportunity to inspect the centre of the *Tausendjährige Reich,* Hitler's 1000-year German Empire, on whose ruins we were now standing twelve years after its foundation.

The inner courtyard was still partly blocked by burnt-out armoured vehicles. We entered a seemingly endless, high-ceilinged corridor to the right of which monumental doors led to a succession of offices. Every conceivable space seemed to be decorated with the Nazi party emblem. The dimensions were vast, the shapes severely rectangular. Everything was clearly designed to convey a sense of Hitler's overwhelming power. His aim was to delight his supporters and to create a sense of fear in his opponents.

The Red Army had stormed this last redoubt on 2 May. It appeared that the troops had vented their feelings by smashing and tearing up everything in their way. The floors were strewn with documents of every description. I found papers bearing Himmler's signature confirming the promotion of officers, as well as piles of Hitler's personal note paper and official telegram forms and batches of his 'Ex Libris' labels.

Here I also found a copy of the penultimate issue of *Der Panzerbär,* dated 28 April 1945, only two days before Hitler's suicide and four days before Berlin's surrender. It was a well-produced four-page paper replacing the press which had ceased to exist, and conveyed a vivid picture of how the propaganda machine continued to fool the German public – and itself – with absurd claims of successful resistance and promises of ultimate victory. Its editorial bore the title, 'A Holy Word: Berlin!' It said:

> From Berlin came the orders of the *Führer* during the war which, despite all difficulties. gave peace and order, work and bread to Europe occupied by us ... From Berlin, Hitler's orders are again issued for the battle of liberty which makes world history. ... In Berlin we shall defeat Bolshevism decisively. That is why the *Führer* is in Berlin. He stands on the most vicious battlefield known to history. He is surrounded by the most fanatical soldiers known to us. ... The attitude of Berliners and the irrepressible battle spirit of its defenders will defeat the Bolsheviks. ... The world's enemy will be beaten here.

Hitler's demolished office was located some way down the ceremonial corridor. It was easy to imagine the succession of Czecho-Slovak, Polish and other emissaries being led along this passage, escorted by an intimidating armed 'Guard of Honour', to be received at the entrance to Hitler's office by his SS bodyguard. The office itself was enormous. Hitler's desk was located at the far end of the room. The hapless emissary was faced with a long walk across this expanse. It can have done little for his self-confidence.

We then found ourselves in the labyrinth of linked subterranean bunkers which had formed the command headquarters from which Hitler had tried to direct the final battle, and where his macabre wedding to Eva Braun had taken place prior to their and the Goebbels family's suicide.

As a fitting end to our tour of inspection, we made our way through a tunnel back into the open. We found ourselves in a courtyard which contained a large open hole surrounded by some empty German Army jerry (petrol) cans. Our Soviet liaison officer informed us that this was the grave in which the Russians had found the burned corpses of Hitler and Eva Braun.

Mil Gov – the 'Silent Partner'

On another occasion I explored the depth of the Soviet sector on my own. The road took me in a north-easterly direction into a part of the city which I would not normally have had occasion to visit. Communist and Soviet posters were now liberally sprinkled over every conceivable public space in the East. The SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* – United German Socialist Party), newly-founded in April 1946 in order to combine the traditional Communist and Social Democrat Parties in the Soviet Zone, but vetoed by the Social Democrats in the West, was frantically trying to attract votes. Here I found further evidence of the growing East-West conflict. It would shortly lead to the creation of two antagonistic German States.

We often discussed the period which we thought would be required to restore a normal, civilised pattern of life to this ruined city. Some experts hazarded a guess that the clearance of the daunting mountains of rubble might take something like twenty years before serious reconstruction could begin. As is shown in the chapter, 'A Parliamentary Purview', this widely-shared estimate, which took shape in 'The Year Zero', clearly influenced political thinking in London; but by the time I left Berlin a year later it had become evident that these planners had greatly underestimated the city's determination and ability.

In August 1946, the *Magistrat* organised three versatile exhibitions to declare its faith in Berlin's future, and to demonstrate its achievement, barely 15 months after the city's collapse and surrender.

Berlin im Aufbau ('Reconstruction in Berlin') was mounted in a rapidly restored building in the Unter den Linden. *Berlin plant* ('Berlin's Plans') presented the first progress report in the ruins of the *Schloß,* the Royal Palace, shortly to be totally demolished. And the *Sommergarten am Funkturm,* the 'Summer Garden' exhibition close to my office in the *Messehallen* had created an attractive excursion and local holiday centre for Berlin's population surviving among what was still an environment of ruins.

These displays represented an impressive claim to progress against daunting odds, a mere 15 months into 'the Year Zero'. The catalogue, with its contributions from Dr Werner, the *Oberbürgermeister* (equivalent to Lord Mayor) down to departmental heads, summarised its achievements convincingly. I read it with interest – and with increasing puzzlement as I came towards its end: it did not contain a single reference to the work, or even the existence, of Military Government and its political, administrative, economic and social functions.

Indeed, Karl Maron, the first deputy *Oberbürgermeister,* in his contribution, wrote: 'We do not wish to count on help from foreign lands. We hope for it and welcome it, but we do not rely on it. We approach our giant task for the creation of a New Berlin in a sober spirit, but inspired by our willpower and capacity for work.'

With other Military Government officers I shared a worm's eye view of our efforts to alleviate Berlin's hardship, and knew that the British taxpayer was contributing some £80 million in 1946 for the import of food into the British Zone of Germany. The Berlin *Magistrat,* on the other hand, evidently seemed to feel that its public's morale would benefit from the omission of any reference to Allied help. Yet we were all concerned with solving problems which had been caused by Hitler's war, and by many of his citizens' fanatical obedience to his insistence on total destruction.

A visit to Copenhagen

In November 1945, my brother and I paid a short visit to Copenhagen. I collected him from Hamburg, where he was responsible for the German press, and we drove up through the attractive landscape of Schleswig-Holstein. Some of the fertile fields lining the road were still littered with the remains of our gliders, which had been towed to the target area.

We crossed into Denmark near Flensburg, drove across the enormous, undamaged Fredericia bridge which spanned the Jylland peninsula with the island of Fyn, and enjoyed the well-preserved town of Odense with its Hans Christian Andersen Museum. It vividly reminded us of our childhood tales. Then we crossed the Store Belt to the island of Zealand. Its road to Copenhagen led us through a gentle, hilly landscape.

We almost did not make it. We could not find a petrol station and our fuel meter indicated with increasing urgency that our tank – even when guzzling up the contents of our petrol jerry can – would run dry before we reached the capital. At the top of each hill I therefore switched off the engine, coasted downhill and as far up the next crest as the remaining impetus would take us, and by sheer good luck we finally limped into hospitable Copenhagen.

We were warmly greeted by a population who never ceased to give thanks for their liberation from Nazi oppression. It had been gentle by comparison with most other occupied countries, because the German race theorists had added the reluctant Danes to an 'Aryan' brotherhood which the great majority of these Scandinavians firmly rejected. The sheer supremacy of German might had ruled out the use of physical Danish resistance; but its passive opposition was increasingly obvious as Germany's final victory became open to doubt.

The King had demonstrated his country's magnificent morale by wearing David's star on his tunic when the Germans had ordered the Jews to do so; and the Danes had succeeded in a dangerous attempt to evacuate many of their 7,000 Jewish fellow-citizens in small fishing vessels to Sweden when it became known that the Gestapo was planning to deport them to concentration camps.

We were shown some public buildings which had been reduced to rubble by the British and American air forces, with the Danes' painful approval. The former Shell Petroleum Company headquarters, we were told, had been taken over by the Gestapo, who imprisoned Danish resistance fighters on the fourth floor, kept their secret records on the first three floors and used the basement as torture rooms. Eighteen British and 28 American planes carried out a raid on 21 March 1945, aiming to confine their hits to the three middle floors. They succeeded with their

objective, but suffered the loss of nine planes. One of them crashed on a near-by school and set fire to it. Following planes mistook the conflagration for its target and killed 112 Danish civilians. Public opinion mourned this disastrous accident, but nevertheless warmly thanked the Allies for the attack, which had taken place with wide-spread Danish support.

We left Denmark with feelings of deep gratitude.

A happy Bernese encounter

When we crossed the border into Switzerland in the summer of 1946, my brother and I created quite a stir in our British uniforms in a country which prided itself on its traditional neutrality. The welcome we received showed where the bulk of the public's sympathy lay. Most people were clearly delighted that the threat on their borders had finally been removed. They regarded the protective measures taken by their Government as justified and indeed essential. Some of those, however, who had witnessed the human agony inflicted by Nazi persecution expressed concern at the way in which the Swiss had barred their frontiers to many of the refugees who had been trying to save their lives. This feeling was countered by the widely supported argument that their country had been too small to accept more than a token number of refugees for internment. Moreover, the Swiss had also been forced to comply with German demands to enter into some regrettable economic links in order to preserve their fragile independence; and they could not neglect the presence of a small but potentially dangerous minority of Nazi spies and sympathisers. All of this had made them vulnerable to the risk of a German invasion which had now been happily removed.

Meanwhile, the long-awaited end of war-time perils now gave us a welcome opportunity to renew our contacts with a part of the family hitherto shut off from contact with us, and to enjoy their generous hospitality. It showed itself in a number of unexpected everyday happenings: Geoffrey and I liked the unaccustomed luxury of a real boiled egg for breakfast, and Aunt Lotte duly obliged. We had much catching up to do and were endlessly engaged in bringing each other up to date across a gulf of some six momentous years. Every morning, while our breakfast was bubbling on the cooker, and we were chatting away, Aunt Lotte failed to notice that our eggs had meanwhile turned into a solid, rock-like substance. Undismayed, she lined up the hard-boiled eggs on the kitchen window sill and launched a new consignment. The conversation then continued, until she realised that these eggs, too, had

shared the fate of their predecessors. The intensity of our discussion could always be measured by the length of the queue of hard-boiled eggs lined up on that window sill. Nevertheless, we always got our soft-boiled, three-minute eggs in the end. This, to us, seemed the very height of unrationed bliss.

The blessings of peace surrounded us on all sides. Generations of an industrious and frugal people had steadily built a city which had not known the destruction of war for centuries. The ancient foundations of Bern had been gradually augmented by buildings created in the changing styles of each succeeding generation, and now formed a logical and harmonious whole. We admired the many mediæval fountains in the city's thoroughfares and the sweep of the broad, fast-flowing Aare in its deep-lying river bed as it wound its way through the capital. We went to an organ concert in the great cathedral; walked in the deer park behind our uncle's home in the Jubiläumsstraße; fed the bears, whose image features in the city's coat of arms; and generally imbibed the unaccustomed atmosphere of a nation at peace.

Our visits included Uncle Julius's studios, which afforded a spectacular panoramic view across the Aare to the old city. He proudly showed us the cartoons on which he and his artists were then working. They included a film for the Swiss Federal Railways, commemorating their hundredth anniversary. It was a humorous tribute to a network whose legendary punctuality, spectacular routes and spotless cleanliness we were later able to admire.

We spent the final days of our leave making a rapid circular tour through Switzerland. From the German-speaking part – where dialects which are unintelligible to ordinary German-speakers vary from valley to valley – we travelled to Italian-speaking Lugano and Rhaeto-Romanic Sion and came to French-speaking Montreux on Lac Leman. Each of these peoples not only spoke different languages, but also represented different cultures and religions and followed widely divergent traditions in their 22 cantons. Yet they all shared a fierce loyalty to their Confederation and to a democracy modelled on the ancient Greek city state. The country's philosophy, it seemed to me, was poetically summed up in a German inscription engraved above the portals of a house in Interlaken: *Lasset uns am Alten, so es gut ist, halten. 1599.* (Let us preserve those ancient customs which have proved their worth). Coming straight from the ruins and misery of war-torn Europe, we admired the common sense of these people, who had managed to combine diversity and democracy in peaceful co-existence.

At our lake-side hotel in Montreux an English couple with their off-

spring were seated at the next table. Civilian travel abroad had just been reintroduced in the UK. Our neighbours formed the vanguard of a rapidly growing army of tourists who were trying to make up for lost time, despite stringent currency controls which allowed only a tiny travel allowance.

A *sole meunière* was served. It was done to perfection, served with the professional skill which comes naturally to the Swiss, and tastefully decorated with a sprig of parsley and a slice of lemon. Junior tried the parsley, did not like it and turned to the lemon. He apparently had not seen one before, put it into his mouth and started to chew. His look of surprise turned to shock and disgust as he spat it out. 'Mummy', he shouted, 'I don't like these Continental dishes!'

15

Jewish Experiences in Berlin, 1945-46

WHEN I WAS POSTED TO THIS CITY of my birth in September 1945, I wondered how I would react emotionally to what I feared could be a nostalgic and bitter experience. It turned out to contain both of these components; but I was glad to find that they were overtaken by other, more positive influences. My appointment enabled me to intervene effectively and positively in the events facing me; and I was convinced of the justice and fairness of British policy in Berlin. I carried it out with conviction and was particularly glad that its implementation enabled me to make a small contribution to the alleviation of Jewish hardship.

Jewish events, actions and contacts therefore intermingled with the rest of my activities during this climax of my Army life in Berlin. They form a kaleidoscopic picture in my memory.

A tribute to my grandparents

I knew that my paternal grandparents, Joseph and Berta Pinschewer, had been buried on the large Jewish cemetery at Weißensee, on the north-eastern outskirts of Berlin. Jewish cemeteries had been largely destroyed, or at best allowed to decay during the Nazi dictatorship. I therefore did not hold out much hope of finding their grave intact; but I wanted to visit their place of burial and at the same time pay tribute to the memory of all my family.

After a long drive through East Berlin, I reached Weißensee and turned into the Lothringenstraße. Even after twelve years of physical persecution and intense bombardment from land and sky, it was possible to identify faded inscriptions in German and Hebrew lettering on the dilapidated house fronts, in which a past generation of Jewish craftsmen had offered their services as stone masons.

In the office I was received with courtesy and promptness by an efficient staff. The names and dates of birth and death of my grandparents were all that the clerk wanted to know. From a wooden box containing a set of ancient index cards which had grown yellow with age, she promptly produced not only the location of the grave, but also informed me of my

grandparents' last address. She warned me that, although the card index had been saved, she could not say whether the grave itself was still intact.

I began my slow walk through the cemetery with a feeling of apprehension; but I found that, unlike many other Jewish cemeteries throughout occupied Europe, Weißensee had not been deliberately devastated by Nazi hordes. It had continued to be used by the rapidly disappearing Jewish Community and included those of its members who had committed suicide in preference to deportation, as well as partners of mixed marriages. I was filled with great sadness at the thought of the many members of the Community who would normally have been buried here had met violent deaths in distant concentration camps and now had no known graves.

I was amazed and relieved to find my grandparents' gravestone still standing in its place. Nearby, I also found the grave of my great-aunt Henriette, the mother of my uncle Julius, who was now living in Switzerland.

A considerable time passed before I felt able to return to my car.

Unfortunately, the restoration did not keep pace with the on-going decay of the cemetery after the Wall, erected by the German Democratic Republic in 1961, divided Berlin into rigidly segregated sections. When I revisited Weißensee forty years later, the stone marking my grandparents' grave was one of many which had disappeared among thick layers of weed. I hope it will be rediscovered and restored to its appointed place.

The first Purim in Berlin

One day, early in 1946, a lively, cheerful and intensely active man of about my age arrived in my office. He wore a uniform similar to that of the Civilian Officers of the British Control Commission and introduced himself as the newly-arrived head of the London-based Jewish Relief Unit. This is how I met Charles Spencer. He later became the leader of the well-known Brady Boys' Club in London's East End. Following his invitation in the 1950s, I joined the Club's managers for several years after my return to London.

On this occasion he asked whether I could help the Jewish survivors in connection with their arrangements for the first Purim festival to be celebrated after the Holocaust.

I considered it my privilege. Special ration allowances were available for the pathetically small number of persecution victims who had survived, and I ensured that these allowances were made readily available.

Purim was the first Jewish festival which I, too, wanted to celebrate

since my arrival in Berlin. I was therefore delighted when the head of the city's tiny reconstituted Jewish Community invited me to be their guest at the Schöneberg Town Hall on 17 March. Accompanied by my newly-found cousin, Margot Cohn, and Charles Spencer, I joined the Purim congregation around the dinner table.

The meal was frugal, but it was blessed with prayers of thanks. The guests, in threadbare, neat suits and dresses, were half trying to smile with happiness at the restoration of a life they had almost given up, and half crying at the irreparable destruction of family and friends.

After the meal, Charles and I distributed sweets and chocolates among the few children who were present, and talked to our new friends. One of them told me about his missing wife, Esther.

'Her name-sake was luckier in the Persian Empire 2,500 years ago', he said. 'That's what we are celebrating today. That's what Purim is about.'

We recalled a story in our distant Jewish history: it had an uncanny resemblance to events which destroyed the majority of our present European generation. We remembered that Hitler's predecessor, Haman, the Grand Vezier, had meticulously prepared the wholesale slaughter of his country's large Jewish citizenry and that Esther had listened to her uncle Mordecai's advice and succeeded in persuading her husband, the Emperor Ahasuerus, to save the Jews, and to hang Haman instead.

After a sad pause, with a sob in his voice, this man said: 'My Esther is still missing. Somehow – and I don't know how – we all have to come to terms with the loss of millions of human beings who gave fulfilment to our own existence. Twentieth century technology has become a servant to barbarism in our generation!'

Mr Fishbein's DP Camp

The official designation, 'Displaced Persons', stood for the survivors of persecuted people rendered desperate, lonely, homeless, hungry, poverty-stricken and often sick, as a result of deliberate Nazi policy.

The nearest DP Camp to Charlottenburg was located in the neighbouring US Sector in Zehlendorf. I visited it on a number of occasions and struck up a friendship with the Camp's director, Mr Fishbein, who was an official of the American Joint Distribution Committee – popularly known as 'the Joint'. This organisation represented the combined efforts of America's Jewish charities and made a leading contribution to raising not only the survivors' physical well-being, but also their morale.

But it was hardly surprising that those finding themselves once again confined to the hated discipline of a camp, impatiently turned to Mr

Fishbein for reassurance, comfort – and action. He was middle-aged, round and jovial and needed his sense of humour, humanity and fair play. His protégés made full use of it. Many of them could not rid themselves of the nightmare of the past and the fear of an uncertain future which they felt powerless to influence. After the initial euphoria of liberation had worn off, they had emerged into a world which seemed to give precedence to its national policies and domestic concerns. It appeared unable, and sometimes unwilling, to distinguish between sufferers who had been helpless victims, and those who had helped to cause distress before their own misfortune had overtaken them as a consequence. These hapless and hopeless camp inmates feared that their unspeakable experiences had for ever set them apart from the rest of society. I was one of the diminishing number of Military Government staff officers who, as a result of personal experience, was painfully aware of the different causes and effects.

My official duties fortunately involved me in some positive activities in connection with the 'Diplaced Persons'. I was glad to be able to play a small personal part in ensuring the implementation of the *Kommandantura's* decision to allocate a ration of 2,000 calories per person to political refugees. One of my tasks, combining both my transport and food responsibilities, was to provide buses for the DPs who were leaving for settlement overseas. We arranged to serve hot meals before their departure and distributed travel rations. I have a note of one such operation. It bore the code name of 'Jericho', under which we sent six vehicles to the Pionierstraße in Spandau, and fourteen to Kruppstraße in Tiergarten in July 1946, to help in an operation which was close to my heart. It enabled me to bid farewell to a number of people whose acquaintance I had made while they had told me of their experiences.

A cousin returns from Auschwitz

The end of the war marked the beginning of a world-wide search by survivors and their families for the millions of relatives and friends who had disappeared without trace. The International Red Cross became a vital channel of communication between searchers and the multitude of agencies which held some form of official record.

The Gestapo had meticulously documented their activities, including the performance of their extermination camps. These statistics were, however, limited to those who had been pushed into the queue selected for slave labour. This brief extension of the victims' lives was certified in Auschwitz by an indelibly tattooed serial number on their right arm. The

lists were used by the Gestapo to claim their rewards from the war industry. Those of whose death no record was kept included the elderly, the children and the sick. They were considered expendable, and dispatched, unrecorded, to the gas chambers immediately upon arrival at the concentration camp. But even the number of recorded victims was so vast, and the documents were so dispersed, that in many cases years elapsed before the records had been processed.

Early in 1946, my parents told me that the Red Cross had informed them of the return from Auschwitz of Margot Cohn, a distant cousin on my father's side. I had not previously met her. She now lived at the Argentinische Allee 88, in the American sector in Zehlendorf. This small, temporary home was crowded with survivors from various concentration camps.

Margot was in her mid-30s. She was delighted to have found a relative, however remote, but tended to hide her feelings under a cloak of artificial liveliness. She refused to discuss her experiences in Auschwitz in any detail, on the grounds that I could not possibly understand what she had experienced. My approach probably did not help. I felt hesitant, and feared that any signs of inquisitiveness about her suffering might awaken intolerably painful memories. Her feelings, on the other hand, might have been hurt by my reticence to share her problems.

The scars left on the victims' souls were often deeper and more enduring than the injuries inflicted on their bodies. With my background, I should have been well aware of these consequences. In an analytical way I could claim that I was; but direct contact with those involved revealed to me the depth of their emotions. I became aware that my own fortunate salvation prevented me from fully sharing the overwhelming consciousness of their suffering.

Before being sent to Auschwitz, Margot had spent some time at Theresienstadt, a camp used as a staging post to the gas chambers. It had once been a small Czech garrison town to which the Nazis frequently took International Red Cross delegations investigating the treatment of detainees, to demonstrate what they claimed to be the 'progressive' nature of their 'preventive detention'. This grossly overcrowded prison camp had a Jewish administration, strictly regulated by the Gestapo. In anticipation of visiting Red Cross delegations, the Gestapo usually improved Theresienstadt's presentability by reducing the overcrowding and sending truck loads of excess humanity to Auschwitz. As a memento, my new friends at Argentinische Allee presented me with samples of the special Nazi-issued currency circulated by the SS for use in the camp,

bearing a picture of Moses holding the Tablets of the Law; and a blue/white cloth badge with a deportee's registration number which had been worn on the flimsy, striped prisoner's garb.

My visit to Zingster Straße

When visiting Margot, I asked to be introduced to as many survivors as possible. In this way, I met Regina Weiß and her 12-year-old daughter Ellen at the temporary shelter which Margot was sharing with others at the Argentinische Allee.

When I prepared to leave Margot and her friends, I found that Regina and Ellen had to make their way to their distant flat in Gesundbrunnen by public transport. They gladly accepted my offer of a lift to the underground station, and I promised to visit them in their flat to learn more about their experiences. Little did I imagine that the English equivalent of the name of this VBK, in the French sector, had a significance for my long-term future. It bears the ancient German name of *Wedding.*

As promised, I made my way to the Gesundbrunnen Underground Station. Branching off the square, I found Zingster Straße, a short, crescent-shaped street lined by neatly kept tenement buildings. It had been lucky to escape destruction.

As I stopped my staff car outside No. 9, I became aware of being furtively watched from many curtained windows. I climbed the staircase to the flat on the second floor, to which Regina and Ellen had returned. Their former neighbour, Mrs Krüger, who played a prominent part in saving Regina and Ellen, continued to live in the flat opposite. I was fortunate to meet her later. She was one of the remarkably ordinary citizens with an extraordinary sense of fairness and humanity whose fearlessness contributed to saving Regina and Ellen. Her help is recorded in *Ellen's Chronology,* together with the not inconsiderable number of others who risked their own lives, and those of their families, to rescue the persecuted.

I was warmly received by Regina in a home which, together with Ellen, she had once shared with her missing husband; a place where brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews had met to share their joys and sorrows. All but one member of their close family had disappeared.

While Regina told me more about her life, she offered me refreshments. The security of supply which the Allies now ensured seemed heavenly to her after having been denied entitlement, not only to food, but even to survival, for nearly three years. My awareness of this appalling experience

was limited, first to rumours, then to increasingly firm reports. It was exemplified by the letter which a Nazi *Blockleiter* had sent to a baker on 8 February 1942, had found its way onto my desk – and now into Chapter 11 of this book. Once again I became aware of the fact that this evidence was merely words which the readers' experience had to interpret, but to which their imagination would find it very hard to do full justice.

Ellen listened attentively and with a degree of understanding and sensitivity which I found moving. She was tall for her twelve years, pretty, her hair neatly plaited and reaching down to her shoulders. Her large eyes looked at a new world in which she was now beginning to grow up. Her reaction to me makes interesting reading in her *Chronology* under '1946'.

This was the first of a number of visits before my demobilisation six months later. My admiration for the courage and warmth which enabled Gine and Ellen to face the future after the dreadful ordeals through which they had passed grew into my friendship with them. It survived through letters in which we kept each other informed over the years of the way in which our lives developed. My close relationship with Ellen, which culminated in our wedding, did not, however, mature until we were able to get to know each other more closely in the early 1980s.

16

From Uniform to University

MY WORK IN BERLIN HAD BEEN INTERESTING. The working conditions had been congenial. For a 26-year-old I had carried a responsibility and enjoyed a prestige which only very exceptional circumstances could create. What I had been doing had met with the obvious approval of my superior officers in British Military Government. It had also been appreciated by the German administrators with whom I had established a good working relationship; but life was moving on, and I had to make some far-reaching decisions about my future.

The British Army had established a time-table for demobilisation which was based on a combination of length and nature of service and family circumstances. Both Geoffrey and I had accumulated a considerable credit balance by virtue of six years' active service and were entitled to be demobilised in the autumn of 1946.

Meanwhile, the officers seconded to British Military Government were gradually being replaced by British civilians employed by the Control Commission for Germany (CCG). Some Army officers, however, were encouraged by offers of promotion to stay on. I was one of them; and the prospect of several more years in 'Mil Gov' seemed superficially attractive. But military government was clearly of limited duration – although at that time it seemed very much longer than it turned out to be – and its work did not offer qualifications for alternative appointments or, indeed, a recognised career structure of any kind. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education offered university scholarships to suitable ex-service candidates, provided that they satisfied entry requirements.

My work in Military Government had kindled my interest in the inter-relationship of economics, politics and administration. These topics also seemed to offer a variety of worth-while career openings; and the London School of Economics enjoyed a world-wide reputation for teaching and developing these disciplines.

First contact with the LSE

I was given special leave to fly to London to attend a selection interview.

The School was just in the process of returning to its London home at Houghton Street from St Peter's College in Cambridge, to which it had been evacuated to escape German air raids. The windows were still partly bricked up, and everything seemed to be in a state of hurried transition. In this atmosphere I was asked to write an essay on world affairs and was then subjected to a searching examination by the interview panel. The examining tutor next called me into his study. He looked quizzically at my captain's uniform, and his eyes rested for a moment on the campaign ribbons on my chest.

'You have expressed some interesting ideas', he said, 'but your style is somewhat on the emotional side.'

'That may well be so', I replied. 'But it is difficult to have passed through my experiences and not to have been influenced by strong feelings and reactions.'

'I accept that', he said, 'but you must realise that it is our function to develop a detached academic approach.'

His comment gave me much food for thought. It was clearly justified. An academic treatise had to rely on cool, clear, balanced analysis without the use of evocative adjectives. But I did not think that this was the complete answer. The rock of the LSE's existence, I thought, was founded on the moral belief of its founders – and they were inspired by the urge to improve conditions for social reform in a democratic environment.

Fortunately, my emotions did not stand in the way of my admission as a 'Mature Student' on an Ex-Service Government Grant.

After my selection interview I returned to Berlin, to hand over the Food and Transport Departments to a Control Commission Officer. The time had come to say good-bye to my friends and colleagues. My stylish quarters at Ulmenallee 18 were the location of a crowded farewell party on 21 September 1946. With mixed emotions I took leave not only of them, but also of the prestigious existence of a staff officer and, beyond this, of an important, formative chapter in my life.

Some of my last days in Berlin were spent bidding farewell to my friends among the diminishing number of Holocaust survivors. My cousin Margot had already joined her mother in the New World. Regina and Ellen were among those who remained in Berlin, waiting desperately, but in vain and with diminishing hope, for the return of husband and father, and the host of other close relations who had vanished in the concentration camps.

Back to 'Civvy Street'

Geoffrey and I applied to be demobilised together. We joined a long khaki queue at the Military Disembarkation and Dispersal Unit in Guildford on 29 September 1946, to collect our 'demob outfits'. The underwear was scratchy, the shirt was stiff, the suit did not quite fit, the shoes pinched; but this did not matter. We felt we had done our bit to help defeat Nazi Germany and marvelled at the fact that we were able to return alive and uninjured. We were looking forward to the reunion with our parents and the challenges of a peaceful future.

My 'Release Certificate, Emergency Commissioned Officers – Regular Army' confirmed that I would be on privilege leave until 15 December 1946, and would be entitled to wear uniform up to that date. I also received a letter from the War Office, recording the Army Council's thanks for 'the valuable services which you have rendered in the service of your country at a time of grave national emergency'. I was granted the honorary rank of Captain and informed that I was entitled to use that rank in the future.

For most of the home-coming servicemen and women these thanks and privileges represented nothing more than polite formalities. For former refugees, who had been able to demonstrate their devotion to Britain, it was tangible proof of acceptance by their adopted country.

There just seemed to be a slight hitch with the timing of the official adjustment of our out-dated status. Illustrating that our Government Departments did not always proceed at the same pace, and that the naturalisation machinery at the Home Office seemed to be lagging a little behind the War Office, Geoffrey and I were requested to produce our long-forgotten Aliens Registration Books at our local Police Station at West End Lane and to supply up-to-date photographs.

We did not have any regulation-size passport photos; and so we went to our local Polyphoto shop, who produced some excellent likenesses. We then duly reported to the police sergeant. He looked at us in bewilderment: we appeared before him in full service dress uniform – Geoffrey a Major in the Intelligence Corps, and I a Captain in the Royal Fusiliers – complete with our campaign ribbons. His embarrassment was clearly increased when we handed him our excellent photographs. They recorded our military status with exceptional sharpness. He had no option but to affix them to our Registration Books. The expression on his face, as he reluctantly returned them to us, seemed to indicate that he shared our feelings.

In the event, we never had occasion to use these books, and our naturalisation was duly formalised a little later.

President and Dishwasher

This incident did not interfere with the unhindered start of our civilian existence. Geoffrey set out on a long and successful career as a publisher, while I, with a large crowd of undergraduate students, duly turned up at my new Alma Mater. It lacked the dreamlike quality of 'Oxbridge', but it was strategically located in the heart of Britain's capital, adjoining the High Courts and close to Whitehall and the Houses of Parliament on one side, and the City of London's financial and economic centre on the other. The newly-elected Labour Government was engaged in trying to recover from the severe damage suffered in the war, while at the same time creating the much-desired Welfare State. We were sitting right in the middle of the debate which was swirling all around us. And the academics contributed to the arguments.

We were a unique crowd of students: the great majority of us consisted of recently demobilised servicemen and women in their mid-twenties. Being short of civilian suits and dresses, many of us at first turned up in uniforms; and their ribbons bore witness to the hard-learnt lessons of life they had acquired during their campaigns in many countries. The traditional teen-age students formed a small minority that year. Some of the lecturers, on the other hand, were recently qualified academics, younger than many of their war-experienced students and, if attractive ladies, were evidently a little embarrassed by the critical, non-academic appraisal to which they were occasionally subjected by their male students.

My scholarship grant proved exceedingly limited. I augmented it by frequently helping for an hour with the canteen's washing-up at lunch-time, to qualify for a free meal by way of payment. I did not object to this extraordinary contrast between my life as a privileged staff officer and an impecunious student. I was not alone in this process of transition. Life at LSE proved exhilarating and stimulating.

We were reminded that one generation ago the LSE had seen a similar spectacle. Professor Lionel Robbins, doyen of our leading economists and later created a Life Peer, recalled that he, too, had returned as a demobilised and somewhat disorientated soldier after the First World War, looking for a saner world. He was powerfully built, with an impressive, lion-like mane and spoke to us with convincing logic as someone who had shared our experience in his own youth.

Among the many friends I made at LSE, some shared my background. Their subsequent careers illustrate the degree to which they succeeded in integrating themselves with the country of their adoption and contributing to its public life. One of them was Claus Moser. Born in Berlin like

myself and also a British ex-serviceman, he was a Lecturer, and later Professor in Statistics at the LSE. In 1961, he was appointed statistical adviser to the Prime Minister's Committee on Higher Education, which was chaired by Professor Robbins, and later became Director of the Central Statistical Office and Head of the Government Statistical Service and Director of the Economic Intelligence Unit. Upon his retirement he was appointed Warden (i.e. Master) of Wadham College, Oxford; and the many civil and academic honours he received include a knighthood.

Ex-service personnel faced a number of problems; and the Students' Union set up a committee to help them. I found myself appointed chairman of this body. It evidently brought me to the notice of many fellow-students who did not fancy extreme political trends, and I found myself elected as the Union's President in the following year. It proved an absorbing and time-consuming activity.

One of our fellow-students who was too young to have been called up during the war was Bernard Levin. He tried to compensate for his youth by proving beyond doubt that he had an enterprising and innovative mind. My contacts with him began quite hilariously when I was President of the Students' Union. He nominated a candidate for election to the Union Council in the person of David Marshall. Candidates had to be introduced by their proposer to the Union at one of its weekly meetings. Bernard Levin explained that his nominee's absence was due to a cold and asked permission to speak for him. I promptly gave it, and he proceeded to describe Mr Marshall's many qualifications with accomplished eloquence. His candidate was duly elected – and was then discovered to be a phantom in Levin's imagination. The Union 'punished' him by sending him to the Prince of Wales Theatre to review 'Harvey' for the Union's 'Clare Market Review'. It was a play appropriately containing a phantom rabbit in its cast. I like to think that the writing of this theatre review helped to provide a useful start to a well-known career as a prolific journalist, writer and broadcaster, which has been rewarded with a CBE.

When the time came for me to hand over the Union Presidency to a successor, a friend asked me whether I would advise him to offer himself for election. I thought that on balance it was well worth it, even though at that time the Union's senior officers were not granted an additional year's study to compensate for the virtually full-time job they had to perform. That omission was remedied shortly afterwards. John Burgh was duly elected as my successor. Born in Vienna, he joined the Civil

Service and eventually became Director-General of the British Council in the 1980s. He was given a knighthood and, on retirement, was appointed President of Trinity College, Oxford.

I did not exaggerate my description about the work of a President of the LSE Students' Union who was trying to combine this function with a crowded and demanding three-year course of studies.

My Father's death

The second year should have represented a climax of my life at LSE, but it was overshadowed by my father's death on 1 March 1948. He was only 65 years old. It seemed a relatively young age to Geoffrey and myself at a time when we were in our mid- and late twenties. Our mother helped to bring his life to a blessedly peaceful end. We deeply mourned his death, but it had been our fate to witness the indescribable fate of most persecuted victims and found solace in the fact that he had escaped deportation to a Nazi Concentration Camp in 1938, found refuge in England and had been able to join his wife in celebrating the reunion with their sons after the war in 1946. These were our thoughts as we laid him to rest at the West London Synagogue's cemetery. The strength with which our mother bore his loss proved an inspiration to us.

17

South Africa on the brink

AT THIS MOMENT OF OUR BEREAVEMENT, our father's elderly sister, Margaret Samuel, living by herself in South Africa, urgently needed someone to look after her. Geoffrey now had a full-time job; and so I suddenly found myself on a Union Castle liner, with my Government grant transferred during the summer vacations from the LSE to the University of Cape Town. As tugs manoeuvred the ship into the harbour, I saw a lonely figure waiting on the distant dockside, dressed in mourning black, and knew instinctively that this was my Aunt Margaret. We had not seen each other for some thirteen fateful years, during which time she had done much to help the family. Now in her seventies, and ailing, she was hoping that my necessarily short stay with her would persuade the family eventually to join her in South Africa.

I was not so sure. I felt uncertain about the kind of society which I was likely to find – and my doubts soon grew into certainty. Having so recently taken part in the defeat of Nazism, I was at first optimistic enough to hope that racism had been dealt a final blow, at least in civilised countries; but once again I found myself involved in a political upheaval which seemed to have all the ingredients of a bloody conflict. Cape Town University offered an exceptional place for observing a Commonwealth country's slide into a racist abyss.

I arrived with an introduction from the LSE to Professor W. H. Hutt, the head of the Economics Faculty. He was obviously pleased to renew his personal contact with someone from the LSE. His faculty's colleagues, no less than my fellow-students, in turn began to induct me into South Africa's economic problems. During this process I found it a strangely flattering sensation that my personal links with LSE academics seemed to enhance my own reputation. Their papers were frequently quoted with respect, and a glance in my direction occasionally appeared to seek my confirmation. As a second-year undergraduate with many other preoccupations I was hardly in a position to do justice to these expectations, but it felt good!

Professor Hutt entered into lengthy discussions with me, during which

he explained the complex conflict in which his country was involved, but also wanted to know how a 'mature student' with my unusual background reacted. He invited me frequently to his home at Bantry Bay, an attractive suburb on the outskirts of Cape Town; and on one occasion we climbed to the top of the Table Mountain. Its famous white 'table cloth' of a cloud, which had been spread out along the flat mountain top, had given way to blazing sunshine. From its commanding height we looked down at the city lining the shore below us, and at the shimmering sea beyond. No spectacle could have been more enchanting, or made it clearer that in discussing life in this vast country we were not just dealing with an abstract, academic topic in the Economics Faculty.

An academic approach

It was not long before I became better acquainted with South Africa's real impact on the public and private lives of its mixed population. The Economics Department included representatives of a school of thought which condemned racial differentiation. It supported a path to equality, but only in combination with the fulfilment of certain conditions: it would be subject to gradually raising the level of education and training of the 'non-Europeans' to that of the 'whites'. In this way the under-privileged majority would gradually advance to a state of economic equality. In the fullness of time this would equip them to acquire civic rights and enable them to discharge the obligations of political franchise. It seemed a modest policy to me, but was apparently regarded as a daringly advanced doctrine by a majority of those who were entitled to cast their vote.

Jewish undergraduates formed a significant proportion of my fellow-students. They represented a prosperous section of the 'white' population, but were close enough to the memory of racial persecution which had driven their parents or grandparents out of Eastern Europe. Those who had a conscience – and there were many of them – tried to come to terms with this self-evident conflict by interpreting the existing laws in the most charitable way and supporting liberal tendencies in politics. Things were not going their way; but it was not only affairs at home which gave rise to unease. The fate of Europe's surviving Jews was also watched with anxious concern. The momentous events which led to the proclamation of the State of Israel were therefore greeted with relief and gratitude, mixed with anxiety. On Sunday, 16 May 1948, all Synagogues held special Services of Intercession and Dedication. I attended the overcrowded Synagogue at Sea Point, where an emotional Service ended

with a recital of Jewish songs. I was surprised to find that it was performed by my friends, the Hamburgers, who were on a concert tour of South Africa. They were a well-known British couple whose husband, the accompanist, had himself been a refugee from Nazi persecution.

Echoes of Nazi doctrines

I was immediately brought face to face with the reality of racial persecution when I began to attend lectures. Cape Town was one of the few South African Universities offering places to 'non-European' students. This privilege was subject to limitations: it forced them to occupy seats at the back of lecture halls and segregated places in the Refectory. These sights sickeningly reminded me of Nazi practices. I occasionally chose to demonstrate my protest by sharing their tables with them at meal times, secure in the knowledge that my stay in South Africa was limited. The authorities ignored me. Perhaps they regarded my gesture as an ineffective interference by an over-idealistic crackpot from overseas.

The Students' Union were sufficiently interested to invite me to address them on my British experience and seemed particularly fascinated by my war-time career.

'Three years ago', I told them, 'British troops over-ran the notorious Concentration Camp at Bergen-Belsen, in Westphalia. My unit happened to be just a few miles away, and next day we saw official photographs of the scenes which had met our soldiers' horrified gaze. The Officer Commanding my unit happened to be a South African captain seconded to the British Second Army, and I was his Second-in-Command. We were both appalled by what we saw, and he readily agreed with my suggestion that we should prominently display the photographs at our headquarters and order the local population to file past this dreadful exhibition. It was a revealing experience, and I was glad that it was a South African officer who was involved. It seemed to be a welcome omen for an end to world-wide racial atrocities.'

My subsequent experiences in Berlin also seemed to arouse a good deal of fascination, and I found myself the subject of an article in the *Cape Times.*

The British National Union of Students asked met to represent them at NUSAS, the South African National Union's Annual Conference in Pietermaritzburg that summer. My Aunt Margaret encouraged me to accept the invitation; and so I joined the Cape Town delegation. For two days we travelled by train in a north-easterly direction, crossing the

interminable Great Karroo desert. Its burnt scrub land had just experienced a downpour. This, I was told, was a most unusual occurrence. It had transformed the desert from its usual brown scrub into an untypical and picturesque riot of colourful vegetation.

On and on we chugged into the burning sunshine and through a star lit night, stopping at irregular intervals at tiny stops. Tough-looking, deeply sun-tanned farmers with bulging muscles, who reminded me of characters in American Wild West films, met the train to receive goods and load produce, helped by their black servants. Occasionally, at some of the larger stations, like Bloemfontein, we had time to visit a refreshment room. At that stage I became aware of some rolling stock, resembling freight wagons, attached to the end of the train. That was not unusual in itself. What surprised and shocked me was that they contained some of our fellow-delegates to the Pietermaritzburg conference. They represented the segregated higher education establishments. What distinguished them from us was the colour of their skin. It excluded them from the use of ordinary carriages, and they were not allowed to use the stations' buffets. Some of us therefore distributed a few desirable items amongst an appreciative crowd. I would not have been surprised or shocked if I had detected an active spirit of revolutionary opposition – but I didn't. I only became aware of their resentment later, during their defiant eloquence at the conference.

And so we continued our journey. We next skirted the mountains of Basutoland – a former British High Commission Territory, later known as the Kingdom of Lesotho, and widely described as a 'hostage state', totally encircled by South Africa. Reaching its northern apex, we turned eastwards, entered Natal and eventually reached the small town which was our destination.

The Conference debates mirrored the heated political diatribes renting the country as it approached its crucial Election. In the middle of these altercations I was called upon to convey the greetings of the British NUS. Then followed a debate on the future relationship of South African Universities with those in the rest of the world. A motion about links with the International Students' Union was finally approved by a narrow margin. Shortly afterwards, however, it led to a drastic reaction: some Universities, including Cape Town, disaffiliated from NUSAS. It gave a foretaste of the national electorate's verdict on the future conduct of race relations.

Cape Town University was a privileged and popular centre for campaign leaders trying to attract the white citizens who were entitled to vote in the impending General Election. The University's Jamieson Hall nestled

against the slope of the Table Mountain massif and looked down upon the statue of Cecil Rhodes, contemplating the wide, green expanse of the Cape Flats and the misty outline of the mountain ranges beyond. In this evocative setting I listened to General Smuts, who made a confident plea in favour of reelection. In my eyes, he was only second to Churchill as a Commonwealth war-time inspiration.

On the evening of the General Election Professor Hutt had invited me to be his guest at a concert in the City Hall. I was greeted by a pleasant surprise: the conductor turned out to be none other than Sergiu Celibidache, whose artistry I had come to admire when he had taken charge of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra two years earlier.

After the concert, when we emerged into the town square, the first results of the General Election were flashed on the screens. A tangible shock wave went through the crowds: the Nationalists were winning and, to top it all, Smuts had been defeated in his own constituency! He suffered the indignity of having to accept a seat vacated in his favour by a supporter.

A new Parliament meets a radical Government

I was invited to attend the opening session of the newly-elected Parliament. It was situated in the ancient Municipal Gardens, laid out several centuries earlier by sailors planting vegetables for provisioning their ships. Exotic trees and tropical flower beds were now set against the magnificent background of the Table Mountain and the classically proportioned buildings. I found myself in a Chamber closely modelled on the British House of Commons. General Smuts delivered his first speech as Leader of the Opposition.

'We have lately heard a great deal about the Colour Bar. What do you mean by it? What is your policy', he asked, waving an Order Paper about with an impressive gesture and looking across the Chamber at the new Prime Minister.

'If you go to the station today you will see what we mean.' This was the voice of Mr Sauer, the new Minister of Transport, a fat, jovial man whose interjection was greeted with loud laughter on his side of the House.

I had just been to the station and knew what he meant: 'Vir Blankies – Europeans Only' said the bold, black letters on a wooden plank to those who could read. A railway official was fixing it to the carriage of a suburban train.

Dr Malan, the new Prime Minister, had more to say. He addressed his newly-conquered Parliament with an eloquence which he had clearly

acquired as a former Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, before he had turned into a powerful and single-minded politician. I had been told that, as a member of the South African Government in the 1920s, he had been responsible for introducing Afrikaans as an official language; and so I was not surprised that he replied to Smuts's questions in that language. Fortunately, I found it sufficiently close to German to be able to follow the outline of his sentiments. This was only the beginning, he explained. The Government were planning, for instance, the removal of non-European students from the Universities and the setting up, instead, of Native Colleges. That this measure had the support of South African students, he said, was shown by recent disaffiliations from the National Union of South African Students, particularly that of the University of Cape Town.

Dr Malan's Party had been notorious for their pro-Nazi sympathies and had strongly favoured neutrality during the war. He now introduced his new Government's programme with evident relish.

A message to LSE from South Africa

I was asked to write a report for the *Clare Market Review*, the LSE Students' Union's journal and summed up my impressions in the following words:

> The difficulty of understanding the South African political scene lies mainly in the profound differences which distinguish hers from the British social framework. These differences have led to a strange confusion of political terminology. It is a country where the 'Labour Party' conceives its major function to be the prevention of the penetration of non-Europeans into the skilled trades; where 'Liberalism' is frequently regarded as synonymous with 'Communism'; and where political evaluations are, on the whole, largely determined by the individual's attitude to the racial problem.
>
> The visitor is bewildered by the extent no less than by the quality of the problem facing South Africa. It is hard to reconcile the warm individual hospitality of many of her people with the inflexibility of their attitude to the all-pervading racial problem – an inflexibility which tends to regard external criticism as undesirable and ill-informed interference in domestic affairs, and internal opposition to the prevailing attitude as little short of treason. The visitor is conscious of the underlying motive of fear which seeks solution, not in the gradual emancipation of the non-European, but in his suppression. In an atmosphere making for extremes, the short-term view prevails. For the sake of an unstable *status quo* great opportunities are

> missed and the voice of moderation, though it has great exponents, carries little weight. The most striking feature of South African life is the apparent inability or unwillingness of most leaders of public opinion to realise that in their racial policy they are moving backwards in terms of international political evolution.

I ended my article in 1948 by saying: 'It is a depressing picture, and the visitor, leaving South Africa with a feeling of sadness, watches the towering mass of the Table Mountain merge into the sky-line and hopes that South Africa may find a way out of her dilemma before it is too late.'

This sentiment not only reflected a generally held opinion, but also explained my personal rejection of Aunt Margaret's request that my family should join her in South Africa. What I had witnessed seemed to confirm my decision. I did not believe that my hope of an acceptable solution stood a chance after the Election. I felt certain that the point of no return had now been passed, and that only the timing of the outbreak of a disastrous civil war was in doubt.

My view represented the overwhelming majority of observers, who did not dare to hope for the miracle performed by Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk forty-six years later.

Epilogue

TREATING THE FIRST TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS of my life as the theme for an autobiography, and relegating the subsequent fifty years to an 'Epilogue' is, to say the least, unusual. It does not in any way detract from the fullness and job satisfaction of the rest of my life; it simply underlines the fact that fate decreed my active participation in an historic process of considerable public interest while I was in my twenties.

After my demobilisation, the rest of my working life blended into a more normal, unsensational pattern. I was able to follow an existence which does not need to be recorded for the general public. In this Epilogue, I have merely described some aspects of my career which illustrate my contacts with public life.

Looking back, the outstanding feature of my professional activities was total absorption in Britain's internal post-war development for some twenty years after my graduation. The tide of public life then started to carry me back on frequent visits to Continental Europe and beyond; and by a remarkable coincidence, the newly created Commission of the European Economic Community decreed that Berlin was to become a regular destination for me. It was to exert a crucial influence, not only on my work, but also on the whole course of my future.

My working life began with my appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Economic Research Council and editor of *Economic Digest*. Then I became Technical Officer of the Purchasing Officers' Association – now the Institute of Purchasing and Supply – which involved editorship of *The Purchasing Journal* and responsibility for its student scheme. This, in turn, led me to the Federation of British Industries (FBI) – now the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) – as head of its Education and Research Sections. It brought me into contact with leading industrialists and civil servants, as well as with related organisations. One of these bodies was to become my ultimate professional home. It was the highly-regarded British Association for Commercial and Industrial Education – a nation-wide educational charity known as 'BACIE'.

Return to 'F.E.'

Throughout this period, while my career was beginning to take shape, I found much fulfilment in what was widely and often affectionately known as 'F.E.' (Further Education). This time, however, I found myself at the 'giving' end: an evening lecturer in Economic History and Management at the Regent Street Polytechnic (now the University of Westminster) and at the Brixton School of Building, for some twelve years. But I also wanted to keep abreast of developments on the policy-making and administrative side of the complex world of education. Throughout the 1960s and the early part of the 1970s I therefore also served as the University of London representative on the Governing Body of the Sir Philip Magnus (Secondary Technical) School, in the under-privileged King's Cross area, and later as a governor of the large West London College in Hammersmith. These activities helped to keep me up to date with developments in diverse sections of the public education sector.

As far as my lecturing was concerned, I had not forgotten the lessons about effective instruction which I had learnt as a REME corporal teaching mathematics to craftsmen, and later at OCTU and as an infantry platoon commander. I tried to apply these lessons to my evening students. They deserved it: they came in their own time, after work, and most of them at their own expense. The majority of their employers would neither sponsor them, nor send them on a day release course. These students spent the evening on this course because that is what they really wanted to do. I regarded their presence as a compliment which reminded me of my own technical college days. In return, how could I improve the effectiveness of my teaching?

I recalled the times when students could not help but miss a crucial lecture; and so, at the beginning of each class, we appointed a student as secretary, who produced a set of minutes of the evening's proceedings and read them at the beginning of the next meeting. It brought previous absentees up to date, reminded the rest of what we had done, indicated possible sources of misunderstanding, and built up into a collection of documents recording the progress of our course which was open to inspection by everyone at any stage. This novel approach met with much approval, and incidentally helped to improve the standard of minute-taking and communication.

'A Club called Brady'

In the early 1950s, I accepted Charles Spencer's invitation to join his team of voluntary managers after he had taken charge of the Brady Boys'

Club in Whitechapel on his return from the Continent, where he had been head of the Jewish Relief Unit.

This, he told me, was not just a Club intended to keep the boys off the street: it had been founded by leading members of London's Jewish community as long ago as 1896, to provide what virtually became a second home for the children of poverty-stricken and distressed refugees who had escaped the Russian pogroms which had begun in the 1880s. Many of them had poured into the East End of London – fearful, often jobless, and ignorant of the English language and ways of life. The Club was designed, not only to help them with looking after their children, but also with the task of turning these boys into useful and creative citizens. A girls' club was founded next door. In addition to providing immediate relief and recreational activities, Brady therefore required its young members to take part in a number of specific activities under a manager's guidance.

This work was close to my heart. Brady was trying to give to the children and childrens' children of the 19th century refugees an introduction to a civilised and tolerant society. I knew all about this. Like their parents and grandparents, I had escaped persecution and had been fortunate to be inducted into this country's traditions and life-style with sympathy and understanding. I very much wanted to pass this on to the coming generation. These youngsters, of course, were now British-born; but they were growing up in an under-privileged environment amidst a post-war depression. In this setting, Brady's aim was to add the best features of this country's life-style to Jewish traditions.

I therefore gladly accepted this invitation and was asked to look after the Discussion Group. And so, every Thursday evening, I made my way to the functional club house in Durward Street, close to Whitechapel Underground Station. My Group was attended by those who decided, of their own free will, that this was one of the activities they might 'have a go at'.

It turned out to be a stimulating and practical challenge. What, I asked them, was wrong with the proposition: 'Don't confuse me with the facts – my mind's already made up'? Could I persuade boys to sacrifice some of the precious time devoted to their favourite hobbies to sit down with this group once a week in a bare room on the first floor of the club house, to come to grips with the disciplines of meaningful debate? They chose the topics and often took it in turn to introduce the subject, having done the necessary fact-finding during the intervening week.

This sounds sombre and academic. Even if I had been so inclined, I would not have been allowed to get away with it. Brady turned out to be

an inspired mix of organised chaos and hilarious exuberance: it made short shrift of any pomposity. The discussion group, with a core of regulars and a floating membership at the margin, was anything but an artificial debating society. We had fun, especially when joined by the discussion group from the Girls' Club in neighbouring Hanbury Street. I hoped, not without some justification, that presentational skills and self-confidence would be developed as an incidental by-product.

Some thirty-five years later, a shy but courageous boy who had joined the discussion group suffering from a stammer, sent me a letter. He was now a very successful graduate and thanked me for 'those extraordinarily vigorous and challenging debates in which I participated under your benevolent and tactful direction. ...'

'You will not remember the encouragement you gave me when I struggled to string a few words together in articulation of my thoughts', he continued. 'Nor will you recall the tolerance you promoted in other members of the group. ... That I conquered my speech defect to become a tolerably articulate human being was entirely due to Brady and, very specially, to the discussion group and the man who led it with such gentleness and wisdom'.

I replied:

> I still vividly recall that small crowd of boys, seated around a table, putting the world to rights and coming to grips with the skills of logical argument and courteous listening. One of the curios I came across recently was a Parliament Bill which I had drafted and printed on my own printing press, for use in one of our Mock Debates.
>
> I remember the shy boy you describe; but until now I had no idea that our pleasant Brady evenings had such a profound and beneficial effect on at least one member of the group. I can, however, let you into a secret: the Brady connection meant a great deal to me, too. I had come back, after more than six years of war-time service, to be a student and to catch up on my lost education. Charles Spencer, who was head of the Jewish Relief Unit in Berlin when I first met him, invited me to join Brady's managers, and this opened up a whole new world of friendship which helped me in the difficult adjustment to civilian life. Brady gave its managers as much as it gave to its boys and girls, and so we can both count ourselves fortunate to have been part of that experience.

BACIE

In 1959, BACIE commemorated its 40th anniversary as an outstanding pioneer of vocational training reform. In planning its future expansion, it

began to look for its first permanent Director, to take the place of senior staff who had up to then been seconded by member organisations for limited periods. The two-year secondment of Jock Crosbie, a senior ICI manager, was about to end. I had established a harmonious relationship with him while I was with the FBI. Several industrialists representing leading companies on the FBI's Education and Research Committees, which I served as Secretary, also had close links with BACIE.

I enjoyed a congenial job as section head in a large, powerful organisation. Now I was invited to leave it in order to join the staff of a small voluntary body. But it was a prestigious Association pursuing objectives which I admired – and I would be the chief executive! Under my guidance the Association's expanded functions were to include the development of courses for the training of trainers, the development of its publications, the expansion of its much used reference library and information services and the initiation of a national debate on a reform of the country's manpower policy which had long been regarded as in need of far-reaching changes.

I accepted this offer; and in the 25 years during which I held this post I never regretted my choice. My work involved close contacts with its members. They included employers, trades unions, the education sectors, local and central government, the professions and the civil service; and we had ready access to Members of Parliament and the Ministers concerned. The Association's non-party-political, factual concern with vocational education and training offered an important national and regional platform.

In this process I also learnt another practical lesson about one of the methods by which a mature democracy can slowly but surely find its way towards change by evolution rather than revolution: BACIE was in the mainstream of voluntary associations dedicated to the promotion of one or other aspect of social, economic and educational reform. They had long been a feature of British public life. Their work was quite separate from that of political or professional pressure groups. They were concerned with clearly defined sectors of public life. Their activities cut right across party political boundaries and united dedicated and knowledgeable groups of people from a variety of backgrounds in the furtherance of common objectives.

The existence of such organisations rested on a strong nonconformist tradition which does not believe in the omniscience of the State or in the right of government to confine public initiative solely to official channels. I found that British Governments of both shades tended to support and, indeed, use voluntary organisations without controlling them. They were

recognised as a valuable aid in gauging informed opinion and in initiating and helping to carry out reforms.

My aim was to keep BACIE firmly in the mainstream of this tradition. As an independent, non-political educational charity it was outside 'the Establishment', yet in close touch with it. The Association was therefore free to express opinions which could, and frequently did, differ from the official policy; but I saw it as one of my major tasks to ensure that BACIE was well-informed, and always combined criticisms with constructive and closely-reasoned recommendations.

In this effort I was guided for a quarter of a century by a succession of honorary officers and members whose experience and helpfulness proved invaluable, and whose philosophies exerted a powerful influence on my own attitudes to political and social questions.

The first President under whom I served was Sir Godfrey Ince, the former Permanent Secretary of the war-time Ministry of Labour and National Service, who had been responsible for the mobilisation of Britain's manpower. He introduced me to my new job in the forthright and efficient manner which had made him famous.

Lord Jackson of Burnley, FRS, was my second President. I had first met him when I was Secretary of the FBI Research Committee. As Sir Willis Jackson he represented the Metropolitan Vickers Company. He then returned to academic life as head of Imperial College, London, and exerted an increasingly powerful influence on public policy in science and education.

I counted myself fortunate when he accepted BACIE's invitation, in 1962, to become the Association's President in succession to Sir Godfrey Ince. I formed a warm personal friendship with Willis and his wife Mary. It led to my sitting in the Visitors' Gallery in the House of Lords as his guest, together with his family, to watch the quaint and history-steeped scene of his induction into a Life Peerage.

His untimely death, in 1970, led to my tribute in the March issue of the *BACIE Journal,* which I concluded with the following words: 'His involvement in matters of high policy never diminished his interest in the individual. BACIE's staff – from the filing clerk to the director – will always treasure the memory of the dinner parties which Lord and Lady Jackson gave for them (at Christmas time) as a token of appreciation and encouragement'.

Sir Joseph Hunt succeeded as BACIE's President from 1971 to 1977. His story is a classical account of a generation which has now all but disappeared. He had left school at the age of twelve and had gone to

work in a cotton mill, His alma mater had been the local technical college. He had struck up a friendship with George Tomlinson, Minister of Education in the post-war Attlee Government, who had encouraged him to 'give some back, Joe lad'. It became his guiding philosophy for the rest of his life; and BACIE became one of his most important means of returning to the community the benefits which he had obtained from it by his own exertions.

Like Willis Jackson, Joe Hunt was intensely concerned about the problem of reconciling the demands of modern technology-based industry with the traditional values of a democratic society; how to create a welfare state without destroying the will to work effectively and conscientiously. In the Willis Jackson Memorial Lecture he gave in 1971, he summed it up by saying, 'Our problem is to be efficient and yet remain nice'!

I found myself invited to be a member of a number of Government-appointed bodies dealing with specific training topics. They ranged from Central Training Council Committees to those of the National Health Service and the Council for Technical Education and Training for Overseas Countries.

One of the non-Governmental bodies was the Committee on Continuing Education, set up by the Open University in 1975. Its chairman, Sir Peter Venables, invited me to serve on it.

He was another remarkable man, whose acquaintance I had made nearly twenty years earlier. He was then Principal of the Birmingham College of Advanced Technology (later transformed into the University of Aston in Birmingham) and Chairman of the FBI Industry-Technical Colleges Committee, of which I was the Secretary. We had worked together closely, and with much pleasure, on the production of a range of booklets, which had appeared under the FBI imprint.

He became a Vice-President of BACIE in 1969, at a time when the 'University of the Air' saw the light of day as the 'Open University', after a controversial public debate. He had been chairman of its Planning Committee, then Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of its Council.

The Committee on Continuing Education was set up six years later under Sir Peter's chairmanship to plan the University's future progress and he invited me to serve on it. In the course of eighteen months we met twenty times, occasionally for several days. It was a rewarding experience.

There were occasions on most committees when I found myself in outspoken disagreement with some of the issues which were under discussion; but frankness in debate did not interfere with the establishment

of contacts which led to cordial relationships. As I knew from experience, goodwill was an invaluable aid to the acceptance of the conclusions which I tried to be included in our recommendations. I was therefore delighted to receive a handwritten, personal letter from a senior civil servant in the Department of Employment and Productivity in January 1970, in which he wrote:

> In conformity with best civil service tradition I shall be moving to a new assignment at the end of next week. Unfortunately, the likelihood of any continuing contact with BACIE, and my friend, its Director, is very remote. This is very sad; our association has for me been very pleasant. ... I shall put (my successor) in the picture about BACIE. In the meantime, Peter, all good wishes to you and your work.

BACIE's contribution found its highlight in the events which, as a result of a most unusual vote in Parliament, led not only to the unopposed, but to the unanimous passage of the Industrial Training Act in 1964. BACIE's direct involvement continued during its implementation.

Our work was mentioned in letters which I received on the occasion of BACIE's Golden Jubilee in 1969, ten years after I had been appointed as Director. It included messages of congratulations from as diverse sources as Mrs Barbara (later Lady) Castle, Secretary of State for Employment and Productivity, Mr Robert (later Lord) Carr, a member in the previous Conservative Government, Victor (later Lord) Feather, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, and Dr (later Dame) Kathleen Ollerenshaw, Chairman of the City of Manchester Education Committee. All these messages were summed up in her concluding sentence: 'I wish the Association every success in the new ventures and tasks in which, under the enterprising leadership of the Director, it is currently embarking'.

The Industrial Training Act of 1964, was followed, regrettably, by the progressive dilution and eventual fading out of this Reform Act after 1973. Many experts share my belief that an acceptable solution to the vital problems posed by vocational education and training has not yet been found – but that is another story, told in another place. It is described in *Evolution of British Manpower Policy* and subsequently in *Sand in the Sandwich*. There are a few public events, however, in which I was involved, and which therefore seem to deserve a brief mention in this Epilogue.

'Fog in Channel – Continent cut off'

Britain's first attempt to join the EEC in 1963 was turned down by the

Community's Council. It led to a feeling of acute frustration on the part of those who had favoured entry and, for diametrically opposed reasons, it had reinforced the intense feelings of those who wanted to keep Britain out. This controversy formed a ground swell of dispute which overlapped party political trends and continues unabated. It also influenced our policy on vocational training.

How did this problem arise in the first place? It was a question to which I sought a solution in vain, though the facts seemed clear enough.

After the war, I had gratefully returned to 'this precious stone set in a silver sea', which had been miraculously saved from the ultimate horror of conquest. The British people therefore felt confident enough to rely on their historic and greatly treasured independence and took pride in the 'Mother of Parliaments'. 'Thick fog in the Channel – the Continent is cut off from Britain' seemed to sum up popular feeling very nicely.

Those of us who knew continental Europe at first hand realised that British isolationism, founded on traditional self-confidence, was not shared by our neighbours across the Channel. They wanted to replace their damaged and, in some cases, discredited forms of government with new economic and political links. Together, they now began to look for closely integrated structures which would preserve them from yet another outbreak of armed conflict.

On 25 March 1957, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg signed the Treaty of Rome and expanded their first experiments – Benelux, the European Coal and Steel Community and Euratom – into the European Economic Community. Those of us across the Channel who paid any attention to these developments watched them with detached benevolence and the expectation that they were likely to end in failure. In any case, attention was largely absorbed by the efforts which were being invested in the new Welfare State at home, while the public gaze tended to sweep beyond Europe to the English-speaking world and the vast parts of the globe which were linked to us as members of the Commonwealth of Nations. These were countries with which people were familiar. They shared both language and tradition in a way which could not be matched by a Europe divided by tongue and political philosophy. It also proved difficult and even painful to accept the consequences of the gradual disappearance of the Empire and the decline of a leadership which had enabled Britain to determine the balance of European political power in the past.

People gradually began to realise that the EEC experiment was turning out to be more successful than expected, and that Britain's membership of the Community might therefore be essential to safeguarding this

country's economic future. We found ourselves involved in a debate revealing conflicting interests which remain unresolved. On the one hand, there was recognition of the undeniable benefits conferred by membership of an Economic Community; on the other hand there were grave doubts, widely held, about the wisdom of sacrificing national sovereignty to a Community which was rushing towards political union and ever-growing domination over Britain's treasured heritage.

I shared some of these doubts. They were reinforced by the impressive speed and magnitude of Germany's recovery – and led to fears that under adverse future conditions it might enable her surviving extremist and militaristic elements to regain strength and exploit this increasing power once again. I was not alone. My regard for the Federal Republic increased when I found that these fears were shared by many Germans who were doing their utmost to atone for self-confessed crimes and restore Germany's former standing as a civilised and cultured nation. They believed that their fears could only be dispelled by Germany's firm anchorage in a European political union, reinforced by unbreakable economic ties. Peace, guaranteed by merging politics and economics, was therefore their real long-term target. They welcomed the prospect that, like the Zollverein – the German Customs Union of the 1860s – the EEC would inevitably grow into a political union.

I remembered the lessons on this subject which I had been made to learn some fifty years ago in my history class at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Schule in Berlin! Today's supporters of the progress towards this target were prepared to bear the burden. High as the cost of this sacrifice was known to be, peace was beyond price.

Questions now began to appear on our agenda whose cross-Channel implications could not be ignored. My linguistic qualifications and my Continental experience, which had lain fallow for two decades, began to be in demand once again. A new, fascinating activity now occupied a growing proportion of my activity, as BACIE took the initiative in comparing the vocational training policies and practices of other countries with our own. It set in train a series of fact-finding missions, which began in 1963 and included visits to the Soviet Union, USA, Canada, the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland and Israel and culminated in a mission to the EEC.

Soviet Customs

On a sunny afternoon, on 5 May 1963, a BACIE delegation disembarked

from a plane at Cheremetyevo airport in Moscow. With the support of the Foreign Office, we were on the point of beginning a study tour of the Soviet vocational training system. In 1958, the Soviet Union had taken what looked like a giant leap forward in the field of vocational training by adopting the 'Law on Establishing Closer Links between Schools and Life, and on the Further Development of Public Education'. While its fundamental objectives clearly differed from ours, organisation and method contained a number of applications which seemed to deserve careful study. In seventeen days we would travel some four thousand miles, use Moscow, Leningrad and Tbilisi as centres and pay nineteen visits to Ministries, Government Departments, vocational-technical schools, industrial establishments and institutes of higher education.

A battery of press photographers and reporters was waiting at the foot of the ramp. We were pleased and flattered by this apparent evidence of public interest in our mission. A lady, who had occupied an inconspicuous and lonely place during our flight, preceded our descent. It then became evident that the public interest was focussed entirely on her. We later discovered that she was the wife of a British businessman who was about to stand trial for espionage.

We felt quite deflated – until we were warmly welcomed by Carolina Yagunova, a charming, pretty interpreter, and Oleg Volkov, a young and competent liaison officer of the Soviet Coordinating Committee for Scientific Research.

As the organiser of this mission, I carried a bulky briefcase. It contained the preparatory documents which we had accumulated in the space of a year. They had been studied and analysed with care during seminars which we had held in my office at monthly intervals prior to our departure. They had guided us to a detailed agenda and helped us to prepare a questionnaire which the Foreign Office had forwarded to the Soviet authorities in advance of our arrival. In addition to acquaintance with the general background of our investigations, each member of the delegation also assumed responsibility for a group of topics which would feature in the forthcoming consultations with our hosts. We had followed this meticulous procedure to avoid the possibility of an aimless ramble through a vodka-lubricated tour. Our efforts had rewarded us with an agreed, prearranged agenda to which we were now looking forward.

Our escorts introduced us to the customs officer. He promptly pointed at my briefcase and asked me to open it for inspection. It revealed its piles of paper.

'I take it that this is your delegation's report on your visit to the Soviet Union'? he asked in the form of a rhetorical question.

'Well, actually it isn't', I replied. '*Our* normal procedure is to write our Report *after* a study visit.'

Before the baffled official could think of a suitable reaction, our escorts showed a commendable presence of mind and had whisked us away to the Peking Hotel in the centre of Moscow.

It happened to be a period of strained Sino-Soviet relations, and one of our hosts showed an unexpected sense of humour by suggesting that, if the hotel had now been built, it might more appropriately be called 'The Washington Hotel'!

Our delegation consisted of Dr James Welch, Vice-President of BACIE and Director of Education of Richard Thomas & Baldwin Ltd, and a former Director of Religious Broadcasting; Dr (later Dame) Kathleen Ollerenshaw; Mr Don Chappell, of Johnson Matthey & Co Ltd, and Dr Ernest Taylor, of Stewarts & Lloyds Ltd. It was a close-knit team which met in one of our hotel rooms after dinner each night, bade a cheerful 'good evening' to invisible 'George' who undoubtedly listened in to our discussion via a carefully hidden microphone, and then compared notes of the day's proceedings. They formed the agreed contents of the subsequent illustrated Report which I compiled on our return to England, and which later appeared as a well-received publication.

Among a host of impressions which had no place in a formal report, some memorable incidents come to mind. The first two took place during our visit to Leningrad, that architectural gem which was still struggling to recover from its war-time agony.

The first incident was centred on Dr Kathleen Ollerenshaw. She was always immaculately dressed and combined charm with natural dignity and an infectious sense of humour. She was a mathematician of international repute, had served for many years as Alderman and Chairman of Manchester's Education Committee, was a prominent member of the Conservative Party and would be elected Lord Mayor of Manchester ten years later and be elevated to a DBE – all this after a childhood illness had left her stone-deaf! She was an accomplished lip-reader who effectively, and with apparent ease, overcame a major physical handicap.

The Russians evidently shared our admiration for her, especially when she produced a Mancunian greeting to Leningrad, its twinned city, artistically inscribed on vellum. It was a sweltering morning which we had spent on a visit to a technical college. We had returned to our hotel – a reminder of Victorian-style architecture, complete with aspidistras – to collect Manchester's dedication before going on to Leningrad City Hall.

Kathleen removed the document from its cardboard tube to display it to our admiring gaze. The heat had fused the scroll so that it could not be unfurled. Dr Welch helpfully produced a razor blade, and we took it in turn to scrape away with the utmost care, in an attempt not to damage the vellum, while the minutes to our appointment at the City Hall ticked away. We managed to unscramble the scroll in time and without damage. After its formal presentation and a few complimentary speeches each of us, in return, received a small memento of our visit from our Leningrad hosts.

Our conducted visit to the Palace of Tsarskoye Selo, built for Empress Catherine near Pushkin, on the outskirts of Leningrad two centuries ago, also created a deep impression. It left us mindful of a frightful past. The Germans had occupied this front and virtually destroyed this imperial residence which marked the limit of their advance in their failed attempts to conquer Russia's second capital. From the adjoining hills we could make out the distant outline of the great city below us from which German artillery had shelled it and two million citizens had perished. We were taken to the Palace to meet the teams of craftsmen who were reviving both ancient and modern skills in their attempts to restore their national heritage. The Soviets had clearly come to the conclusion that this time and capital consuming work had to take precedence over the pressing physical needs of their citizens in order to restore and maintain the nation's morale. Their work was certainly impressive. One room, however, remained bare. We were told that in 1755 it had been panelled and furnished with a world famous amber collection. This priceless treasure had been looted by the Nazis, and had never been found again.

One of the inspired training organisations which had first seen the light of day in Russia had been created in St Petersburg by one of the few Russian-Jewish aristocrats, Baron Horace de Gunzburg. In 1880, Russia's Jews began to be exposed to a series of pogroms. Their after-effects were still recalled to me at the Brady Boys' Club in Whitechapel and, indeed, during my visit to South Africa.

Gunzburg had founded the 'Organisation for Rehabilitation and Training' as a practical means of restoring the self-confidence and pride of its students. He gave them the ability to carry the treasures of their skill, knowledge and faith with them, beyond the grasp of their persecutors. The fame of ORT, and the number and variety of its training centres had spread world-wide, but we could find no trace or mention of it in Leningrad.

The restoration of 'St Petersburg' has meanwhile led to the return of ORT to its birthplace.

Our visit to Georgia's capital, Tblisi, also proved memorable. Squeezing into an ancient Aeroflot plane, surrounded by peasants carrying baskets with cackling chickens and similar live luggage, we flew South, all the way from Leningrad, across the Caucasus Mountains. We landed in what was said to be the world's oldest city and breathed a totally different, almost Middle Eastern, air. Its Georgian language, related to the Finnish and Hungarian tongues, and using a script that was even stranger than Russia's Cyrillic characters, introduced us to an atmosphere of uninhibited hospitality.

One of our visits took us to the large Rustavi Steelworks and its Training School. The outside of the buildings was attractively designed in the Georgian style, but the living accommodation inside was heavily overcrowded. Four apprentices had to share a tiny but spotless room which was filled entirely by its beds and a small table. Notices were prominently displayed in three languages: Georgian, Russian – and Spanish.

What, we asked, was Spanish doing in Tblisi? That, we were told, was for the benefit of 'our apprentices from Cuba'.

We concluded the study tour with our return to Moscow. Before our departure to London, the British Ambassador, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, and Lady Trevelyan, gave a reception for us at the Embassy, to which he also invited Mr Polukin, Deputy Minister of Education, and Mr Kirpichnikov, chairman of the State Committee of Technical and Vocational Education. The eminence of the guests evidently ensured that we were able to pass the critical stare of the Russian policemen guarding the entrance without being challenged. While we were thanking everyone concerned for their help during our study visit, we enjoyed the Embassy's refreshments on the verandah overlooking the broad sweep of the Moskva River and the famous skyline of the Kremlin.

Into the EEC

Britain's belated entry into the EEC on 1 January 1973, ten years after our first frustrated attempt, led to the expectation of many significant changes in our public life. BACIE decided to look at its implications for our vocational education and training, and I became responsible for organising a study-visit which took place in June 1972.

The systematic method of preparing ourselves for the study which had preceded our visit to the Soviet Union, was again adopted. This time I found myself responsible for a delegation consisting of fifteen members, which also included representatives of the Institute of Personnel Management and the Institution of Training Officers.

Once again we followed the practice of meeting at monthly intervals before our departure. We delved into the mass of documents which had been created by the Community's various agencies in the preceding fifteen years of its existence, when Britain had played no part in its decision-making process. Before our mission's departure I discussed the detailed topics with the Commission, as well as with the Government Departments, employers' representatives and trades unions in the member countries which would be visited by groups of our delegates.

The result was a detailed report which I wrote on our return to England after a stimulating and thought-provoking visit. *Vocational Training in the EEC* became a widely-used reference work. It also prompted the European Commission's Social Affairs Committee to invite me to address them at their meeting in Brussels on 7 December 1972, three weeks before Britain, Ireland and Denmark became members of the Community.

At the time of my visit to Brussels, one of the German Commissioners was Dr Ralf Dahrendorf. It never occurred to me that twelve years later I might meet him in London at an LSE graduates' dinner. By this time he was the School's popular Director, had acquired British nationality and was later elevated to a peerage.

My audience in Brussels represented the member nations' 'Social Partners' – government, employers and trades unions. The United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark, not yet members, had sent observers. Behind my audience, in dimly-lit, glass-fronted and sound-proofed cubicles, I could see the shadowy figures of the simultaneous interpreters – one for each language. As I was to discover later, their skill to convert the spoken word into instantaneous and meaningful versions was outstanding. It even seemed to me that they occasionally succeeded in translating apparent gibberish, uttered in the original language, into intelligent-sounding statements in the other. They performed an exhausting task, and the interpreters' shifts were usually limited to a maximum of half an hour.

My address, which, I hope, gave a minimum of trouble to the hard-working team of interpreters, was reprinted in the March 1973 issue of the *BACIE Journal* under the title, 'Some thoughts on joining the EEC'. After describing the British structure, I concluded my address with the following comments:

> To the outside observer all this presents a confusing picture. And so it is. Our complex pattern, the result of generations of uneven growth, lacks the monolithic simplicity of the neat, centrally-controlled education and training systems which are so common across the Channel.

> This makes for administrative untidiness. On the other hand it allows scope for diversity of expression, adaptability to local conditions and freedom to experiment.
>
> Vocational training, of course, does not exist in a vacuum. It is part of our common effort to find solutions to the doubts and discontents, the questioning of social values and ultimate goals, which our changing societies share. At this level, as well as from the purely technical point of view, I believe that British experience has much to offer. Your discussions in this Committee will, I think, be enriched by the contribution which the new member countries will be able to make.

What worried me, as my working contacts with the European Commission developed over the years, was that Britain's reputation was beginning to suffer as a result of a policy which seemed to lack conviction and single-mindedness. I first referred to it in my editorial in the March 1973 issue of the *BACIE Journal,* following our entry into the Community:

> Now we are in. Our representatives ... will shortly take their place at the committee table. Their colleagues expect the British contribution to be well-informed, flexible and progressive; and, being in, we had better make the best of it.

In my editorial in the July 1975 issue of the *BACIE Journal* I returned to this subject, following the Referendum on 5 June, on continued membership of the EEC:

> Few situations could have been more inimical to British interests than the uncertainty which existed before 5 June. It prevented the country from exerting its full influence inside the Community and at the same time made it impossible to reap such advantages as we might have derived from not having signed the Treaty of Rome in the first place.

The invitation to a common exploration which I had suggested in my address to the Community's Social Affairs Committee had unexpected consequences. The report of our fact-finding mission prompted the Commission to invite BACIE to edit a newly created journal, *Vocational Training Information Bulletin,* and to produce it in the six official languages. The original intention was for BACIE to produce the Bulletin until a newly established European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training could take over this task. In the event, BACIE's contract was renewed four times.

The Association's task of producing the Bulletin proved less difficult

to perform than expected. The British had a reputation as poor linguists. It was no longer true. Many students now spent part of their studies in the country speaking their chosen language. I was therefore able to fill the translators' vacancies with relative ease from among a host of British youngsters who had completed their linguistic studies abroad, had met with little success in their search for appointments in Britain and had accepted temporary jobs overseas. Now they felt that the time for more substantial posts at home had come, and they queued for the attractive career-launching platforms which we were able to offer. It filled me with great satisfaction that this work provided a background of experience which enabled several of these linguists to proceed to substantial appointments.

Back to Berlin – again

The background story of the creation of a European Vocational Training Centre is intriguing. The new quarterly EEC Bulletin, which BACIE was producing for the EEC, exposed the critical under-staffing of the Vocational Training Department in Directorate-General V at the Commission's headquarters in Brussels. The solution was sought in the creation of a separate Research Unit, preferably in Brussels. Germany, however, saw a welcome opportunity for gaining effective control over this new institution by outbidding its partners and at the same time gaining political kudos by demonstrating that West Berlin was part of the EEC by hosting this new Community institution. Berlin offered a desirable piece of ground at the Bundesallee, on which the purpose-designed premises were to be built. The EEC's Council of Ministers could not afford to turn down this generous offer, despite grumbles at the location of the new Centre on the exposed and endangered frontier of Western Europe. The Soviet Union duly, but vainly, protested and the construction of functional, modern offices, complete with multi-lingual interpretation facilities, was promptly ordered.

In 1975, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training was formally established by the Council of the European Communities under Regulation No. 337/75. It became known as CEDEFOP, an acronym of the French title, *Centre européen pour le développement de la formation professionnelle.*

As the original producer of the EEC's Training Bulletin I was one of the first visitors to CEDEFOP's temporary offices at the Ansbacher Straße, near the Wittenbergplatz, while the purpose-designed offices at the Bundesallee were taking shape. As the years passed, the projects

undertaken by the Centre grew in number, scope and expertise. The multi-lingual staff produced publications, conducted and guided research projects and became a source of information with the assistance of international teams of consultants.

CEDEFOP reviewed the role of the national correspondents, whose help was vital to their work. It was agreed that the civil servants who had previously performed this function for most member countries, might advantageously be replaced by correspondents who were free to bring a greater measure of critical judgment to bear. In Britain's case, the task was entrusted to BACIE on the recommendation of the Manpower Services Commission. It was a most welcome assignment, since it enabled the Association to retain a close link with the European Centre and the other national correspondents which had been established during the early years of CEDEFOP's existence.

I was one of the longest-serving members of this international group of advisers. CEDEFOP became my highly-regarded second professional home.

My first return to Berlin in 1945, and the context in which it took place, was indeed unique. The fact that, after an interval of more than two decades, I found myself back on frequent visits to Berlin as a British representative – this time in connection with European Commission duties – seemed equally remarkable; but that it all culminated in my wedding was, for me, the most significant event of all.

I was welcomed into Gine's and Ellen's home whenever I visited Berlin, was introduced to some of the remarkable people who had saved their lives, explored East as well as West Berlin, and from the centre of this former, as well as future, capital witnessed the demolition of 'The Wall' and the reunification of Germany.

The pretty girl with the pig-tails and her big, questioning eyes, had now turned into a qualified lawyer who regularly visited London. I gradually came to know her well and learnt more about the events which had shaped her life. They are recorded in *Ellen's Chronology.*

We grew very close and were married at the West London Synagogue by Rabbi Hugo Gryn, in March 1987.

Related Public Events

These items have been selected from sources listed in the Bibliography, to illustrate links with incidents described in this book.

They include not only some events of general significance (printed in *italics),* but also highlight a few of the 2,000 German laws, statutory orders and regulations which began with compulsory persecution and ended in legalised mass murder.

The cross-references indicate the extent to which overlapping German edicts were issued by Ministries, Government Agencies and Party Authorities at different times and in a variety of versions.

30.1.33
Hitler becomes Reichskanzler.

21.3.33
Concentration Camp Oranienburg is opened by SA. (→26.10.36)

24.3.33
Law of Empowerment ('Ermächtigungsgesetz') confers entitlement on the Government to change the Constitution without parliamentary authority. (→14.7.33(1))

1.4.33
'Judenboykott' is carried out in the whole of Germany. (→7.6.34; 14.6.38)

7.4.33
Jews are barred from public service. (→23.5.33; 15.9.35; 14.11.35; 25.6.38)

2.5.33
SA and SS occupy Trade Union premises and confiscate TU funds.

5.5.33
Public premises in Berlin may not be let or sold to 'Mosaic' organisations, and existing contracts must be terminated at the earliest possible moment. (→28.12.34)

10.5.33
20,000 books are burned at a public demonstration in Berlin, in compliance with Goebbels' 'Action against the un-German spirit'. (→21.6.34)

17.5.33
Medicines manufactured by Jews may only be prescribed if others of equal value are not obtainable. (→7.6.34)

23.5.33
'Non-Aryans' may no longer be called upon to serve as experts or put on oath. (→7.4.33)

June 33
Jews are expelled from membership of the Society of Blind German Academics ('Verein der blinden Akademiker Deutschlands') . (→17.7.34)

2.6.33
All Jewish sports clubs are excluded from membership of public associations, and denied the preferential treatment available to such bodies. (→28.3.38)

22.6.33
Sozial-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) is prohibited and several thousand members are arrested. (→16.11.34)

14.7.33 *(1)*
Law against formation of new Parties ('Gesetz gegen Neubildung von Parteien') makes NSDAP the sole legal Party. (→24.3.33)

14.7.33 *(2)*
The law authorising the confiscation of possessions promoting Marxist and state-hostile activites ('Gesetz über die Einziehung volks- und staatsfeindlicher Vermögen') includes Jewish property. (→31.7.38)

14.7.33 *(3)*
Law for the Revocation of German Naturalisation ('Gesetz über Widerrufung von Einbürgerungen') authorises cancellation of German naturalisations for those who are considered to harm German interest by their conduct or who are resident abroad. Their funds and properties are confiscated. The Law is applied particularly to Jews originating in Eastern Europe. (→26.7.33; 17.7.34; 27.10.38; 18.2.44)

15.7.33
The Jewish 'Kulturbund' is established and run under the control and supervision of the Ministry of Propaganda. (→5.3.34; 15.5.35; 12.11.38(3); 11.9.41)

26.7.33
The emigration of Jews is to be encouraged. At the same time, a major tax, in the form of the 'Reichsfluchtsteuer', is to be levied on all those whose emigration reduces the tax revenue accruing to the State. (→14.7.33(3); 18.5.34; 10.2.35; 21.3.39)

16.8.33
The importation and sale of Jewish newspapers is forbidden.

22.8.33
Jews are banned from using public beaches and swimming pools in many places, including Strandbad Berlin-Wannsee. (→11.6.35; 28.11.38)

13.9.33
Race and 'Vererbungslehre' (generic science) become compulsory subjects to be taught in all schools. They also have to feature in all finals examinations. (→17.7.34; 4.10.36; 15.4.37)

5.3.34
'Non-Aryan' actors and actresses are banned from appearing in public theatres. (→15.7.33)

12.4.34.
'Protective custody' is authorised: (a) for the protection of the prisoner; and (b) when the prisoner is considered to endanger public safety and order, especially in connection with hostile activities against the State. (→26.10.36)

18.5.34
Liability for the payment of the 'Reichsfluchtsteuer' is reduced from the capital sum of 200,000 RM to 50,000 RM, thereby substantially increasing the catchment area. (→26.7.33)

7.6.34
Radio stations in German territory are forbidden to transmit programmes which mention companies known to have Jewish connections. (→17.3.33; 1.4.33; 14.6.38)

21.6.34
The Old Testament is removed by the 'Hessische Kultusverwaltung' from the teaching syllabus of the Protestant Church. (→10.5.33; 24.3.35)

17.7.34
Loss of German nationality under the law also leads to the annulment of doctorates. (→June 33; 14.7.33(3); 13.9.33; 15.4.37)

10.8.34
The intended house collection by Jewish clubs for helping Jews in districts overrun by Poles is prohibited on the orders of the Gestapo. Shortage of foreign currency is given as a reason. (→27.10.38)

16.11.34
Citizens returning to Germany after a stay abroad, and who seek the help of a Labour Exchange for finding employment, require a clearance from the Department for Returnees, of the Berlin branch of the NSDAP. (→22.6.33)

12.12.34
A circular by the President of the 'Bund Deutscher Friseure', marked 'Secret! Not to be published!' states: 'In response to various enquiries re accepting Jews as apprentices, I confirm that there is no legal basis for excluding a Jew from an apprenticeship, followed by participation in a trade test. On the other hand I can advise you that a proud German craft master cannot be expected to accept a Jew for a trade test. In such an event it is natural that an upright German craft master, declining to accept a Jewish candidate, should find a "substitute" who is willing to perform this task.' (→15.4.37)

10.2.35
Jewish assemblies arguing in favour of remaining in Germany are to be banned immediately. (→26.7.33; 24.1.39)

18.3.35
City-wide air raid practice with total black-out is held in Berlin.

24.3.35
Jewish religion classes are removed from the official teaching syllabus in Prussia. (→21.6.34)

15.5.35
The 'Theatergesetz und Ergänzungsgesetz zum Reichskulturkammergesetz' places all theatres under the direct control and supervision of the Ministry of Propaganda. (→15.7.33)

11.6.35
Posters bearing the inscription 'Juden unerwünscht' ('Jews not wanted') should be surreptitiously removed from main roads because of the Olympic Games. (→22.8.33)

17.8.35
All Jewish organisations are required to hand over their complete membership records to the Gestapo, so that a 'Judenkartei' (Record of all Jews) can be created. Subsequent changes are to be notified immediately. (→4.7.39; 27.11.42)

15.9.35
The following Acts are passed:
1. Nationality Act (Reichsbürgergesetz);
2. Act for the Protection of the Purity and Honour of the German Race. (Gesetz zum Schutze d. deutschen Blutes u. d. deutschen Ehre); and
3. Laws for exclusion of Jews from public life (Nürnberger Gesetze). (→7.4.33; 14.11.35)

20.9.35
Communal authorities are told not to suspend the payment of subsidies to Jewish schools, since this may result in their closure. (→15.11.38; 17.12.38; 20.6.42)

14.11.35
Voting rights and appointments to public offices are denied to Jews, and Jewish civil servants are dismissed. Mixed marriages are prohibited. (→7.4.33; 15.9.35)

20.12.35
National criminal statistics are required to add special emphasis to reports on punishable acts by Jews, to provide a basis for statistics of Criminal Acts by Jews'. (→26.6.41)

4.10.36
The conversion of Jews to Christianity is to be regarded as being of no significance with regard to the question of race. According to the Ministry of the Interior, this disguise of racial origin will be made to disappear as soon as the Race Research Institutes have taken up their activity. (→13.9.33; 15.9.41)

26.10.36
Confidential memorandum by Gestapo HQ: In order to achieve a deterrent effect in connection with incarceration in a concentration camp, the length of a detention should under no circumstances be divulged. It should be referred to as 'until further notice'. There is no objection to the creation of a 'whispering campaign' regarding the length of detention. (→21.3.33; 12.4.34; 1.6.38; 15.6.38(2); 10.11.38(2 & 4); Oct 39; 5.11.42)

15.4.37
Jews of German nationality will no longer be admitted to examinations leading to a doctorate. (→13.9.33; 17.7.34; 12.12.34)

12.5.37
An application for the introduction of English as a second foreign language at a Jewish school is refused.

17.12.37
The teaching of Hebrew is forbidden, and examinations in this subject will no longer take place.

14.3.38
Germany annexes Austria.

28.3.38
Jewish Communities are no longer recognised as public corporations. (→2.6.33)

26.4.38
Jews have to register possessions over 5,000 RM.

1.6.38
All Jews sentenced to imprisonment of more than one month, or to a fine which, in case of non-payment, leads to imprisonment of more than a month, are to be arrested and sent to a concentration camp without further interrogation. (→26.10.36; Oct 39; 5.12.39)

June 38
Finance Ministry and Police compile lists of 'wealthy Jews'.

14.6.38
Jewish businesses are registered, and the Minister of Trade can order them to display a special identification to this effect. (→1.4.33; 7.6.34)

15.6.38
1,500 Jews are arrested and sent to Concentration Camps. (→26.10.36)

25.6.38
Jewish doctors are barred from attending 'Aryans'. (→7.4.33; 27.9.38)

23.7.38
Jews possessing German nationality must apply for the issue of an identity card by 31.12.38. Future dealings with authorities must be preceded by the presentation of the identity card without request. Written contracts must contain disclosure of Jewish identity, and the place of issue and number of the card. (→15.5.42)

31.7.38
With reference to legacies left to Jews, the Law on Last Wills ('Gesetz über die Errichtung von Testamenten und Erbverträgen') renders void any wills which 'offend public sentiments' on what should govern a responsible testator with regard to family and nation. (→14.7.33(2); 18.2.44)

17.8.38
'Israel' and 'Sara' are added to forenames of all Jews, and a list of permitted forenames is issued. (→12.7.39)

27.9.38
Jewish lawyers are banned from practice. (→25.6.38)

3.10.38
By order of the Ministry of Propaganda, all Jewish organisations and educational establishments must submit written texts of lectures for approval before publication.

5.10.38
Passports of German Jews are reissued with the addition of 'J'. (→11.3.40)

27.10.38
15,000 Polish Jews are deported to camps on the German-Polish border. (→14.7.33(3); 10.8.34; 9.11.39)

7.11.38
German diplomat in Paris is assassinated.

9.11.38
Order issued to the SA: All Jewish businesses are to be destroyed by SA-Men in uniform, and SA guards are to be mounted to ensure that nothing of value is stolen. The Press is to be invited. Synagogues are to be set on fire, Jewish symbols are to be preserved. The fire brigade may only protect the homes of Aryans, as well as adjacent Jewish residences, but the Jews must be evicted, since Aryans will shortly move in. The police is not allowed to interfere. In the case of resistance they are to be shot.

10.11.38 *(1)*
'Reichsführer' SS and Chief of Police: Only those measures may be taken which do not place German life and property in jeopardy. Police will immediately confiscate the archives of Jewish Communities. In all districts as many Jews are to be arrested as can be accommodated in the available cells. Priority should be given to wealthy Jews. After the arrests, immediate contacts should be established with the appropriate concentration camps to ensure quick transfer. Police are instructed not to interfere.

10.11.38 *(2)*
Reply by Gestapo Berlin: The concentration camps Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen are each able to receive 10,000 detainees. (→26.10.36)

10.11.38 *(3)*
Reichsführer SS and Chief of Police: Detained Jews are to be brought to police

prisons. Detention orders are not required. The Minister of Justice ('Reichsjustizminister') has instructed the State Attorneys ('Staatsanwaltschaft') that no investigations are to be conducted into the 'Judenaktion'. (→26.10.36; 10.3.44)

12.11.38 *(1)*
The German-Jewish Community is fined 100,000,000 RM for damage caused by the pogrom. All Jewish businesses are ordered to close.

12.11.38 *(2)*
Edict is passed for repair, by the Jewish traders affected, of damage caused by the pogrom on 9 Nov. Their insurance cover is confiscated by the State.

12.11.38 *(3)*
Jews are forbidden to visit theatres, cinemas, concerts, exhibitions, etc. (→15.7.33)

15.11.38
Minister for Education ('Reichsminister für Volksbildung'): 'After the wicked murder in Paris, no German teacher can be expected to teach Jewish pupils. It is equally obvious that German pupils cannot bear to share a classroom with Jews. ... I therefore order that Jews are banned from German schools. They are to be confined to Jewish schools.' (→20.9.35; 20.6.42)

28.11.38
Police is authorised to ban Jews from selected places. (→22.8.33)

17.12.38
Reichsminister für Volksbildung: In future, private Jewish schools will not receive any further subsidies from public funds. Police will arrange the release of teachers taken into protective custody. (→20.9.35)

28.12.38
'Aryanisation' of living accommodation is ordered. (→5.5.33; 29.3.41)

24.1.39
The 'Reichsministerium des Innern' establishes a central agency for Jewish emigration. It supervises preparation and expedites completion under the supervision of the chief of 'Sicherheitspolizei'. (→10.2.35)

14.2.39
Secret memorandum from 'Reichsminister der Wissenschaft' (Minister of Science): By order of the Führer, future war memorials must not contain names of Jews, but they may remain on existing memorials.

21.3.39
Obligation for surrendering precious objects is reduced from an estimated value of 300 RM to 150 RM. Instructions have been issued to emigration departments that valuables must not be exported. (→26.7.33)

4.7.39
'Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland' is set up under the 'Reichsbürgergesetz' as a legal association under strict government control and as its agency, to assume administrative and financial responsibility for emigration, Jewish schools and welfare. All German and stateless Jews within Germany are regarded as members. (→17.8.35)

12.7.39
Newspapers are ordered to include 'Sara' and 'Israel' in reports of court cases to emphasise involvement of Jews. (→17.8.38)

1.9.39
Germany invades Poland.

3.9.39
UK declares war on Germany.

26.10.39
Employment of Jews for forced labour by public authorities is sanctioned. (→4.3.41)

October 39
All Jews who fail to comply with an instruction or show any form of reluctance are to be arrested immediately and sent to a concentration camp. (Issued as a confidential order by Reichsführer SS) (→1.6.38; 26.10.38; 5.12.39; 24.10.41)

9.11.39
All 40,000 Jews are expelled from Posen. (→27.10.38)

20.11.39
To prevent Jews who have surrendered their wireless sets from obtaining a replacement, retailers have to keep a register of the names and addresses of all customers purchasing sets.

1.12.39
Special rations of meat, butter, cocoa and rice issued from 18.12.39 to 14.1.40 are withheld from Jews. (→3.1.40; 23.1.40)

5.12.39
Hitler's 'Nacht und Nebel' ('Night and Fog') decree is used in concentration camp lists. It stands for 'execution'. (→1.6.38; Oct 39)

12.12.39
Jews must collect their ration cards at specified times from the local Food Office, while others receive their cards from their 'NS-Blockwart'.

3.1.40
Special rations for Jews are further reduced by cancelling the issue of meat and vegetables between 15.1. and 4.2.40. (→1.12.39; 11.3.40; 4.12.42)

23.1.40
No ration cards are issued for textiles and shoes for Jews. (→1.12.39)

30.1.40
Heydrich sets up new dept. (IV-D-4) to complete deportation of Jews. (→20.1.42)

6.2.40
Clothing coupons for Jews in Berlin are cancelled. (→26.6.41)

11.3.40
Jewish ration cards are given special identification by overprinting them with the letter 'J'. Jews are excluded from the issue of unrationed food, e.g chicken, fish and smoked food. (→5.10.38; 3.1.40)

4.5.40
The curfew for Jews applies to the times between 21.00 and 05.00 hrs from 1.4. to 30.9.40, and between 20.00 and 06.00 hrs between 1.10. and 31.3.40.

10.5.40
Germany begins offensive in the West.
Churchill is appointed Prime Minister.

26.5.40
Evacuation of Allied Forces (Operation 'Dynamo') begins. 340,000 soldiers are lifted from Dunkirk's beaches in 7 days.

3.6.40
Jews are banned from receiving extra pay given to other workers in respect of work on public holidays, or for births, marriages or funerals, etc. (→4.3.41)

16.6.40
UK offers France political union. France refuses.

17.6.40
Pétain forms government, asks Germany for armistice.

18.6.40
Gen. de Gaulle announces creation of Free French Forces in a broadcast from London.

2.7.40
British evacuation ship 'Arandora Star' is sunk by German submarine with loss of 714, incl. Jewish refugees.

4.7.40
The sale of food to Jews is limited to one hour between 16.00 and 17.00 hrs.

10.7.40
Hitler issues Directive No.16, 'Sea Lion', for a landing operation in England.

22.7.40
Hitler orders Gen. Halder to begin detailed planning of Russian campaign.

13.8.40
'Day of the Eagle.' 1,485 German planes cross Channel

14.8.40
520 German bombers and 1,270 fighters cross Channel. 75 are destroyed. 60 British planes are lost on the ground. Gen. Ismay at 11 Gp. Fighter Command: 'At one moment every single squadron in the group was engaged; there was nothing in reserve, and the map table showed new waves of attackers crossing the coast. I felt sick with fear.'

18.8.40
Final German effort: 71 are shot down against 27 RAF losses.

19.8.40
No air attacks. Churchill: 'They are making a big mistake in giving us a respite.'

20.8.40
Churchill in House of Commons: 'Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.'

25. and 28.8.40
RAF bomb Berlin. (→12.9.41)

2.9.40
Luftwaffe night raid on London.

4.9.40
Hitler to nurses and social workers in Berlin: '...we will raze their cities to the ground.' (→14.11.40)

6.9.40
Bombing raids on South coast ports lead to expectation of invasion within 3 days.

7.9.40
300 bombers and 600 fighters attack London docks. Invasion is believed to be imminent. Church bells are rung.

17.9.40
German invasion of the UK is postponed by Hitler 'until further notice'.

27.9.40
Treaty between Germany, Italy and Japan is signed in Berlin.

5.10.40
Hitler orders end of day raids. First night raid.

7.10.40
Jews are banned from public air raid shelters where possible.

14.11.40
500 German bombers attack Coventry. 568 civilians are killed. Germans coin a new word: 'Coventrieren'. RAF Bomber Command study the Luftwaffe's novel strategy of starting uncontrollable fire storms. (→4.9.40)

29.12.40
Mass raid on City of London.

4.3.41
Göring's secret decree orders all Jews capable of work on his Four-Year-Plan to be employed in segregated teams, and accommodated in separate camps. (→26.10.39; 3.6.40; 3.10.41)

22.6.41
Germany invades the Soviet Union.

26.6.41
Ration cards for soap and shaving soap are withdrawn from Jews. Men with beards are intended to be more readily identifiable as Jews. (→20.12.35; 6.2.40)

1.9.41
Jews are forbidden to leave their district without written police permission and must not wear any orders or decorations.

11.9.41
The 'Kulturbund' is dissolved. (→15.7.33)

12.9.41
British air raid on Berlin (→25.8.40)

15.9.41
The compulsory wearing of the Jewish star in public is introduced for persons over the age of six years. (→4.10.36; 13.3.42)

18.9.41
In addition to a police permit for leaving their registered district and for using specified transport, Jews are not allowed to travel in sleeping or dining cars or excursion trains, and are only to be admitted to the lowest class and to use seats only if not required by the general public. (→24.3.42)

3.10.41
Jews used for compulsory work are subject to special employment laws, and the Minister of Labour is empowered to lay down appropriate terms in consultation with the head of the Party and the Minister of the Interior. This regulation also applies to the conquered territories in the East. (→4.3.41; 14.3.42)

18.10.41
Mass deportation of Berlin Jews begins from Bahnhof Grunewald. (→4.11.41)

4.11.41
Jews not employed in reserved occupations are to be deported to the East within the next few months. Their possessions are to be confiscated by the State. The order gives precise instructions on how to administer and evaluate confiscated possessions. (→18.10.41; 20.1.42)

11.12.41
Hitler announces war against the USA.

12.12.41
Jews are forbidden to use the public telephone. Severe penalties for disobedience will be imposed. (→29.7.40)

20.1.42
'Wannsee Conference' in Berlin under Heydrich agrees on Jewish 'Final Solution'. (→30.1.40; 4..11.41; 5.11.42)

14.2.42
Bakeries and restaurants are instructed to display posters emphasising that cake will not be sold to Jews and Poles. (→3.1.40)

13.3.42
All Jewish flats must display a Jewish star. (→15.9.41)

14.3.42
In the present situation the armaments industry cannot do without its conscripted Jewish workers. Party branches are instructed not to cause problems in this matter. (→3.10.41; 27.3.42)

24.3.42
Use of public transport by Jews is prohibited, except to and from places of employment located more than 7 km, or for children whose schools are more than 5 km from their place of residence. (→18.9.41)

27.3.42
Jews employed in the war industry are currently exempted from deportation. (→14.3.42; 28.2.43)

15.5.42
All applications or submissions intended to be made to public authorities by Jews must, in the first instance, be checked for their permissibility by the 'Reichsvereinigung'. Failure to do so will result in police action. (→23.7.38)

29.5.42
Heydrich is attacked in Prague – dies on 4.6.42.

9.6.42
All clothing that is not immediately needed by Jews must be surrendered.

20.6.42
All Jewish schools must be closed by 30.6.42, and all pupils must be informed that, with effect from 1.7.42, the schooling of Jewish children by teachers – paid or unpaid – is prohibited. The current 'resettlement' of Jews is given as the reason. (→20.9.35; 15.11.38)

10.7.42
The sending of presents to deportees, in the form of articles or money, is forbidden, but later briefly relaxed for Theresienstadt.

5.11.42
All concentration camps in the Reich are to be 'cleansed of Jews', who must be transferred to Auschwitz and Lublin. (→26.10.36; 20.1.42)

27.11.42
Accurate statistics of Jews in Berlin are demanded. The Jews themselves are ordered to supply relevant personal data without a further reminder. Failure to do so will be subject to 'state-police measures.' (→17.8.35)

31.1.43
German 6th Army surrenders to the Soviet Army at Stalingrad.

18.2.43
Goebbels declares 'Total War' at demonstration in Berliner Sportpalast. (→19.3.45; 28.3.45)

28.2.43
Final rounding up of remaining factory-employed Jews is carried out by the Gestapo for deportation and extermination. (→27.3.42; 26.3.43)

26.3.43
A secret decree issued by the 'Beauftragte für den Vierjahresplan' (Representative of the Four-Year-Plan) orders the deportation to forced labour or concentration camps of all Jews still to be found in private employment. (→28.2.43)

11.7.43
In a secret decree the Nazi head office ('Parteikanzlei') issues Hitler's instruction that in public discussions of the Jewish question no reference shall be made to the 'Final Solution': 'Jews are collectively sent to work in an appropriate manner.'

18.2.44
In accordance with para. 2 of the 13th Administrative Order of the 'Reichsbürgergesetz' of 1.7.43, all property of deceased Jews is confiscated by the State. (→14.7.33(3); 31.7.38)

10.3.44
A confidential instruction issued by the head of the Security Police orders the suspension of the usual publication of Official Orders, because the completed evacuation and isolation of Jews and Gipsies now renders this method irrelevant. (→10.11.38(4); 16.2.45)

6.6.44
D-Day: The Allies invade Normandy.

20.7.44
Hitler assassination attempt by Graf Stauffenberg fails.

25.9.44
Men between 16 and 60 years are called up for 'Volkssturm'.

16.12.44
Ardennes offensive is started by German Army.

16.1.45
German Ardennes offensive fails.

27.1.45
Auschwitz Concentration Camp is freed by Russians.

1.2.45
Berlin is declared a fortified city by Hitler.

4.2.45
Yalta Conference (to 11.2.45).

16.2.45
Reichswirtschaftsministerium orders the destruction of documents recording anti-Jewish activites, if they cannot be hidden, to prevent their falling into enemy hands. (→10.3.44)

19.3.45
Hitler issues order for scorched earth policy in Germany. (→18.2.43)

28.3.45
German Propaganda Ministry orders media to call for fanatical resistance. (→18.2.43)

14.4.45
Eisenhower stops Western Allies' advance on Berlin.

15.4.45
Soviet Army starts attack on Berlin.
Buchenwald Concentration Camp is freed by British Army.

22.4.45
Soviet Army enters Berlin.
Soviets free Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp.

25.4.45
US and Russian troops meet on Elbe River at Torgau.

30.4.45
Hitler commits suicide.

1.5.45
Goebbels commits suicide.

2.5.45
Gen. Weidling surrenders Berlin to the Soviet Army.

4.5.45
German forces surrender to FM Montgomery.

5.5.45
Soviet Kommandantur introduces new food distribution system in Berlin.

8.5.45
Unconditional capitulation of all German forces is signed in Karlshorst.

13.5.45
First post-war issue by Russians of food ration cards in Berln.

26.5.45
A Labour Government is returned in Parliamentary election in the UK.

5.6.45
Allied Control Commision is appointed.

1.7.45
US vacate Saxony & Thuringia. US & UK occupy their Berlin Sectors.

7.7.45
Marshal Zhukov asks Western commandants to assume responsibility for the supply of food and fuel in their sectors.

17.7.45
Potsdam Conference (to 28 July) .

12.8.45
French take over their sector in Berlin.

20.8.45
Nuremberg trials start.

7.9.45
Victory Parade in Berlin is attended by Allied generals.

ADOLF SCHUSTERMANN
ZEITUNGSNACHRICHTEN - BUREAU
BERLIN SO. 16, RUNGESTR. 22-24.

Zeitung: Vossische Zeitung
(Abend-Ausgabe)

Adresse: Berlin

Datum: 5. MAI 19[illegible]

Dem Fabrikanten Carl Krall, Berlin, ist für tatkräftige Förderung der Leipziger Mustermessen das Ritterkreuz 1. Klasse des Albrechtordens verliehen worden.

Carl Krall, maternal grandfather: He built up a thriving manufacturing business which sold its products throughout Germany and also promoted a substantial export trade.

Nachruf.

Am 1. Juni wurde uns der Begründer und langjährige Mitinhaber unserer Firma, Herr

Carl Krall

Inhaber des Ritterkreuzes I. Klasse, des Kgl. sächs. Albrechtsordens

durch den Tod entrissen.

Wir verlieren in dem Dahingeschiedenen einen hochgeschätzten Mitarbeiter, der uns auch nach seinem Austritt aus unserer Firma durch Rat und Tat bereitwilligst unterstützte.

Dem Verstorbenen, der uns allezeit ein Vorbild kaufmännischer und menschlicher Tugenden sein wird, werden wir stets ein dankbares und ehrendes Andenken bewahren.

Berlin, den 6. Juni 1918.

Berliner Metall- und Alfenidewaren-Fabrik
Carl Krall G. m. b. H.,
Ritterstrasse 46/47.

The esteem in which my grandfather was held was reflected in the obituary notice which appeared in the press. (*see page 1.*)



I joined a Jewish childrens' orchestra. . .

Jüd. Box-Club „Maccabi“ E. V.

Berlin

Programm

für die

Jugend-Chanukkah-Feier

am Sonnabend, dem 1. Dezember 1934 nachm. 5 Uhr, im Großen Saal der Conditorei Leon, Kurfürstendamm 155

Vortragsfolge

Begrüßungsansprache	Dr. Hugo Bernhardt
Anzünden der Chanukkah-Lichte	Samuel Antmann
Klaviervortrag: Chanukkah-Hymne	Gerda Warszawski
Gemeinsamer Gesang der Chanukkah-Hymne	Text umseitig!
Festrede	Rabbiner Dr. Emil Bernhard Cohn
Chanukkah-Gedicht	Siegbert Freyer
Boxschaukampf	Werner Cohn — Gerhard Stern
Klaviervorträge	Gerda Warszawski
Stepp- und Groteskтänze	Peter Tintegsten — Hans Jungmann
Violinvorträge	Joachim Pinschewer
Tanzvorführungen	Eva Münzer
Klaviervorträge	Fritz Rosenthal
Boxkampf vom Fliegen- bis Schwergewicht	Marco Pollner — Hans Deutsch
Groteskтänze	Heinz Jolson
Gesangvorträge	Siegmund Zwiebel
Rezitation	Hanni Rosen
Lustiger Boxkampf	Hermann Friedmann — Hans-Joachim Abraham
Conference	Hermann Friedmann
Gemeinsamer Schlußgesang	

Kaffeetafel

. . . and found my violin a considerable asset and stimulus to cultural activity.

‘A letter sent by the Maccabi Boxing Club contains a significant sign of the times: The entry, “member of the Brandenburg Boxing Federation” had been crossed out.’
(*See page 6.*)

JÜDISCHER BOX-CLUB „MACCABI“ E.V.

~~MITGLIED DES BRANDENBURGISCHEN BOX-VERBANDES~~

GESCHÄFTSSTELLE:
BERLIN NW87, JAGOWSTRASSE 5, part.

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POSTSCHECK-KONTO: BERLIN 14236

DEN 19. Februar 193 4

Herrn
P i n s c h e w e r
Berlin-Halensee
Eisenzahnstr. 4.

Sehr geehrter Herr Pinschewer !

Joachim hat durch sein gestriges Auftr
anlässlich unserer Veranstaltung wesentlich dazu beigetragen, unser
zu verschönen.

Wir danken Ihnen, Ihrer geschätzten Gat
und Joachim recht herzlich dafür.

Hoffentlich werden wir noch oft Gelege
haben, Joachim bei uns zu hören.

Mit den besten Grüssen, auch für unser
beiden lieben Kameraden, empfehlen wir uns Ihnen

mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung
i. A. Warszawski
Jüd. Box-Club „Maccabi“ E.V.
BERLIN



Kaiser-Friedrich-Schule, Charlottenburg, Kneſebeckſtr. 24

Konzert zum Beſten der Schulſammlungen

am Montag, dem 13. März 1933, abends 8 Uhr,
veranſtaltet vom Chor und Orcheſter der Schule.
Muſikaliſche Geſamtleitung: Dr. Artur Böhme
unter gütiger Mitwirkung von
Frau Margaret Otto (Sopran), Frau Elena Serani (Sopran)

Die Oper in alter und neuer Zeit

1. Hirtenchor aus der Oper »Rosamunde« (1824) . . Fr. Schubert (1797—1828)
   Chor mit Orchesterbegleitung
2. »Reigen seliger Geister« aus »Orpheus« (1762) . . Chr. Gluck (1714—1787)
   F. Tichauer IV (Violine)
3. Fantasie aus »Lucrezia Borgia« (1833) . . . . . G. Donizetti
   G. Podiebrad UII (Klavier) bearb. v. Osten (1797—1848)
4. Pagenarie aus »Die Hochzeit des Figaro« (1785) } W. A. Mozart (1756—1791)
   Frau Margaret Otto
5. Fantasie aus »Die Zauberflöte« (1791) . . . . } bearb. v. P. d. Sarasate
   Gerh. Hayn UI (Violine). Am Flügel: Marianne Hayn
6. Arie »Ein Schütz bin ich« aus »Nachtlager in Granada« (1834) . . . . . C. Kreutzer (1780—1849)
   Horst Kuhn UIII (Bariton)
7. Zigeunerchor aus »Preciosa« (1820) . . . . . C. M. v. Weber (1786—1826)
   Chor mit Orchesterbegleitung

PAUSE

8. Gebet aus »Der Freischütz« (1821) . . . . . } C. M. v. Weber (1786—1826)
   Chor mit Orchesterbegleitung
9. Cavatine aus »Der Freischütz« (1821) . . . . }
   F. Tichauer IV (Violine)
10. Arie der Elisabeth aus »Der Tannhäuser« (1845) . } R. Wagner (1813-1883)
    Frau Elena Serani
11. Ballade der Senta aus »Der flieg. Holländer« (1843) }
    Claus Calmon OI (Klavier)
12. Fantasie aus »Der Troubadour« (1853) . . . . . G. Verdi (1813—1901)
    I. Pinschewer IV (Violine)
13. Fantasie aus »Eugen Onegin« (1879) . . . . P. Tschaikoffsky
    Heinz Schneemann OI (Klavier) bearb. v. Frühling (1840—1893)
14. a) Arie des Cavaradossi aus »Toska« (1901) . . } G. Puccini (1858—1924)
    Horst Kuhn UIII (Bariton)
    b) Arie aus »Toska« (1901) . . . . . }
    Frau Margaret Otto
15. Arie aus »Madame Butterfly« (1907) . . . . . }
    Frau Elena Serani
16. Intermezzo und Barcarole aus »Hoffmanns Erzählungen« (1880) . . . . . (1819—1880) J. Offenbach
    Soli: Niklaus: Frau Magaret Ott, Giulietta: Frau Elena Serani
    Chor und Orchester

Änderung des Programms vorbehalten

'I quickly found myself recruited into the school orchestra . . . and regularly featured as a soloist.' (*See page 12.*)

The Marchioness of Reading
requests the pleasure of
W. J. P. Pinschewer's presence
on Wednesday, May 15th, 1940,
at the Stern Hall, 35, Seymour Place, W.1
(near Marble Arch) at 8.15 p.m.

Speakers:
Colonel J. V. R. Jackson
Marchioness of Reading
Dr. Ernst Raut

Mr. Egon Jameson (Jacobsohn) will be in the chair.

Recruiting No. L.1082

CENTRAL OFFICE FOR REFUGEES
(National Service Department)

This is to certify that
Mr. Joachim Pinschewer
of 158 Haverstock Hill NW 3
has this day signed a form offering his services to
HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT
for Enlistment with the Forces of the Crown.

Signed: for the CENTRAL OFFICE FOR REFUGEES
Bernard Davidson *Registrar.*
Capt.
Date: 22/7/40 **No. 3 Army Recruiting Centre**
Euston

1940: 'In this topsy-turvy situation, our recruitment into the British Army followed an erratic "on-off" course . . .' (*See page 37*)

137 Coy. Pioneer Corps.

CHRISTMAS, 1941.

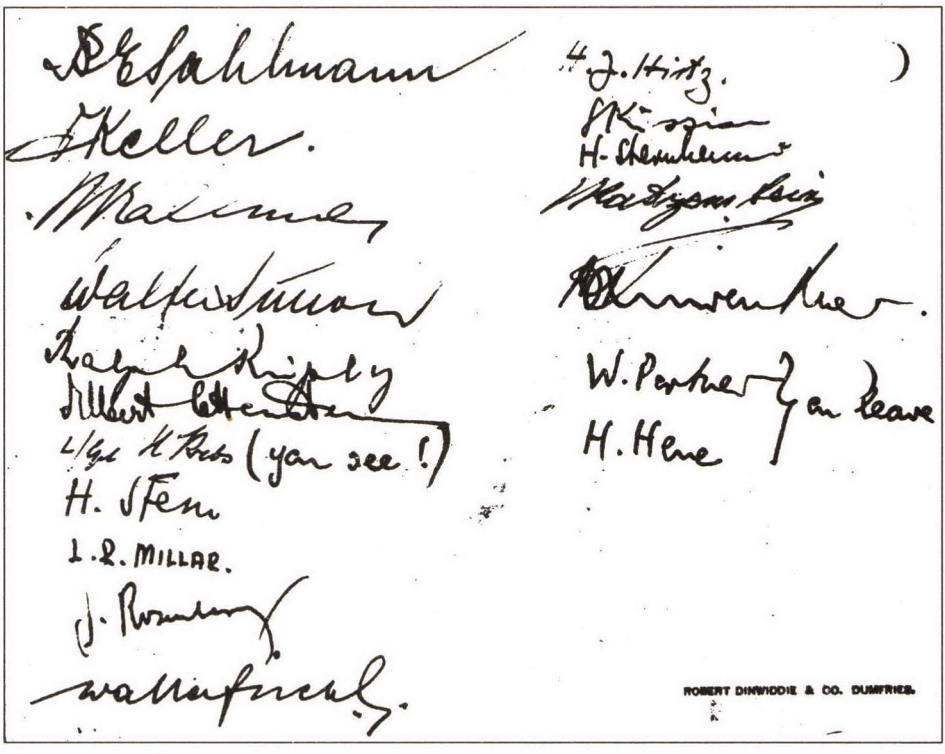
The sun shines bright, as you can see,
The stove is hot—so is the tea,
But when it's cold on "Scotland's Border,"
The "Blessed Stoves" are "out of order."



So please accept our Xmas Greeting,
And better stick to "Central Heating."

all the best
in the New Year from
Section 8.

137 Coy AMPC Christmas greetings sent to me by my old Section 8 to my new unit at the RAOC.

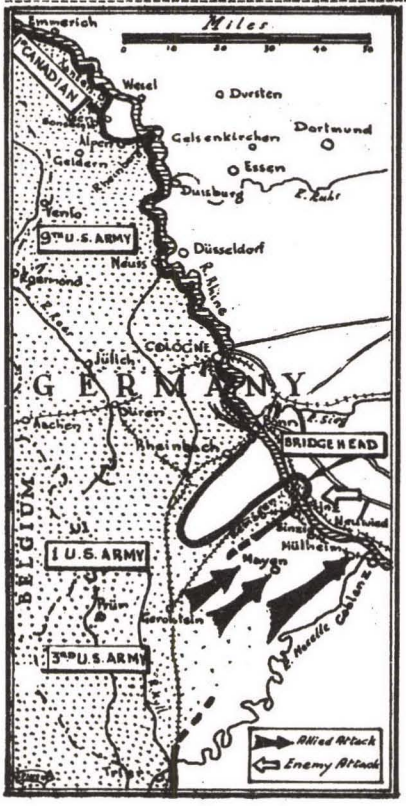


137 Coy AMPC Christmas greetings sent to me by my old Section 8 to my new unit at the RAOC. A picture of the Section, taken before my departure, is reproduced in the photographic part. The names (subject to possible errors after half a century) are as follows, seen left to right:

Front row: B.E. Sahlmann, H. Stern, W. Portner (one of my friends, who was later transferred to the Tank Corps, and killed in action in Normandy), J. Rosenberg, S. Kissin.
Centre row: Albert Ottenstein (who later became an optician and opened a shop in the Finchley Road in Hampstead), ? , L/Cpl Ralph Kingsley, L/Cpl H. Krebs, the Section Sergeant, Cpl Walter Fischl, L/Cpl . . ., ? , Kallmes.
Back row: ? , ?, H. Sternheim, ? , E. Riss (an architect who designed the card and drew the sketch), J. H. Hirtz, Kunreuther, myself, H. Hene. (*See page 47.*)

SECOND ARMY TROOPS NEWS

No. 272 Saturday, 10 March 1945 0600 hrs



LAST PHASES OF RHINELAND BATTLE

Most of the Rhine's west bank is now under Allied control. North of Cologne only one bridgehead west of the river is held by the Germans and this is steadily being compressed by the Canadian First and American Ninth Armies. South of Cologne the Rhine has been crossed and the First and Third Armies are rapidly closing in on the 50-mile stretch of the river north-west of Coblenz.

Yesterday the total of German prisoners taken since the Normandy landings passed the one million mark; this total includes 54 generals. The First Army alone took 3,000 prisoners yesterday.

ALLIED FORCES POUR ACROSS THE RHINE

Troops of the First Army have extended their bridgehead east of the Rhine. They have occupied the small town of Erpel and the high ground beyond, and are now driving eastward. Reinforcements and supplies are pouring across the river.

It was officially revealed last night that the crossing was made at Remagen 12 miles south-east of Bonn. The railway bridge just east of the town was found intact and captured in face of only weak opposition. Engineers removed the explosive charges and quickly converted the surface to take tanks. The crossing was made by units of the American 9th Armoured Division driving south-east from Rheinbach.

R.A.F. Mosquitoes have supported the bridgehead troops with low level attacks on German positions and road junctions. So far Allied aircraft have reported little enemy movement towards the bridgehead.

On the west bank of the Rhine troops of the First Army have taken Sinzig about 4 miles south of Remagen. North of the bridgehead they have pushed on through Bonn and reached the bridge over the river.

PATTON FOUR MILES FROM COBLENZ

Third Army columns have reached the Rhine at two places north-west of Coblenz; they are Andernach and Brohl, respectively 12 and 18 miles from the city. The German forces in the Rhine-Moselle angle have thus been cut into two "pockets", the larger one being between Andernach and Coblenz.

Towards Coblenz General Patton's troops have advanced swiftly to take Mülheim, the meeting place of five roads only 4 miles from the city and two miles from the Rhine. Altogether the Third Army yesterday took over 1,800 prisoners. Two-thirds of the plain stretching from the Kyll to the Rhine have been cleared by the Third Army in the last few days.

STRONG ARTILLERY RESISTANCE AROUND WESEL

Heavy fighting has continued in the remaining German bridgehead north of Cologne. The enemy has assembled a large concentration of artillery on the east bank of the Rhine around Wesel, and is heavily shelling our troops. British troops in the north of the "pocket" have occupied Xanten; the Ninth Army has taken Alpen in the south.

'The Allied build-up was overwhelming. . . . Just south of my unit's position the only foothold still in German hands on the west bank was a bridgehead which was being rapidly being demolished . . .

2 SECOND ARMY NEWS SHEET

BALTIC REACHED AT TWO NEW POINTS

Last night's Moscow communique reported a great advance by Russian troops on Rokossovsky's left flank. On the Danzig-Stettin railway they have captured two important centres, Stolp and Schlawe, 15 miles apart.

Two branch railways from these two towns reach the Baltic at Stolpmunde and Rügenwalde. These places have also been captured. By reaching the sea at Stolpmunde Rokossovsky has shortened by 30 miles the large German "pocket" between Danzig and Kosling. South of Danzig the Russians have advanced to within 12 miles of the city.

In Thursday's fighting Rokossovsky's troops occupied 200 places and took over 1,500 prisoners.

ZHUKOV SIX MILES FROM STETTIN

West of Rokossovsky's advance Marshal Zhukov has reached the Dammscher See, the southernmost lake at the mouth of the Oder. He has gained a position only 6 miles from Stettin situated on the far bank of the river. The principal German defences in the area are at Alt-Damm where the Oder flows into the lake 4 miles east of Stettin.

Enemy reports say that the Russians are now attacking what is described as the "Stettin bridgehead". The Germans have continued to announce attacks by Zhukov against Küstrin 40 miles south of Stettin.

In Hungary the Germans claim small gains in the neighbourhood of Lake Bala')inspite of Russian counter-attacks. Russian bombers yesterday attacked a concentration of trains north of the lake.

==========

AERIAL POUNDING OF GERMANY CONTINUED

The important communication centre of Kassel was Bomber Command's priority target on Thursday night. In addition, U-Boat yards at Hamburg were attacked, and Mosquitoes bombed Berlin for the 17th successive night.

Following the night attack by Bomber Command, Kassel was heavily attacked by American heavy bombers yesterday morning. The 1400 US planes that ranged over Western Germany yesterday, also attacked marshalling yards at Frankfurt-on-Main. In the afternoon; a force of Halifaxes bombed two oil targets near the Ruhr.

Last night the R.A.F. again raided Berlin: this is Berlin's 18th successive night raid and the heaviest in the series.

==========

IN MANDALAY British troops are engaged in heavy fighting. The Chinese are advancing towards the city from Lashio.

RADIO RENDEZVOUS

--:--

SELECTIONS FROM TOMORROW'S PROGRAMMES

A.E.F. PROGRAMME : 1230 Canadian Variety ; 1300 Atlantic Spotlight ; 1930 Forces' Sing-Song ; 2105 Mail Call.
GENERAL FORCES : 1700 Variety Band-Box ; 1815 Forces' Favourites ; 2105 Parliamentary Summary.
HOME SERVICE : 1315 Country Magazine (Somerset Edition) ; 1345 Worth Hearing ; 1430 Symphony Concert ; 1845 Songs for Everybody ; 2045 Music from Norway ; 2130 BBC Theatre Orchestra.

==========

TOKYO'S HEAVIEST RAID

The Japanese capital yesterday was attacked by 300 Super-Fortresses, so far the largest force to attack the city. The bombers came from the Marianas and dropped over 1,000 tons of incendiary bombs. Pilots have reported that the centre of the city quickly became a mass of flames.

The attack came shortly after a Japanese General had warned civilians that the War's decisive battles would be fought in Japan and not on Pacific islands.

==========

ROUND ABOUT : : :

MASTERS AND CREWS of the Merchant Navy sailing to and from the Far East are to have extra leave and pay.

\+ + +

GENERAL BRADLEY'S HQ yesterday released the news that the US 15th Army is now present on the North-west European front, under the command of Lt-General L.T.Jerow. This brings the total of American armies fighting on the Western front to five.

\+ + +

50 TRAINS AND 25 LORRIES, loaded with food and comforts for prisoners of war, are about to leave Switzerland for camps in Germany. If these reach their destination in safety, two further convoys, each of 25 lorries will follow.

\+ + +

THE AIRCRAFT-CARRIER "IMPLACABLE", sister ship of the "Indefatigable", has been in action against units of the German fleet. Planes from this carrier took a leading part in the operations culminating in the sinking of the "Tirpitz".

\+ + +

AN APPEAL HAS BEEN MADE to increase the quantities of food for the Liberated Countries. It is suggested that small shipments should be included in ships bringing war material to the Western European Theatre.

\+ + +

GENERAL SPAATZ, head of the Strategical Air Force in Europe, has visited Berne to discuss the infringement of air space over Switzerland.

10/DS/1532 Issued by Education Branch, Second Army ; In the Field 10 Mar 1945

'. . . I still have a news-sheet, distributed to the troops, informing us of the latest position.' (*See page 66.*)

Magistrat der Stadt Berlin
Hauptamt für Aufbau - Durchführung
- Technisches Untersuchungsamt -
Charlottenburg, Alt-Lietzow 28/30
Tel.: 32 04 41 App.: 548/9/50

Berlin-Charlottenburg, den 19.Juli 1946

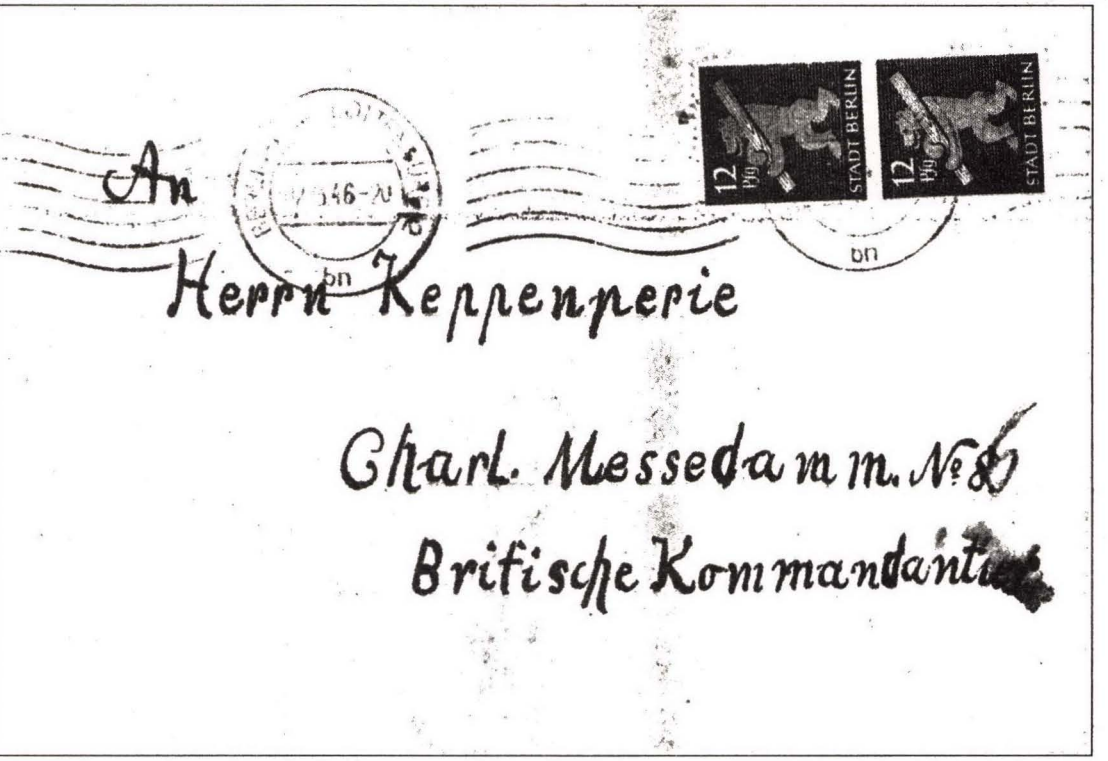
An den
Food Officier of Charlottenburg VBK
Mil.Gov.Detachement (Collonil Perry)
Berlin - Charlottenburg
Ulmenallee

In der Anlage übersenden wir die Abschrift unseres Antrages vom 2.Juli 1946 an die englische Militärregierung. Auf diesen Antrag hin sollten wir auf Grund einer Benachrichtigung der Military Governement M GBFB/C/460/2/PW u.U vom 6.Juli 46 ,von der auch bei Ihnen eine Abschrift vorliegen muss, unsern Fall dem verantwortlichen Ernährungsoffizier vorlegen. Dieses geschieht hiermit und wir bitten höflichst um dortige Entscheidung.

Herrmann

(Dr.Herrmann).

This letter from the head of Berlin's Central Bureau for Construction illustrates that I was responsible for my departmental work to the colonels in charge of the specialist services at Mil. Gov. HQ. (*See page 86.*)



'My rank and name became inextricably mixed up in some of my correspondents' minds . . .' (*See page 104.*)

Would Captain P e r r y please come
along to our children's party.
We thank the Military Government for their past help, and hope the Captain will come as guest.

The party will begin 1. Sept. 1946 14 h

Berlin
Charlottenburg
Spandauer Chaussee 19

(Brachland)-Kolonie
Golfplatz

Vogel
Feldleiter

- - - - - - - - -

Wir erlauben uns

Herrn Hauptmann P e r r y

zu unserem am Sonntag, d. 1. Sept. um 14 Uhr beginnenden K i n d e r f e s t einzuladen.

Wir bitten Herrn Hauptmann herzlich, an diesem Fest teilzunehmen und möchten nicht verfehlen, für die uns bisher von der Britischen Militärregierung gewährte Hilfe zu danken.
Wir würden uns freuen, Herrn Hauptmann als Gast bei uns begrüßen zu dürfen.

Berlin
Charlottenburg
Spandauer Chaussee 19

I.A. der (Brachland)-Kolonie
Golfplatz

Vogel
Feldleiter

The Food and Transport Departments 'responded favourably to a firm lead, especially as they soon realised that the Food and Transport Officer spoke the same language. . . . As a result, I found myself invited to many social events held by various German administrative organisations.' (*See page 96.*)

P/327629

WAR OFFICE

4th December, 1946.

Sir,

Now that the time has come for your release from active military duty, I am commanded by the Army Council to express to you their thanks for the valuable services which you have rendered in the service of your country at a time of grave national emergency.

At the end of the emergency you will relinquish your commission, and at that time a notification will appear in the London Gazette (Supplement), granting you also the honorary rank of Captain. Meanwhile, you have permission to use that rank with effect from the date of your release.

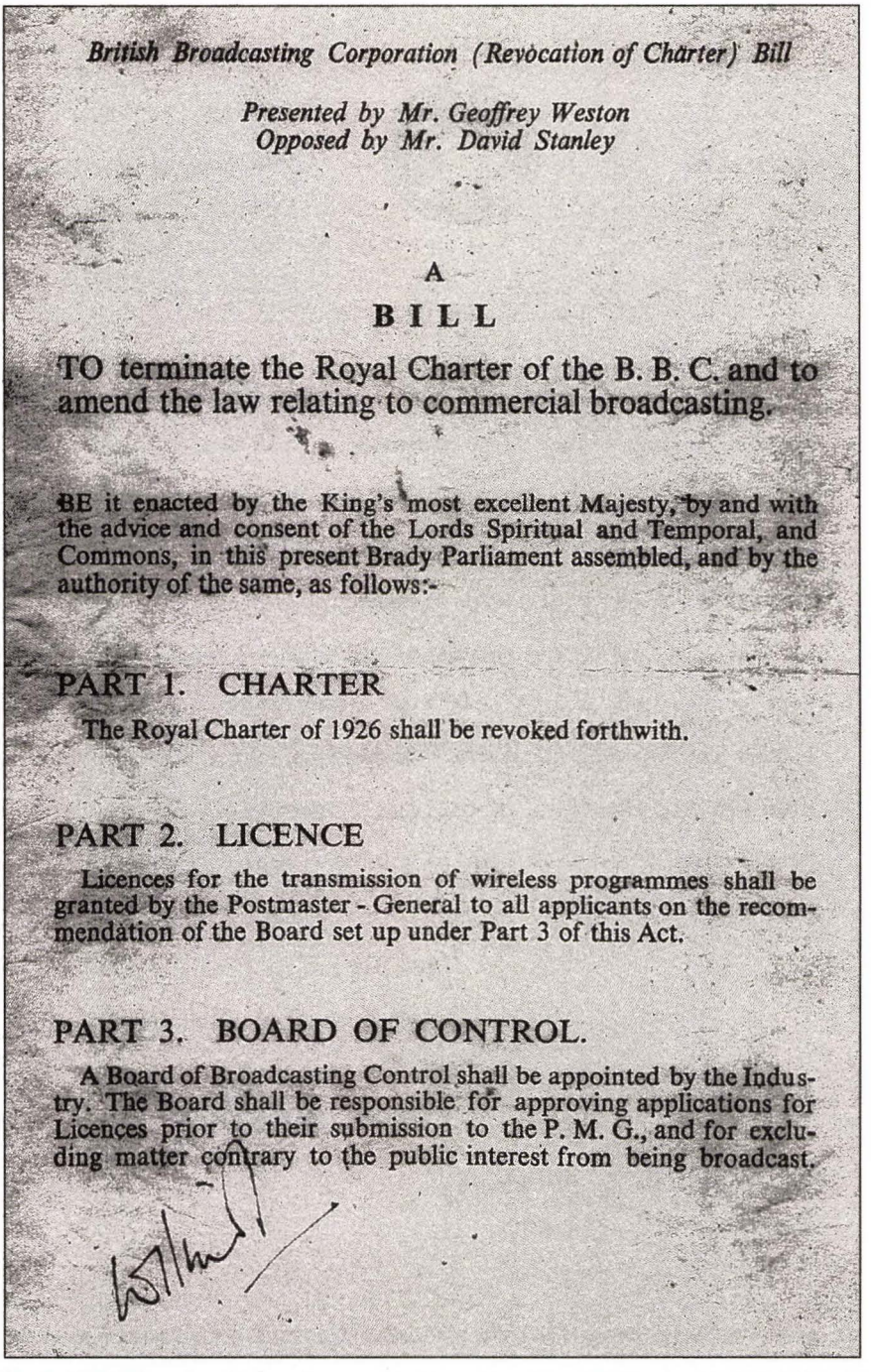
I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

L. B. Reed.

Captain P. J. C. Perry
The Royal Hussliers.

'For most of the home-coming servicemen and women these thanks and privileges represented nothing more than polite formalities. For former refugees, who had been able to demonstrate their devotion to Britain, it was tangible proof of acceptance by their adopted country.' (*See page 144.*)



British Broadcasting Corporation (Revocation of Charter) Bill

Presented by Mr. Geoffrey Weston
Opposed by Mr. David Stanley

A

BILL

TO terminate the Royal Charter of the B. B. C. and to amend the law relating to commercial broadcasting.

BE it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Brady Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:-

PART 1. CHARTER

The Royal Charter of 1926 shall be revoked forthwith.

PART 2. LICENCE

Licences for the transmission of wireless programmes shall be granted by the Postmaster - General to all applicants on the recommendation of the Board set up under Part 3 of this Act.

PART 3. BOARD OF CONTROL.

A Board of Broadcasting Control shall be appointed by the Industry. The Board shall be responsible for approving applications for Licences prior to their submission to the P. M. G., and for excluding matter contrary to the public interest from being broadcast.

Brady Club Discussion Group: A current topic was brought to life in a motion I drafted and printed on my hand press. (*See pages 158.*)

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ACI →Army Council Instruction
AMPC →Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps
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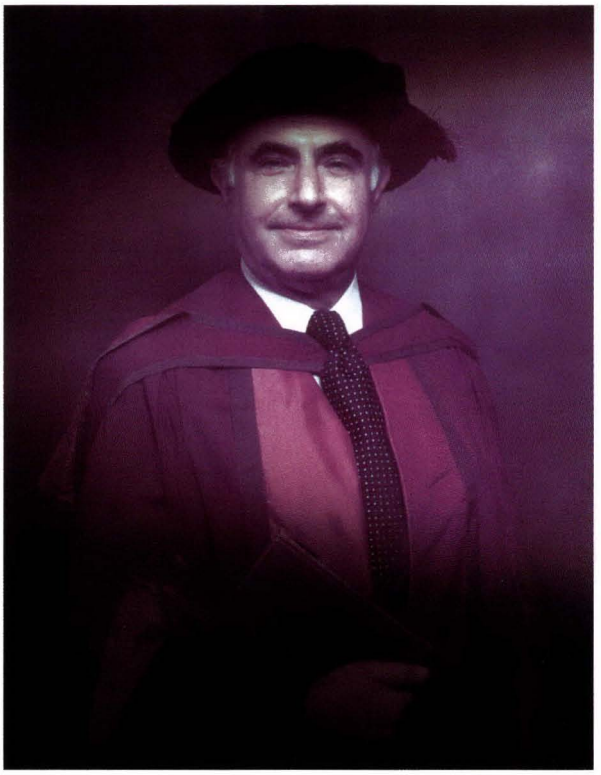
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At the University of London's Ph. D. Conferment Ceremony in 1976

HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, with BACIE's Council after a Lecture he gave, as the Association's Patron, at the Royal Institution in 1979





Christmas Day in 1985 with Elisabeth Fenske ('Aunt Lilala') and her brother, Rudi Wolter, photographed by me in the flat at Helmstedter Straße 14. It served as one of the Weiß family's hiding places during the war.



Gine Weiß and Ellen (who is taking this picture), accompanied by Rudi Mayer, bid me farewell at Tegel airport, Berlin, on my return to London after one of my official visits to the European Centre for Vocational Training.



With Rabbi Hugo Gryn and his wife Jackie, at the Reception after the Wedding Ceremony.



An outing with Gertrud Ludwig *(née Naujocks)* and her husband Gerhard, to Köpenik, on the outskirts of Berlin, following the fall of the Berlin Wall.



Leaving West London Synagogue after the Wedding Ceremony.

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ELLEN'S CHRONOLOGY

dedicated to the memory of her parents

Moritz and Regina Weiß

Early Childhood

17 August 1930

Moritz Weiß and Regina Zwiebel marry.

Moritz, commonly known among his family as 'Mor', comes from Posen. He was born on 2 August 1895, the third of eight children in a Jewish family which had been settled for generations in Hermannsdorf, in the *Kreis* (administrative district) of Wirsitz. His father, Isidor, ran the village store, his mother Cäcilie looked after the household and her numerous children. Moritz visited the local Elementary School, followed by a commercial apprenticeship in the near-by market town of Wirsitz.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, he volunteered for service in the Army, together with his older brother, Sally, who fell in the same year. His younger brother, Arthur, became a casualty in 1917. Moritz was wounded three times.

After the war, when Posen was transferred to Poland, the family opted to stay in Germany and moved to Berlin. The father had died in Posen.

On demobilisation, Moritz started his career in the textile business, first as salesman, then as a buyer of cloth, carpets and curtains. By 1928 he had risen to Manager in the textile store 'Brünn', in Weißensee, with a staff of about a hundred employees. It was the appointment he held at the time of his wedding.

Regina, called 'Gine' by relatives and friends, was born on 23 October 1905, the second of four children in a rather orthodox Jewish family in Chemnitz. Her father was a wine salesman who was frequently away from home on business trips. A few months after her birth the family moved to Bavaria – first to Würzburg, then to Nürnberg, where Gine spent the first years of her childhood which she could recall. Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War the family, which had meanwhile grown to four children, moved to Berlin.

Gine quickly adjusted herself to a new environment in which she soon made friends. At school she found a teacher she greatly admired. This helped her ambition to take wings, and her teacher suggested to her father Sigmund, that his gifted daughter's ability deserved a transfer to a higher school. Father decidedly turned the advice down. He was the sole keeper of a family of six and took the view that it was a girl's job to find a husband and raise a family, rather than to prepare herself for an occupation. In his opinion, any expenses spent on a girl's higher education would therefore be a waste of money. This investment should be reserved

for his son, Alfred. Gine, throughout her life, remained conscious of what she felt to be a lack of education, but of which only she was aware.

After finishing her schooling, Gine was expected to help her mother at home and wait for a suitable husband. She did not like this at all. She therefore asked her father's permission to become at least a *Volontärin* with a tailoring firm. This apprentice position requires the payment of a fee to the employer in return for the tuition supplied. Her father finally agreed that the money would represent a useful investment in her future role as housewife and mother.

Gine followed her training with so much eagerness and aptitude that her employers offered her a paid appointment on completion of her introductory course. Her father at first regarded this as a most unsuitable development – 'It is not proper for a girl from a good home to work as a tailoress!' – but finally he consented. Gine was allowed to keep her income for personal use.

She enjoyed her limited freedom, enrolled in various evening classes in English, literature and household management, bought household linen as a contribution towards her dowry, and added a few crazy hats to keep pace with current fashion.

In 1923, when she was eighteen years old, her father was taken seriously ill with a lung complaint and, until his death in 1928, could only work for limited periods.

His eldest daughter, Helene, had just got married; the two younger children – Berta and Alfred – were fifteen and eleven years old. Mother was fully occupied with running the household and looking after her sick husband. Gine therefore took the initiative, established herself as an independent tailoress and became the family's breadwinner.

Berta married in 1928. Alfred had to leave school, aged 16, after his father's death, to begin an apprenticeship. Gine continued to care for her mother, brother and herself.

After her wedding she intends to continue in employment, together with her husband, in order to complete her newly-established household and to set aside savings for the future. Both of them have to continue to look after their mothers.

31 March 1933

Mor's present employment as Deputy District Manager with the *Web- und Manufakturwaren-Vertriebs-GmbH* is terminated, ostensibly on the grounds that a branch is being closed down, but really because he is a

Jew. He opens a stand which trades in textiles. Gusta Zwiebel is appalled at the fact that her son-in-law becomes a market trader.

June 1933

Alfred Zwiebel emigrates to Palestine.

27 April 1934

A daughter is born to Mor and Gine. She is called 'Ellen'.

December 1934

Gusta Zwiebel follows her son Alfred to Palestine. The reason for her emigration is not fear of Nazi persecution, but to be close to her youngest offspring, who is still regarded by her as her 'child'. She is content in the knowledge that her daughters are now in the care of their husbands.

1936

Mor and Gine receive notice, as Jews, terminating the rent agreement for their flat in the model settlement called *Karl-Legien-Wohnstatt* in the Gubitzstraße. They move into a more modest flat in the Zingster Straße. This home is also situated in a modern block, but in contrast to their former flat, central heating now gives way to oven heating.

1937

Ellen stands in the inner courtyard of their block of flats when a stout woman approaches her with the words: 'You Jew-girl, get off our courtyard'. Ellen doesn't know what this term means, only understands that she is told to disappear and is scared by the threatening attitude of this woman. She runs into the house, rushes upstairs to her mother and tells her of this encounter amidst her sobs.

August 1938

An official list of 'Jewish forenames' is issued. Anyone who bears a name which is not contained in this register must add the name 'Israel' in the case of males, or 'Sara' in the case of females, with effect from 1

January 1939. Jews born after this date may only be given names contained in the official list.

November 1938

Following the pogrom of 9 November, Mor is banned at short notice from continuing to trade from a stand in the market place.

End of 1938

Jews are banned from using certain streets, squares and parks.

1 January 1939

Ellen must now use the additional name of 'Sara'.

Beginning of 1939

Mor accepts a job as presser, although he has never performed this task before.

Shortly afterwards he is conscripted into forced labour, first on road works, then on street cleaning, and finally in connection with the manufacture of cardboard boxes with a company called 'Epeco'. His performance there is regarded as so satisfactory that he is soon used as a *Spezialarbeiter* – a 'special worker'.

28 February 1939

Ellen, in common with all other Jews, is now issued with an Identity Card. It contains neither her photograph nor her finger prints, because she is not yet ten years old, and of course no signature, because she has not even reached the age of five years. She feels very sad about the absence of her photo and finger prints, and expresses these views to her mother at the Police Station. The friendly policeman who is handing out the identity cards and happens to hear her remarks, agrees with her that finger prints are indeed required. He takes her forefinger, applies it to the ink pad and imprints the result on a sheet of paper. Then he shows this 'official' document to Ellen and points out how important it is for him. Although she would have preferred an identity card with her picture, she nevertheless enjoys the blue impression of her finger on the white sheet of paper.

Summer 1939

Some important changes are beginning to occur in the family. Alfred Weiß, one of Mor's brothers, has emigrated to England, followed by his sister Rosa. Regina's brother, Alfred Zwiebel, called 'Bob', has announced his intention to pay a visit from Palestine. Ellen is delighted because her mother has painted this uncle in glowing colours and shown her a most attractive picture of him.

The families of Ellen's parents differ a great deal from each other, but they nevertheless form a harmonious whole to her childhood's background.

Family Weiß tends to be quiet and staid. Their homes have a somewhat old-fashioned look. Ellen finds them a little on the dark side, but is nevertheless attracted by their atmosphere.

By contrast, the Zwiebel family are very lively. Their homes are bright, and more to Ellen's taste.

But the individuals who make up the two families can't simply be allocated to specific groups. Each member possesses a distinct personality, which in turn influences their relationship to Ellen.

'Oma' (Cäcilie Weiß, née Gabbe, now seventy-seven) is gentle and calm. She wears long, black dresses with a white pattern. Her grey hair is plaited and piled in a knot at the back of her head. Her attitude to Ellen is always affectionate – she is the personification of 'Oma'.

Aunt Hanna (Johanna Löwenthal, née Weiß, forty-five) tends to be a little on the plump side. Her hair is combed straight back, and she is dressed very much like 'Oma'; her skirts are just a little shorter. When her brother 'Sally' fell during the Great War, she became the 'Senior' among the children. She evidently regards it as part of her duties to ply them with good advice, which they tend to disregard. She also tries to engulf Ellen with her authority and with many displays of her affection. This makes Ellen feel a little uneasy, although she accepts it with the same tolerance which the other members of the family show in response to Aunt Hanna's uninvited counsel.

Her husband, Uncle Eugen, is distinguished by a shock of thick, grey hair and especially by an enormous, grey moustache. He is a friendly man, and is quite simply one of the family.

Their son, Kurt, is ten years older than Ellen. He is both her cousin and her protector.

Uncle Max (Max Weiß, forty-two) is dark blond, unostentatious and reticent; but where Ellen is concerned he sheds his reserve. He has no children and is very fond of her. When he visits her home, which he does frequently, he spends much of the evening sitting by her bedside, entertaining her with tales which spring from his inventive mind. Ellen supplies him with cues by telling him about her daily joys and sorrows, and he expands them into stories which always have a happy ending. He does this even when there are other guests present. If he is suddenly missed, everybody knows that 'Max is sitting with Ellen and telling her tales!'

He has only recently married. Aunt Käte wears spectacles with thick glasses and is plump. She is inconspicuous and very nice.

Uncle Alfred (Alfred Weiß, thirty-nine) emigrated a little while ago. Ellen does not miss him: he is the only brother with whom her father had relatively little contact. Ellen saw him only occasionally when visiting Oma.

Aunt Rosa (Rosa Weiß, thirty-seven) and unmarried, emigrated soon after Uncle Alfred, Ellen misses her somewhat more than him. She was calm like Oma and moreover very shy. She hardly talked to Ellen, but occasionally put her arm around her shoulder, smiled a little and squeezed her affectionately.

Uncle Arnold (Arnold Weiß, thirty-six) is still a bachelor. He likes Ellen, and devotes just enough time to her to generate a feeling of affection for him. Uncle Max thinks that he has a lot of spare time and persuades him to use his natural skill to produce special toys for Ellen. On one occasion they both construct a doll's house consisting of two rooms, equipped with appropriate furnishings and lit with electric power supplied by a pocket torch battery.

Aunt Leni (Helene Hirsch, née Zwiebel, thirty-seven) is fair, has blue eyes and is regarded as the beauty of the Zwiebel family, despite her slightly protruding teeth. Ellen can't understand this. She thinks that Mutti and Aunt Berta are much prettier. Aunt Leni is lively and nice, and a very competent manager of her family. As far as Ellen is concerned, her advantage over the rest of her relatives is the existence of her children Inge and Hardi. They are like Ellen's brother and sister.

Hardi (Gerhard Hirsch, eleven years old) is fair and blue-eyed like his

mother, and even shares her protruding teeth. He is the 'big one', but not sufficiently grown up to prevent him from taking part in all games.

Inge (Inge Hirsch, born on 7.7.30) inherited her father's dark hair and her mother's blue eyes. She is said to be very pretty; but for Ellen she is just 'Inge', the playmate with whom she shares much of her time. They grow up together. Although two years younger than her brother, Inge dominates her playmates. She invents games, like 'Father, Mother and Child', or 'School', and then proceeds to allocate the roles. For herself, she always selects 'Mother' or 'Teacher', or whatever character is responsible for making decisions. As a rule, Ellen accepts Inge's authority and rarely protests; but it does happen when Inge boasts of the difference in her seniority and describes it as 'four years'. Ellen is aware of the fact that the gap amounts to only 3 3/4 years, and that this makes a difference. Hardi shows equanimity and allows Inge to dominate him up to a point. He tends to reach a limit when his sister tries to ally herself with Ellen by saying things like: 'Women must stick together!' Hardi then either abandons the game, or indicates to Ellen that she is misbehaving herself. It is an accusation which she tends to accept. Once she has expressed her regrets, and Inge loses her ally, Hardi returns and peace is restored.

On Sundays, Inge and Hardi often come to lunch. Mutti then prepares braised beef or roulades with potato dumplings, because these are their favourite dishes.

Uncle Wolfgang (Wolfgang Hirsch, forty-two), Aunt Leni's husband. is a likable man. His importance consists in the fact that he belongs to the family.

Aunt Berta (Berta Zitrin, née Zwiebel, thirty-one) is tall, dark haired, with brown eyes. She has a lady-like appearance, but nevertheless is a real 'mate'. She represents a mixture of everything one hopes to find in a youthful aunt who is really popular.

She is now expecting a baby, and Ellen is sometimes encouraged to touch her 'tummy' to make sure that the child is actually moving about. Ellen is not quite sure whether one is trying to make fun of her, or whether this is the real thing. On second thoughts, something credible seems to be happening.

Uncle Martin (Martin Zitrin, forty-six), Aunt Berta's husband, is tall, strong and self-confident. He teaches 'German' and 'Sport', and is a pedagogue by conviction. Ellen makes an excellent partner for his free-

time activities. He plays word games with her, which she enjoys, and also teaches her a few Hebrew words. Occasionally he takes her out for a *Molle* – the Berliners' term for a glass of beer, when he presents her with a malt drink. During the outing, Ellen occasionally asks him – possibly a little too loudly – 'Uncle Martin, are you going to teach me some more He-brew tonight?'

Papa and Mutti are, of course, in a totally different category – just because they are Papa and Mutti. Both are really powerful characters; but they also differ from each other in their own particular ways.

Papa is imperturbable. He is the rock which stands firmly in the way of the on-coming tide; he is the protector for Mutti and Ellen. In business he is said to be ambitious and decisive, but at home he is warm-hearted, full of care and affection. Mutti, who is really without prejudice, had decided, in her youth, not to marry a bald man, or one called Moritz. But she found Papa so nice that she succumbed to him despite the fact that he was afflicted with both defects.

Papa can do simply everything, except sew, bake and cook. He can, however, make coffee, and even cook potatoes as long as the are peeled, washed and salted.

Papa is very proud of his daughter and finds her most beautiful. Uncle Martin succeeds in pulling his leg by describing her as 'medium-pretty'. When Mutti occasionally stays at home on a Sunday morning while Papa takes Ellen on a visit to Oma, she has to dress her daughter in one of her prettiest dresses (preferably a white woollen dress with colourful embroideries in the front and on the sleeves) and usually waves from the window as Mor and Ellen walk hand in hand down the short, curved street.

When Mutti takes Ellen on a short visit to Aunt Leni and – what happens rarely – returns home after Papa, he will be waiting for them on the stairs and call out: 'Well, you loafers!'

If Ellen specially asks for it, he will read stories to her in the evening; but he will not tell her any tales.

Most enjoyable are Ellen's excursions with her parents to the Grunewald on summer Sundays, usually accompanied by either Uncle Martin and Aunt Berta, or Aunt Leni and family. Papa, who grew up in the country, knows all about plants and animals, and explains everything to Ellen. She loves it when he puts all kinds of beetles and grass hoppers in her hands. Mutti then makes a funny face, but finally pulls herself together, turns away and busies herself with something else.

Papa is totally immune to any aversion. He is also very brave, but never

irresponsible, and always carefully weighs up the consequences before he embarks on anything. He is totally fearless – or very nearly so. He once confided that the only thing he dreaded was the Gestapo.

In contrast to Papa, Mutti is vivacious and just a little bit nervous. She grumbles occasionally, and sometimes does so once too often. Now and then she slaps Ellen, who is then very offended, but never bears a grudge. Whenever Mutti feels that she has acted unjustly, she honestly admits it and apologises. She then explains to Ellen that she is so nervous because of all the prohibitions which continually descend upon them: the worries she has about the heavy work which Papa is forced to carry out, and the sewing she has to carry on in secrecy to help Papa earn money, since Jews are forbidden to work independently.

Mutti is ever-present when she is needed. She sits at Ellen's bedside when she is ill, puts a dressing on a bruised knee and presses a 5-Mark coin on a bump to make it go back to the place it should never have left.

Mutti also seems to have ears everywhere: no wall can obstruct her hearing. She responds to Ellen's call, regardless of whether it comes from the courtyard, the street or the staircase. Just a short time ago, a horde of children from the block of flats, led by a tall girl who lives on the ground floor, had encircled Ellen. They insulted her by calling her *'Jüd'sche'*, mocked her and finally wiped their shoes on her dress. In her distress, Ellen loudly called out for her mother, fearing that she might not be heard on the second floor. Mutti, however, appeared on the scene without delay, and the children took to their heels, although Mutti is also a Jewess. But then she is a grown-up.

Mutti is a superb baker and cook. Ellen is allowed not only to watch, but also to lend a hand; it is something she does with enthusiasm. Eating, on the other hand, is not one of her favourite pastimes, although she feels that Mutti's food tastes best. Ellen is thought to be a 'bad eater'. At the same time, she is relatively tall for her age and so tubby that she is known as *Pummelchen*. Perhaps Mutti simply tries to over-feed her. Spinach offers the ultimate obstacle. Ellen is expected to eat it once a week, because it is thought to be so healthy. That may well be true, but spinach is repulsive all the same. When Ellen was still smaller, Mutti tried to divert her by singing songs and reciting poems. Now she serves the spinach on a pretty plate, decorated with images of cats. The more you eat, the more you can see of the cats. Ellen loves cats; but she still can't stand the spinach.

Mutti plays with Ellen whenever she can spare the time, and also provides a magnificent wardrobe for her dolls. As part of these games, she teaches Ellen everything she needs to know about running a household.

She is even allowed to iron some laundry – an activity which fills Papa with apprehension. But Ellen never scorches anything, and soon learns how to avoid ironing unwanted pleats into the garments.

Mutti knows all fairy tales by heart, as well as many songs and poems, and imparts them to Ellen. She also attaches great importance to clear diction. This explains Ellen's insistence on referring to 'He-brew' during her outings with Uncle Martin.

Whatever Mutti is doing, Ellen is always allowed to be present. When sewing, Ellen often sits next to her. They then talk to each other, and there is never a shortage of topics. Above all, Mutti can tell stories better than anybody else. She describes her childhood and youth in every detail.

It must have been a wonderful time. The family, as it then existed, comes alive in Ellen's imagination. In her mind she sees the 'Opa' she never met, with his twirled, up-turned moustache, and 'Oma', who now lives in Palestine, and at that time had to tame her four children. And then there were Mutti's numerous uncles and aunts, who lived in Cottbus and Nürnberg, where she occasionally visited them.

One unimaginable feature of that time, however, was the fact that being a Jew was said to make no difference, apart from the celebration of a different set of festivals. One was allowed to do absolutely everything that was allowed to everybody else. There were even Jewish teachers (like Mutti's form mistress) and pupils (like Mutti) in all schools, while now Uncle Martin's teaching is confined to a Jewish school, and Ellen herself is about to be enrolled in one. Nobody was permitted to abuse other people, and apparently no one wanted to do such a thing. Only one of Mutti's various girl friends was Jewish, but all of them could visit her without any obstacle. Opa could follow the occupation he had chosen, and no one was compelled to add 'Sara' or 'Israel' to their names.

When Ellen was still smaller, and Jews were allowed to walk down the 'Linden', (*Unter den Linden)* she and Mutti passed the *Schloß* – the Imperial Palace. Ever since then she wants to visit it. Naturally, Jews are no longer permitted to do this; but Mutti promises her a visit 'when everything is over'. Ellen simply doesn't see how 'everything can be over' when conditions are manifestly getting worse all the time.

Although her parents have totally different temperaments, they harmonise wonderfully. To Ellen they represent a unit which naturally belongs together.

When Papa returns from work in the evening and Mutti serves up his food, all three sit close together. At first, they discuss disagreeable events. Mutti reports about the mail which has arrived once again to introduce new restrictions, and Papa recounts his day's events. Ellen listens to this

conversation with the utmost attention. Sometimes she climbs on Papa's lap while he is still eating. Mutti does not entirely approve of this, because she wants him to eat undisturbed, but he likes it. He also enjoys the fact that eating from his plate improves Ellen's appetite.

Having discussed the latest repressions, the conversation then turns to more general subjects. Strangely enough, most talks – even those concerning the family at large – eventually lead to references that they are Jews; but regardless of topic, it is simply good to be together.

1939 and following years

To start with, Jews must surrender jewellery and all items made of precious metals. This is followed by orders to give up everything that is of practical use.

Personal ornaments have to be handed in, followed by radio sets, cameras, and then all electrical appliances. Mor and Gine miss their radio set and resent being parted from their camera; but it is the confiscation of their electric iron which inflicts real hardship, since all textiles have to be ironed. A dear old acquaintance – Mrs Wolter, the mother of Gine's best friend, Elisabeth Fenske – presents her with an old-fashioned, oven-heated iron which she had kept as a souvenir dating back to the turn of the century.

Next follows the confiscation of all furs. Gine's silver fox has to go. It is a loss which she had already expected; but the order to surrender all knitware, with the exception of one item per person, presents real problems. Ellen's loss of these items is alleviated by her being presented with a much-admired woollen cardigan belonging to her cousin Inge, who is four years older.

After having handed over all but their most basic utensils, the family is informed that the remaining household and clothing items are entrusted to them on loan only, and subject to most careful use.

All the numerous prohibitions, regulations and other instructions which are delivered to the Jews on an almost daily basis contain the threat that contrariness or failure to comply will result in *staatspolizeiliche Maßnahmen* ('state police measures'). In practice, this means deportation to a concentration camp.

Beginning of August 1939

Alfred Zwiebel, Ellen's uncle, returns to Berlin from Palestine to persuade his three sisters and their families to emigrate illegally to Palestine

as the only chance to leave Germany. They all refuse to abandon the remainder of their families. Alfred returns to Palestine with difficulty just before the outbreak of war.

At first, Ellen is disappointed in Uncle 'Bob'. She does not find him nearly as handsome as the picture which her mother had shown her. But he is very nice to her, so that her opinion of him improves during his two weeks' stay. When he departs, she has become really fond of him; but he only plays a marginal role in her experience.

End of August 1939

Berta and Martin Zitrin, as Jews, lose their flat in the Varnhagenstraße and move in temporarily with Mor and Gine.

1 September 1939

Aunt Berta takes Ellen shopping. She suddenly says: 'It is war!' Ellen has heard of the 'World War' in which her father had served. She has no real understanding of the implications, but is nevertheless filled with a feeling of dread.

13 September 1939

Berta Zitrin gives birth to a girl who is called 'Rahel' – a name chosen from the restricted list authorised for newly-born children.

Ellen is delighted when Aunt Berta returns from the *Jüdische Krankenhaus* (Jewish Hospital). For the first time, Ellen is 'the Big One'. She is allowed to carry 'Heli' – Rahel's nickname – in her arms, and holds on to her tightly. Aunt Berta has full confidence in her, but the tall, strong Uncle Martin looks extremely worried, despite his wife's soothing words.

30 October 1939

Mor is issued with a *Wehrausschließungsschein* – an 'Army Exclusion Certificate'. The reason given: 'Jew'. *(See p. 405)*

December 1939

The Festival of Chanukah is approaching. In keeping with annual custom, Mor and Gine arrange a festive reception for the whole family.

The preparations are already under way. Baking goes on for days. The flat is full of delicious smells, and just the look of the dough causes Ellen to forget her usual lack of appetite. Gine's traditional Chanukah pastry includes marble cake, 'boves' shortcake and 'fluden', which consists of several layers of pastry with three fillings, two of almonds, raisins, cinnamon and sugar, and one made of confectionery. Nobody can bake it like Gine.

Ellen is totally involved in the baking process. She is allowed to sieve, mix, stir, knead, slobber, cut out bisquit shapes and generally to help Mutti with new creations. It is wonderful, particularly as she is allowed to 'taste' the dough.

Gine also composes poems and sketches for performances by Hardi, Inge and Ellen. (Kurt is already considered too grown up for such things.) A few days before Chanukah the pieces have to be learnt by heart and firmly committed to memory.

The highlight of the preparations is reached on the evening before the feast. Mor and Gine work throughout the night, and Ellen can scarcely shut an eye for excitement.

Coloured ribbons are fixed to the lamp. The other ends are pinned to the walls, so that they form a graceful curve which lets them wave about in gay abandon. Mor cuts star-shaped place cards out of gold-coloured cardboard sheets. Plates, loaded with sweets, are prepared. The big, rectangular dining table is enlarged to its limit by pulling out its two extensions, so that it can accommodate the eighteen persons it will have to seat. When the presents have been put in place and the decorations have been finished, a great white sheet is spread over it all. Only in the centre a place is reserved for the Chanukah candelabra.

The following day starts almost normally, until the guests begin to arrive in the late afternoon. More presents are placed on the specially reserved spaces under the sheet.

The scene has now been finally set. Hardi, Inge and Ellen face their eagerly expectant public and recite their pieces. Then the candles are lit, and everybody joins in singing the Chanukah song, 'Maos tsur ...'

Now the moment has come for Mor and Gine to remove the sheet with a practised flourish, and the children pounce on the presents. The entire table is crammed with all the family's gifts, which are directed mainly at the children. They are shown around, admired, played with, thanked for and generally received with rejoicing.

After a suitable interval, Gine re-directs those presents which are still resting on the table onto the sofa and similar places, and then proceeds to serve her specially prepared coffee and cake. The grown-ups expertly

acknowledge the quality of her delicacies; and the children oscillate between cakes and presents. Crumbs on the floor don't matter today.

25 December 1939

As always, the Weiß family are invited to spend Christmas Day with the Fenskes.

Elisabeth Fenske, known as 'Lisa', (thirty-five years old) is Catholic. She is well-built, radiates contentment and is Gine's best friend. Ellen calls her 'Tante Lilala', because she was at first unable to say 'Lisa' and was only able to pronounce 'Lilalala'. Later she dropped the final 'la'.

Tante Lilala is Ellen's favourite 'aunt'. Her start over Aunt Berta and Aunt Leni can only be described as marginal, but she is proud of her 'rank and title'.

She has no children of her own, much as she would have liked them; and so she concentrates all her affection for children on Ellen – the only person who calls her by a name other than Elisabeth or Lisa.

They frequently visit each other. Sometimes, when Aunt Lilala happens to pass by, or when Mutti is sewing a dress for her, she asks: 'Well, Ellen, shall we go "schuchteln"?' It means going shopping in town, and finishing the trip with a visit to a *Café*. Ellen naturally doesn't need a second invitation to join the outing.

On one occasion she even takes Ellen to a Children's Theatre to see 'Snow-White'. As a Jewess, Ellen isn't allowed to enter a theatre, but Aunt Lilala couldn't care less about such laws. Children are not subjected to control, and Ellen is told not to mention her theatre visit to any playmates, of whom, in any case, there are not many left now.

The visit is so wonderfully exciting that, on her return home, Ellen can't stop telling Mutti about it in such detail that she even describes her visit to the toilet during the interval!

Aunt Lilala conducts long conversations with Ellen, and shows much understanding for her dislike of spinach. She doesn't actually say so when present at a meal, but Ellen is aware of her sympathising looks. Her mother notes with some envy that, when having a meal at Aunt Lilala's, Ellen eats *everything* placed in front of her.

When Aunt Lilala moves to Helmstedter Straße 14 in 1938, Ellen is the first guest to be taken along. The flat is spacious, elegantly furnished, and meets with Ellen's full approval. Even before the move, Ellen had developed a special liking for Aunt Lilala's dressing table with its three-piece mirror in which, suitably adjusted, one can observe oneself reflected from three angles – all at once! This attraction was further increased,

because Aunt Lilala placed all her 'family jewellery' – i.e. the fashion necklaces and bracelets she had bought to go with her latest dresses – at Ellen's disposal.

'Uncle Fenske' (Karl-Martin Fenske, thirty-one), Aunt Lilala's husband, is, in contrast to her, very tall and slim. He tries to demonstrate his affection for Ellen by lifting her high into the air when she arrives, and holding her there for what seems quite a while. She is always glad when her feet finally regain solid ground.

He owns a factory, which specialises in impregnating textiles in the Niederwallstraße in the centre of Berlin. He is very well off and uses his wealth to drive large cars.

Aunt Hedwig (Hedwig Wolter, fifty-seven) is Aunt Lilala's mother and lives in her flat. She has three children, but no grandchildren and 'adopts' Ellen automatically as a substitute grandchild. She teaches her how to knit, crotchet and play cards, like *Rommé* and *'66'*. They also play *Mensch-ärgere-Dich-nicht* (a popular board game). *Rommé* and *'66'* are played for money. Aunt Hedwig gives Ellen a few *Pfennige* for this purpose out of her cash box – a retired, dented tin in which cigarettes were once sold. She declares that one day she might win enough cash to buy a cottage with a garden. Whenever Ellen jubilantly wins a game, Aunt Hedwig admits that her cottage probably won't materialise after all.

Aunt Hedwig also has a nameless doll, whose permanent domicile is located in her cupboard. From time to time this toy emerges, to be given a plain, home-made and somewhat boring new dress. It provides an opportunity for both of them to play with her.

It is particularly cozy when Aunt Hedwig sits at her wide window sill, with her work basket by her side, busily mending or patching clothes and darning socks. Ellen then resumes her traditional seat on a foot rest opposite her, with the cat by her side or on her lap, and listens intently to her tales.

Aunt Hedwig describes her childhood in Silesia in minute detail. She grew up in conditions of dire poverty; but that doesn't sound dreadful now. It seems more like a Cinderella story, because one can see that she is really quite comfortable.

She also tells Ellen about the Catholic faith and explains it without ever trying to convert her. Each one follows her own rightful faith. In this way, Ellen gains a practical insight into the parable of 'The Three Rings' from Lessing's famous play, 'Nathan the Wise'.

Aunt Hedwig is, however, prejudiced against the Protestants, whom

she regards as renegades. She calls them *die Evangel'schen*; but this opinion has never prevented her from marrying a Protestant, whom she dearly loved, nor is it stopping her now from enjoying an excellent relationship with her Protestant son-in-law.

Although Aunt Hedwig is very religious, and as a rule follows the regulations of her Church, it does not prevent her from regularly laying her cards. It is clearly not sufficient for her just to follow the faith – she also wants to glimpse in advance the fate which the future holds for her.

She regularly attends Church on Sundays and afterwards often recounts how her priest spoke against the Nazis in his sermons; and how he frequently singled out their persecution of the Jews for special condemnation.

Today it is Christmas day. Two days ago, under his wife's direction, Mr Fenske began to decorate the Christmas tree with red and gold glass orbs and a suitable crowning top with bells. Being a pedant, he suspended two strips of *Lametta* tin foil in exactly equal distances on the branches and affixed the brackets holding the candles so accurately in a vertical position to the stem, that the lights appear to be perfectly aligned. As in previous years, the result is a splendid example of a Christmas tree which reaches from floor to ceiling.

The Weiß family is called into the dining room when all the candles have been lit. The exchange of presents follows. Ellen previously helped with the wrapping at home, using Christmas paper, tying up the parcels with gilded ribbon and decorating them with fir twigs. Now Aunt Lilala presents her with a doll with long, black tresses and a white dress sewn by Aunt Hedwig. 'This is Little Snow-White', declares a beaming Aunt Lilala. Although Ellen finds the doll attractive, and doesn't have any dolls with real hair, she is not as enthusiastic as Aunt Lilala had imagined. This is because, for her, Little Snow-White is a character from a fairy tale, and therefore can't be regarded as a real child. 'Kate' – a doll with a name of which no one knows the origin, because it has been in the family longer than Aunt Kate – remains her favourite, despite the imitation hair. Mutti is secretly delighted, not only because it was her present, but also because its size corresponded exactly with Ellen's at the time of her birth.

After the exchange of presents, Aunt Lilala puts on records of Christmas carols, while they all sit down to coffee and cake. She serves her home-baked delicacies, which are nearly as good as Mutti's, and an animated conversation accompanies this festive meal. Much of it is concerned with Rudi (Rudolf Wolter) and Fritz, Aunt Lilala's brothers who have recently been called up. Both have sent Christmas

greetings, and everybody hopes that they will survive the war without a scratch.

1940 and subsequent years

After the outbreak of war, and with the commencement of rationing, further special restrictions for Jews are introduced. Their food ration cards bear a 'J' in the middle. Subsequently, this letter is also reproduced on each single coupon.

At first, former Jewish *Frontkämpfer* (front line ex-servicemen) of the First World War are issued with tobacco coupons and are allocated certain food items. These 'privileges' are, however, quickly cancelled.

No clothing coupons or footwear allocations are available to Jews. This shortage rapidly becomes a problem – especially for children, who quickly outgrow their shoes. Wooden clogs with textile uppers are occasionally offered without coupons. One has to queue for them for many hours. Supplies are usually sold out before one can reach the counter. On only one occasion, after Gine and Ellen have queued for hours in pouring rain, do they succeed in acquiring a pair of clogs for Ellen.

Finally, only wooden sandals with cotton straps can be obtained. Very occasionally the toe section may have a flexible joint. These models are regarded as healthier for the feet. They are also very popular with the children, who call them *Klapperlatschen* – 'clatter-clogs'.

Access to coffee beans, chocolate, cocoa and rice is withdrawn from Jews. It is followed by tropical fruit, beans, cake, pastry, white bread, rolls and full cream milk. At the same time severe reductions are decreed in the availability of meat, fat, sugar, eggs, fruit and vegetables. Finally, the meat, fat and sugar rations virtually disappear, while access to eggs, skimmed milk, fruit and vegetables is totally banned. The sole exception is yellow turnips.

Gine manages to conjure up astonishing variations from these turnips. Among the most favourite dishes are her 'turnip cutlets', produced from sliced turnips which are fried in minimal quantities of fat.

Beginning of April 1940

Helene Hirsch is now employed by the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden* (the body set up by the Government to implement its regulations for the Jews), and alerts her sister Gine to the fact that, in a few days' time, an order will be issued restricting the living accommodation permitted to Jews. The number of square metres available in their flat will then force

them to accept a sub-tenant. Lene advises her sister to anticipate this order by immediately looking out for a suitable person.

Mor and Gine follow this advice and use the notice board at the Jewish Hospital to advertise their accommodation. They want to be quite sure to select the right candidate.

The first person to appear on the following Sunday morning is a student nurse, Anita Frank. She is twenty years old, has a rosy complexion and dark, wavy hair. She explains that her widowed mother has married a Swiss citizen in order to save her children and herself; but only the mother has been granted an entry visa to Switzerland. She is now about to go there to apply locally for her children's entry permits. Anita's brother, Reinhard, eight years her junior, is already being looked after by another family.

Anita's amiable manner instantly gains the family's affection. This sympathy is mutual, and Anita confirms her move, subject only to her mother's approval. She returns that same afternoon with her mother, Mrs Kindler-Frank, who immediately gives her consent.

Anita moves into the small room, which has so far largely served as a store-room. It has a cast-iron stove and is difficult to heat – the other rooms have tiled stoves – but is made as habitable as possible. Anita likes it, although she has grown up in considerable comfort. Right from the start she is accepted as a companion and friend.

Before Anita's examinations Gine tests her knowledge, and the whole family rejoices when Anita passes her exams with 'Very Good'. She had originally intended to study medicine, but Nazi legislation had made this impossible.

Gine is only fifteen years older than Anita, but is soon called 'Mutti Weiß' by her. As soon as she returns from work Anita begins to tell the others of her daily experiences. One shares one's daily worries and sorrows as much as one's occasional small pleasures. Anita becomes a member of the family, who cannot imagine life without her any more.

April 1940

The Festival of Passover is, as usual, celebrated at the home of Lene and Wolfgang Hirsch, together with the families of Lene's sisters, Gine and Berta.

The Hirsch family have been compelled to give up their flat in a modern block in the Kuglerstraße and now occupy a small, two-roomed apartment in an ugly, old building in the Lottumstraße, near the Lothringer Straße.

Berta and Martin Zitrin, with Heli, have meanwhile found two rooms, with use of kitchen, in a large flat in the Brunnenstraße. The occupants of this flat had likewise been compelled to reduce their living space.

School Years

22 April 1940

Ellen is enrolled at school. It is a great day, to which she had long been looking forward, because Mutti had told her so much of her own time as a pupil.

She must go to a Jewish establishment, because Jews are prohibited from entering publicly maintained schools. The Community has therefore set up its own schools in areas with a relatively numerous Jewish population. Ellen must now travel three stops on the Underground, from Gesundbrunnen Station to Rosenthaler Platz, and then walk down the Lothringer Straße, past the ornate, old Post Office 'N 54' and finally turn left into the Choriner Straße, in which her school is situated.

Today, on her first day at school, she is accompanied during this important journey by Mutti and Aunt Berta. On her back she carries her school satchel, a sandwich bag is suspended diagonally across a shoulder, and in her hands she holds a huge, green conical box (*Schultüte)* with a golden border and a colourful picture in the centre. It is so tall that it reaches from the floor right up to her chin; and despite the enforced shortage it is filled to the brim with sweets of all sorts. Every member of the family has contributed something. In addition, Ellen receives other presents, like a pen box from Aunt Berta, coloured crayons from Oma, an album for poetry from Aunt Hannah and – most beautiful of all – a filigreed silver savings box from Papa and Mutti.

Aunt Hannah hands over the poetry album, with her own contributions entered on the first and last pages. Ellen doesn't like this very much, but Mutti explains that these entries were made with Aunt Hannah's best intentions. As time passes, more poems are entered. Ellen likes her Mutti's contribution best of all. It says:

> If happily you want to live,
> Make others happy for a start,
> For the pleasure that we give
> Will return to our heart.

Willst Du glücklich sein im Leben,
Trage bei zu anderer Glück,
Denn die Freude, die wir geben,
Kehrt ins eigene Herz zurück.

Ellen enjoys going to school.

Miss Rubinski is the first teacher to be in charge of her form. She is young, has gorgeous, long reddish-brown hair and wears dresses with swinging frocks and frills. She is also very nice, devotes care and attention to each of her pupils, and her teaching resembles games.

Lively games are also played in the school's yard, supervised by various teachers. They generously overlook the deliberate racket made by pupils with their wooden clogs during the interval, especially when they rush down the stone staircase.

Ellen performs very well in all subjects, with the exception of Physical Training and Music. The latter presents a special problem. Ellen loves music; but she realises that she tends to sing out of tune, and yet cannot manage to put it right. That is disagreeable, and the embarrassment is increased because she rather admires her music teacher, Mr Messerschmidt.

Physical Training, on the other hand, presents a clear-cut situation. Ellen is clumsy with gymnastic apparatus and intimidated by the resolute behaviour of the instructress, Miss Henoch, a well-known sportswoman who wants to turn her pupils into champions.

Mutti is not worried about poor marks in these subjects, because she regards them as subsidiary topics. She even maintains that she would not be unduly concerned about bad marks in the 'main' subjects, provided that 'Conduct' is given a high rating. 'Nobody can help it if they are stupid', she says, 'but everyone can behave properly.'

Gine never supervises her daughter's homework. Ellen can come and ask for advice whenever she wants to raise any questions or encounters any problems; but from the outset she should learn to act independently. Gine doesn't even inspect the completed homework. If Ellen wants to show it to Gine she is welcome to do so; if not, she presents it, unseen by her mother, to the teacher on the following day. She carries the responsibility for her work.

In the beginning, Gine takes her daughter to school. Subsequently, Ellen goes by herself, using public transport. She regards this as quite normal, since the journey is uncomplicated. Nearly all pupils arrive unaccompanied, if only because many of them live close-by.

Only on the day when the school reports are distributed are the children

collected by their mothers, unless they have to attend their workplace for compulsory labour. Ellen always looks forward to her school report, issued twice a year. These are real occasions for celebration. Members of the family turn up to have a look at the report and at the same time ask Ellen to produce her savings box. Everybody then donates one Mark, Uncle Wolfgang gives two, and Papa even produces five Marks. Mutti finds this a little excessive, but Papa can't do too much for his daughter.

Ellen watches her growing savings through the gaps in her filigreed savings box with undisguised pleasure. The accumulated capital is only used to buy presents – sometimes not entirely suitable – for her parents, but there is always something left in the box.

Late Summer 1940

Living space for Jews is further restricted.

Family Weiß is compelled to take in two more sub-tenants. Two young men join them: Werner Czerninsky is just sixteen years old, and Günter Brauer, some two years older. Mor, Gine and Ellen now occupy the bedroom, the two boys the living room, Anita stays in the small room; and the kitchen, together with the adjoining balcony, becomes the meeting place for everybody.

Both boys are very nice, but Werner becomes the favourite. He has dark, back-swept hair, expressive brown eyes and an endearing presence. He brings a musical instrument with him, which he calls the 'Mandriola'; but he only plays it when he feels like it, not when one asks him, although otherwise he is most obliging. He obviously has to be in the right mood to be able to play.

Gine cooks for everybody, except for Anita, who gets her meals at the hospital. She somehow manages to conjure palatable meals out of the tiny rations which appease everyone's hunger. The boys are very grateful and follow Anita's habit of calling her 'Mitti Weiß'. They also insist on taking over the washing-up from her on Sundays, to give her a rest from her work. After lunch they take over the kitchen and return it in spick and span condition after they have done their job.

They soon become an integral part of this domestic community. In the same way that they adopt Anita's address of 'Mutti Weiß', they themselves are called by their first names.

Autumn 1940

The first air raids on Berlin have started. Some buildings in Charlottenburg are said to have been destroyed.

During a visit, Kurt Löwenthal invites Ellen to accompany him on an inspection of the bombed houses. She is not particularly keen to see damaged buildings, but this rare offer from her big cousin to join him tempts her; and so she finally agrees to go along.

The house has been hit by a high explosive bomb. It looks as if it has been cut in two. One can see the remaining sections of the damaged rooms, from the fourth floor right down to street level, with furniture in position, pictures hanging from the walls and some items of clothing strewn about.

The air raid shelter has fortunately not been hit, and all inhabitants are said to have escaped without injury. One learns this from members of the crowd which has assembled to gape at the incident and discusses it with wild gesticulations. Ellen finds the spectacle of the destroyed house repulsive and oppressive. She thinks of the people to whom the exposed items belong and who are unable to reach them. The whole impression is frightful, and she wants to get away from it as quickly as possible.

Kurt ends his inspection sooner than originally intended, and takes Ellen home. She insists that she never again wants to see a destroyed house.

Autumn and Winter 1940

Air raids become more and more frequent. The public are instructed to seek protection in air raid shelters in the event of an air attack.

There are domestic cellars which serve as shelters for residents and their guests; public air raid shelters which are frequently, but not invariably, located in schools, which you must enter if you are surprised by an air raid while in the open; and a number of high-rise as well as underground *Bunker,* which are spread across the whole town, and which are bomb proof.

Mor and his neighbour, Mr Krüger, always tend to stand together and talk during air raids which they spend in the cellar at Zingster Straße 9. They are denounced to the authorities for this contact by another resident. Mr Krüger is therefore instructed to cease every kind of communication with his Jewish neighbours, and Family Weiß is expelled from the air raid shelter in the cellar and told to use its own section of the cellar, one of which is allocated to each tenant for storage purposes and separated from the others by means of a latticed partition. 'The boys' therefore immediately offer to clear up the storage cellar. They also decide to teach 'the denunciators' a lesson: they ask Gine for the wicker furniture and collapsible deck chairs from the balcony, as well as a tiny table and a

small, old carpet. With this the cellar is turned into a comfortable living space which can be seen from the outside through the gaps in the lattices, because Mor had equipped the cellar with electric light when the family first moved into the flat.

During the next air raid, Werner insists on creating a relaxed atmosphere. He brings his 'Mandriola' with him into the cellar and plays a medley of merry tunes.

Mr Küpper, a fellow-resident from the fourth floor – a Communist – feels himself so attracted that he wants to move from the air raid cellar to the private shelter of the extended Family Weiß. Gine begs him not to do this, because he would endanger not only himself, but also his hosts. Mr Küpper finally accepts this reasoning.

December 1940

Although the celebration of Chanukah this year follows its traditional pattern, it is now subject to restrictions. Mor and Gine, as usual, sacrifice their night's sleep, the boys give up the use of their room.

Gine has sewn dresses for Inge and Ellen, They are made of white *crepe* paper, which is still obtainable; and Mor has stuck on stars cut out of gold-laminated paper, which can also still be bought. Inge and Ellen again have to recite their traditional poems, while Hardi this time has to declaim verses with a marked 'Berlinese' accent – it is something he loves to do, and which he is normally told to stop!

The usual pastries are now replaced by three kinds of tarts. Each variety consists of five layers of dough filled alternately with imitation cream and jam consisting of a mixture of four fruit varieties, which is still sold to Jews. It is baked with 25 grammes of fat. Ellen loves the multi-fruit jam, but Gine regards it merely as a mixture of fruit left-overs. The tarts have different colours depending on whether the pudding has a chocolate, vanilla or strawberry base. Everyone is enthusiastic, and Gine is unanimously appointed 'Official Pudding-Cake Baker' for the entire family while supplies of pudding, four-fruit jam and the other essential ingredients are still available to Jews.

Beginning of 1941

Food rations allocated to Jews are steadily being reduced. The issue of cake, rolls and white bread is no longer permitted. For specal events, like birthdays, Mr Reimann, the baker in the Eulerstraße, sometimes sells the odd sugar-coated cake to Regina 'round the back'. (This is literally true,

because she has to ring the doorbell at the back of his flat in the evenings). It does not take long, however, before he, too, feels that he can no longer run the risks. Denunciation is becoming more and more common. But he continues to be friendly.

In contrast, the owner of the greengrocer's shop behind Mr Reimann's bakery suddenly becomes brusque and cold, and evidently regards it as a special concession to sell to the Weiß family those few items to which 'Jew-cards' still entitle them.

The dairy shop on the opposite side of the street has been visited by Ellen on her own for a long time. At first, she was sold full-cream milk, then it was diluted in equal parts with skimmed milk, and now it is only skimmed milk. This does not stop the massive, old Mr Voigt, already bent with age, from greeting her cordially when she enters the shop, swinging her milk can. While he carefully dips the measure with its long handle into the square milk container, they have their usual little chat. Ellen appreciates the expertise with which Mr Voigt scoops up the milk from the depths of the tank, and he enjoys the presence of his talkative little customer.

Today Ellen visits Mr Voigt for the last time, becauce the sale to Jews, even of skimmed milk, is prohibited as from tomorrow. He obviously notices how she feels about this. He smiles at her encouragingly and says that one day she would surely be entitled to obtain milk again, and then they could continue their little chats.

Elli Greiser, a greengrocer, has a special relationship with the Weiß family. Her stand is located in the Badstraße market, where Mor used to sell his textiles. They used to talk to each other occasionally while he had a stall, and bought each other's goods. Mrs Greiser's husband has another job; they are well off, and she therefore always bought expensive pieces of cloth and then had them made up into dresses by Gine. It soon became evident that Mrs Greiser was a determined opponent of the Nazis. She had bought ample supplies of cloth from Mor's stand before he was forced to close it down, and she secretly continues to employ Gine as her dressmaker. During her visits she usually brings some fruit with her. Its quantity has to be limited, so that it does not rouse the other tenants' suspicions. She turns up quickly, usually during the hours of darkness, to avoid being recognised, because she is well known in the neighbourhood.

Spring 1941

Gine is taken ill with diphtheria. Its immediate side effect is unexpectedly beneficial. The day when her illness breaks out happens to

coincide with the date of her summons to the 'Fontanepromenade', the notorious Labour Exchange for Jews, where she is to be directed to a forced labour job. She has so far been spared this ordeal because of the size of the household – including her child and the tenants – for which she is responsible. This exemption has now been abolished. When she reports to the Labour Exchange with a high temperature and a thick shawl around her neck, her sick appearance evidently creates such a fearful impression that the responsible official literally throws her out and shouts after her that she should keep well clear of him for the time being. Gine doesn't have to be told twice. Surprisingly, her file seems to have been mislaid on this occasion, because her summons to the 'Fontanepromenade' is never repeated.

On her return home she consults the Jewish physician, Dr Paradies, who must now describe himself as *Krankenbehandler,* – 'Sickness Attendant'. His test immediately confirms a case of diphtheria. His advice is to move Ellen out of the flat because of the danger of infection. Elisabeth Fenske takes Ellen for the time being. Mrs Krüger, the neighbour at Zingster Straße, nurses Gine throughout the day, until at least one of the other companions returns from work.

Gertrud Krüger, petite and nimble, and with a head of glorious, red hair of which she is particularly proud, moved to Zingster Straße in 1937, as the second wife of Wilhelm Krüger, a departmental manager at AEG. She turns her flat into a spotless home with extraordinary speed, but her performance as cook and baker leaves a good deal to be desired. She acquires these skills mostly under Gine's guidance, and generally turns to her with her afflictions and worries. She therefore holds her in high esteem and is very fond of her. She is, moreover, a determined opponent of the Nazis.

For these reasons, she does not even begin to question the need for her help, regardless of the danger of infection and the risk she runs of being denounced by other tenants. In any case, she shares the worries with her Jewish neighbours and enquires almost daily about the latest orders and instructions which continue to arrive. She usually keeps in touch during her husband's absence because, although he shares her opposition to Nazism, he is worried about the risks.

Ellen is made to feel very welcome at Aunt Lilala's. She is put up in the study and is grateful for the lamp being kept switched on until she has fallen asleep. Uncle Fenske has his own ideas about bringing up children, but Aunt Lilala's view prevails. She naturally spends much of her time with Ellen.

Aunt Hedwig plays with her, as usual, and also allows her to accompany her while doing the house work. This provides an excellent opportunity for them to discuss all aspects of Catholicism.

Although the stay at Aunt Lilala's turns out to be great fun from morning to evening, Ellen is also very homesick for her parents, especially her Mutti. She can visit her on two occasions. Aunt Hedwig accompanies her to the Zingster Straße. They have to stand on the pavement, while Gine waves to them from the window.

Eventually, the danger of infection is over and Ellen can return home. She sits on her mother's bed and is speechless, although she would dearly like to talk to her. Mutti thinks that Ellen is offended because she had to leave her home, but it isn't so: she is just totally overwhelmed by her feelings.

Autumn 1941

A few synagogues have continued to function in Berlin. One of them is situated near Helene Hirsch's flat. She and her sisters, accompanied by their children, attend the services there during the High Holydays.

There are no sweets for children during *Simchat Tora*, as there used to be in previous years; but at any rate there are red-white and blue-white paper banners for them. Inge is given a red and white banner, Ellen a blue and white one. Each of them finds the other colours more attractive. They are given permission to exchange them. That, at any rate, gives them a little pleasure.

Beginning of September 1941

Gine tries to prepare Ellen for the compulsory public wearing of the yellow Jewish Star, which begins on 15 September. She tells her never to be ashamed of this mark, and mentions the names of many well-known Jews who have done great things for humanity at large, and for the German people in particular, On 14 September, Gine once again repeats her advice and tells Ellen 'to wear the Jewish Star with pride, and with the head held high.'

15 September 1941

In company with her mother, Ellen appears on the street with the Jewish Star plainly affixed to the left side of the chest. But she doesn't walk with her head held high. She glances around anxiously to see how

peope react. In the short and narrow Zingster Straße this can easily be seen; but when they enter the much larger, wider and more open Behmstraße, her fear of being under constant threat continues to grow.

A group of children appears nearby. Ellen feels a deep desire not to be specially marked and to be part of their community. She has already suffered the experience of being insulted and physically assaulted. With the Jewish Star on her chest she feels even more exposed to molestations of all kinds. She is not proud. She feels nothing but dreadful anxiety.

13 November 1941

Mor receives a notification of his and his family's deportation to an unspecified destination, scheduled for 15 November. *(See p. 406)*. They are 'permitted' to take specified luggage with them. It is divided into:

1. Hand luggage which can be taken into the 'passenger compartment';
2. Heavy luggage, which is to be stored in the 'luggage van'; and
3. Special luggage, which has to be delivered to a specified depot before the family is collected. Each item of the 'special' luggage, which also includes cooking utensils and similar articles, must be identified by painting the transport number on the base in white or black paint.

A frantic activity develops among the Weiß family. Mor, Werner and Günter paint the transport numbers on pots, pans and other household articles; Gine and the ever-helpful neighbour, Mrs Krüger, sew initials into bed linen; and Anita helps with the packing. Gine also fills a box with books, among them her favourite works by Rilke. The 'special' luggage, which also includes the sewing machine, is duly delivered to the depot.

15 November 1941

During the afternoon, all members of the extended family assemble at Zingster Straße to bid farewell. They have to leave in time, in order to reach their homes by the beginning of the curfew for Jews at 20.00 hours. Gine distributes the remainder of her food stocks to them.

Now follows a period of nerve-racking waiting. Gine has put several layers of dresses on Ellen, because rumour has it that numerous officials had forbidden Jews who were being collected for deportation to take their

hand luggage along. Mor and Gine lie, fully dressed, on their beds, Ellen rests on a sofa, a small knapsack strapped to her back. Although they are usually very communicative, no one now utters a word. Everyone listens to every movement on the staircase. No one knows what is in store, but is scared of an exceedingly hard fate. Time and again the sound of steps can be heard, but they all pass by.

Gine falls into a short, disturbed slumber, dreaming that she is in danger of drowning, but is saved by Ellen.

As dawn breaks, she pulls up the blackout shutters. She knows that the family has been spared this day, because deportation is still confined to the hours of darkness. Mrs Krüger has likewise kept herself awake and listened behind her own front door for noises revealing the arrest of her neighbours. Now she rings their bell and presents them with a bowl of warm vanilla pudding, complete with fruit sauce.

When the night's curfew ends, members of the family converge on the Zingster Straße to check whether Mor, Gine and Ellen have really been collected for deportation. All expect it, all hope for the opposite, and all are surprised and delighted to find their hope confirmed. Berta Zitrin is the first to arrive. From as far away as the street corner she has seen that the blackout rollers have been pulled up. She rushes down the street and embraces her sister with tears of joy. One by one the family call. They bring with them food which probably adds up to more than they had been given the previous day.

Mor and Gine do not know what to make of the situation and want to find out what it means. Gine visits the local police station, situated only a few houses away, which would have been responsible for organising their collection. They inform her that the 'Epeco' Company, which employs Mor as a compulsory labourer, had applied to the Gestapo by telegram for his reclamation by describing him as indispensable. The police had accordingly been notified that same evening.

Written confirmation of the release has to be obtained from the Gestapo the following day, 17 November. This is no mere formality and is exceedingly difficult. Only a combination of a courageous attempt by Gine and a fortunate coincidence enable her to get the saving document. This deferment of the evacuation is finally confirmed by the *Jüdische Kultusvereinigung* with a letter dated 21 November.

Gine later links their salvation with the dream she had during the night when they waited for their deportation: Ellen is endowed with the power of protection for the family. Although Gine is constantly concerned about her welfare, she feels that Mor is in greater safety when he is accompanied by her.

December 1941

Chanukah is celebrated once again. This year it is a poor affair; but all children receive presents and are pleased with them. Gine has attired Inge's and Ellen's dolls in completely new outfits. Two-year-old Heli now enjoys a feast consciously for the first time. She is the family's spoilt favourite, with her curly head and big brown eyes.

End 1941

Mrs Krüger is reported to the authorities by other tenants for allegedly having taken oranges from Mrs Greiser to Family Weiß. The accusation is untrue. Such an action would have been far too dangerous. People have obviously noticed that both Mrs Krüger and Mrs Greiser continue to maintain contact with the Jews and are doing their utmost to hit both targets at the same time.

Mrs Krüger is summoned to appear at a Nazi party office. She denies the allegation and is scared stiff during the proceedings. Finally she is released with a warning to stop her contacts with the Jews under all circumstances. Her reaction is to visit Gine immediately on her return home to unburden her heart. The problem for her is not whether, but how she can in future remain in touch with her neighbours in the most effective way. Once she has recovered a little from her ordeal, everything becomes crystal-clear to her: in future she will make sure from behind her front door that the air is clear, and then nip across the landing to the opposite front door on soft slippers, and knock most gently.

For Mrs Greiser the problem is more complicated. She has no 'official' reason for entering the house, and therefore has no option but to give up her contacts with the Weiß Family.

March 1942

The domiciles of Jews are also stigmatised now. This is achieved by ordering the display of a black Star of David on a white background, equal in design to the 'Yellow Star', in a clearly visible position at the entrance door to the flat. Mor affixes the Star to a wooden board, next to the door bell, so that it faces people as they climb the stairs.

The Jewish Star on the door in no way interferes with Mrs Krüger's relationship with her neighbours, nor does it prevent Elisabeth Fenske from visiting her friends. The contacts have in any case become one-sided, because anyone with a star displayed on the chest can hardly risk to enter an 'Aryan' household.

The encirclement and restrictions inflicted on the Jews are becoming increasingly oppressive. After surviving the agony of their intended deportation, Gine has reached the decision that she and her family must never again be exposed to such a prospect, and considers the possibility of going into hiding. Mor's first reaction to this suggestion is negative: he sees no hope of finding a hiding place and of surviving without the possession of ration cards.

Gine's vague idea is, however, immediately supported and adopted by her friend Lisa. She offers accommodation to the family whenever they are ready to go into hiding. Finding food for three persons would somehow be taken care of when the occasion arises.

Gine also manages to convince Berta of the need for such preparations. She, too, will now try to find a hiding place for herself and her family.

Lene, on the other hand, firmly refuses to contemplate such an enterprise. As an employee of the *Reichsvereinigung* she has been told that every Jew who escapes would have to be replaced by another victim. Gine tries to convince her sister that, in the first instance, the shortness of notice between notification and evacuation makes this procedure impossible to carry out and, secondly, that all Jews are evidently due for deportation in any case. Lene refuses to be convinced; but in common with Berta she realises that the jaws of persecution are irresistibly closing in on them and that further measures are unpredictable. Both of them therefore try to find hiding places for remaining items of sentimental value and for some clothes which they expect to be requisitioned in addition to those they have already been forced to surrender. Lisa Fenske, whose acquaintance they have already made through Gine, has no hesitation in offering to look after their property, and both sisters leave it with Gine. On her visits Lisa now regularly brings along a large, empty grey shopping bag with a zip fastener and leaves with it filled to the brim. 'For once I should like to be able to depart like a lady', she often says jokingly as she is about to leave for home.

End March 1942

Jews are barred from using public transport. Special permits are only granted to adults whose work place is located more than 7 km from home, and to children whose school is more than 5 km distant.

Ellen's school is 'only' 3.5 km away. Her route leads her from the Zingster into the Behmstraße, then across the Millionenbrücke down the long Swinemünder Straße to the Zionskirchplatz, and finally to her school in the Choriner Straße. At first she is accompanied by her mother, then

she walks to school by herself. It only takes a few days before she is waylaid at the far end of the Swinemünder Straße by a crowd of big boys who surround her, bawling, cursing and bullying. The scene resembles the events which occurred at the Zingster Straße a few years earlier, but then Ellen could call for her mother's help. Now she feels totally abandoned. An elderly woman suddenly comes to her rescue. She approaches the boys, tells them to be ashamed of themselves for frightening a small girl and asks them to disappear immediately. They do as they are told; but on subsequent days they nearly always lie in ambush at the street corner, ready to intimidate and assault her.

Usually she can escape by changing over to the other side of the street and reconnoitring from a distance whether they lie in wait for her. If necessary, she makes a detour; but throughout her journey she is in constant fear of potential dangers.

The way home is simpler. The boys are no longer there, presumably because they are older and therefore kept in school longer. Moreover, Ellen interrupts her walk home by stopping off at Aunt Hanna's, who lives half-way down the Swinemünder Straße. She gives Ellen lunch and then promptly sends her home so that she arrives there punctually.

The school itself is like an oasis. It seems as if the persecution is kept at bay outside. Within its walls a normal school life is preserved, although regulations decree that classes must also be held on Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest. On that day, class activities are, however, limited to repetition, and the teachers readily accept Monday's apologies by orthodox parents who plead their children's regular indisposition on Sabbath.

Teachers must also issue certificates to pupils who have to apply for a travel permit. There is no room for 'bending the rules'. The teacher stands in front of the city plan and carefully uses a ruler to measure the distance to find out whether the application complies with the regulations. It is firmly laid down that the distance between the pupil's home and the school must be in excess of 5 km 'as the crow flies'. But, then, who can fly?

Papa, at any rate, has a travel permit for his long journey to work in Lichtenberg. Altogether, conditions at the cardboard factory 'Epeco' are quite good when compared with the working conditions to which he had been exposed at the start of his compulsory labour, when he was put to work on road construction. He used to return home drenched to the skin because his clothes were unsuitable for such work and he was, of course, unable to buy the right things. Whenever it rained, Mutti had a set of dry clothes waiting for him. She was also very worried, because the work was very heavy, and his food quite inadequate. When he was later put to

work as a street cleaner, her sense of humour returned and she predicted that one day he would be promoted to civil servant, complete with broom and 'cat's eyes'.

Since last year he has been made to operate special machine tools at 'Epeco' and has proved himself most capable. Mutti constantly tells Ellen how efficient he is and how proud she is of his ability to set these precision machines, although he has never had the necessary technical training. His foreman is equally satisfied with him. That is why the firm gives him a series of certificates to secure his exemption from possible 'evacuation'. He is also given permission to be in the street during the hours of curfew, because he is employed on shift work. *(See p. 415)*

On one occasion, Ellen's parents discuss the fact that Papa's income amounts to 28 Pfennigs (0.28 RM) per hour. They make no special comments about it; they merely laugh it off, although they have no substantial savings. Mutti earns a little extra by continuing to sew; she is also exceptionally good at managing the family's life on very little money. The main problem is posed by the fact that they are not allowed to buy things, and that dominates their discussion. But they are also constantly aware of it even when it is not mentioned.

Beginning of June 1942

The assassination attempt on Reinhard Heydrich gives rise to further measures against Jews. Under the *Heydrich–Aktion*, five hundred men are arrested in Berlin, and two hundred and fifty of them are shot immediately. The remainder are deported to Auschwitz. They are described as 'criminals'.

Wolgang Hirsch is one of those arrested. He is regarded as 'asocial' because he was sentenced to a fine of 20 RM some years ago. A child had run into his bicycle, but had remained unhurt. He had maintained that he was not to blame and wanted to appeal against the sentence, but on the advice of his family he had decided not to do so. They had all agreed that this action by a Jew would merely tend to aggravate the case and that it was best just to pay the fine of 20 RM.

The whole family now reproaches itself for this decision. Its only relief is the fact that he has been deported to Auschwitz instead of being one of those who have been summarily shot.

30 June 1942

All Jewish schools are closed down. Every form of education – even private lessons – are prohibited. *(See p. 416)*. Ellen is given her leaving

certificate from the Second Form. She is very sad. Despite the dreaded journey she always enjoyed her stay at the school. She also regrets that in future she will no longer be able to see her two friends – Rita Zaduk, fair and quiet like herself, and the lively, dark-haired Golda Steiner.

Mutti consoles her. From Aunt Leni's place she would soon be able to visit Rita and Golda, who live in that neighbourhood.

Mutti also assures her that she would later be able to resume her visit to the school. In the meantime she promises to teach her everything she would need to rejoin classroom teaching. She immediately translates this promise into action. She teaches arithmetic and writing, and lets Ellen read to her – something she particularly enjoys doing.

The Jewish teachers, who have meanwhile lost their jobs, must now report for allocation to enforced employment. Martin Zitrin is put to work on the Jewish cemetery at Weißensee. Shortly afterwards, the former Jewish pupils who have reached the age of fourteen years are likewise directed to all kinds of work.

Beginning of July 1942

Mor returns home from work, and everyone goggles at what he brings with him: a whole basket full of cherries!

Mor relishes his performance and reports on how he acquired this unheard-of treasure.

He had been chatting to a Jewish fellow-worker, Willi Selbiger, who was living in 'mixed' marriage. They had commiserated with each other about their many problems. Mor had mentioned that he had a child about whose health he was worried, because she was not getting any fruit to eat. Willi Selbiger had, in turn, mentioned this worry to an acquaintance who has an allotment with a garden, and who promptly sent a basket full of cherries. Selbiger himself was supplied with all kinds of fruit at the appropriate time of the year.

Everyone is deeply moved by this generosity, but the tantalisingly tempting cherries remain untouched for the moment, except that everyone present is allowed just to taste a sample. Then Gine divides them into portions: one for each family among the relations and, of course, one for her own family and their fellow-tenants. Gine is delighted that tomorrow she will be able to be a bringer of joy.

Mid- July 1942

The front bell rings. Gine opens the door and is faced by a man wearing

a Nazi party badge in his lapel. Without saying a word he pushes Gine aside, takes no notice of Ellen who is standing next to her, enters the lobby and then slowly proceeds from room to room. He examines everything with care and, on returning to the lobby, says: 'I like it. I'll take it'. He hands a paper to Gine which identifies him as Lothar Hinz. The document is known as a *Speerkündigung,* a notice of termination, named after the responsible Minister, Albert Speer. It states that the flat has to be vacated within two weeks.

In the evening all get together to decide what to do next. One must find a new flat, and in this search, presumably, the Jewish Community will help. Anita and Werner immediately declare that they will stay with the family, regardless of where they have to move. Günter Brauer intends to go to his uncle, who has always wanted Günter to join him.

Next day, Gine begins her search. It is very difficult to find anything. Finally she is directed to a flat at Dircksenstraße 45, whose previous occupiers have just been deported. The seal on the front door has to be officially opened, and the furniture must be removed in compliance with a ruling decree; but this cannot be done within the fortnight's period of notice applying to the Weiß family. Gine therefore requests Mr Hinz to allow her an extra week. As expected, he refuses.

Dircksenstraße

Beginning of August 1942

Ellen finds it very hard to leave the flat which has been her childhood home. She is also attached to the large planted courtyard where she used to play, to the narrow, curved street, and even to the two poplar trees which stand at the corner of Bellermannstraße.

The flat in the Dircksenstraße is larger than the present one. As a result, two further sub-tenants must be found. Anita wants her brother Reinhard to join her. She is attached to him like a mother and suffers under the separation, although she has seen him frequently. Mor and Gine immediately agree. Everybody knows Reinhard from his visits and perhaps even more from Anita's descriptions. From the moment he joins them, Reinhard virtually becomes a further member of the family.

In addition, another young man, Werner B., moves in. He is about twenty years old, quiet and friendly. Everybody likes him, but the relationship remains a purely tenant-based one. He also has a father in Berlin to whom he is attached.

The new flat is very spacious. Seen from the entrance hall, the room occupied by the Weiß family lies on the left hand side, the kitchen is on the right. Straight ahead one enters the large living room which extends to the right, while on its left sliding doors with ornamental glass panes lead into a room shared by Anita and Reinhard. To the right, behind the living room, is the accommodation occupied by Werner Czerninsky and the new tenant. Behind it lies the bathroom and behind that is the toilet. *(See p. 422)*

The layout of the flat is odd, but the individual rooms are well proportioned. They have high, richly ornamented but not very efficient tiled ovens, while the bathroom is equipped with a gas-fired hot water heater.

Everybody shares a feeling of acute unease when moving into a flat from which its previous occupants have just been deported. Despite these misgivings they must all lend a hand to make the premises as livable as possible. Gine drives herself to the point of exhaustion. Somebody suggests that she should take a hot bath to relax a little. She vehemently refuses. On no account will she be the first person to use a bath which was last used by the deported predecessors. Mor then offers to be the first to take a bath, and eventually does so.

Ellen asks herself why her mother objects to using a bath which she had cleaned most thoroughly. She has no objection to using the cooker or the washing-up basin – just the bath. Ellen's common sense cannot grasp this, but she is aware of her mother's instinctive feeling. Suddenly the flat is afflicted with a sense of evil.

A few days later it is decided to try and spend an agreeable, social evening in the living room, to create something like an 'at-home' feeling. Werner even plays his 'mandriola'. Everybody enjoys this, but the atmosphere remains depressed.

Soon after this, Gine and Ellen meet the building's caretaker, Mrs Pieritz, in front of the entrance door. She is appalled that a small girl like Ellen should be forced to wear a Jewish Star and advises her to take it off. Ellen replies that she is not allowed to do that, and Gine confirms it.

'Take that thing off,' says Mrs Pieritz, 'and if somebody asks, then just say "I ain't no Jew!". ' (*Mach det Ding ab, und wenn Dir eener frächt, denn sachste, ick bin keen Jude nich.)* This sentence becomes a classical saying among the Weiß family, but its advice just can't be followed.

Mrs Pieritz demonstrates that she not only utters friendly words, but also really wants to help. She comes to Gine and shows her a door in the bathroom which leads into her flat. It is locked from her side, but she

advises Gine to knock on that door in the event of danger and offers to open it as a way of escape.

The move to the Dircksenstraße has brought no change to former relationships.

Elisabeth Fenske continues to appear with her grey shopping bag, which meanwhile also contains the Weiß family's belongings. Her mother, Mrs Wolter, appears even more frequently than before, since the 'traffic' can only proceed in one direction.

Mrs Krüger likewise appears at regular intervals. She mentions that Mr Hinz, who had refused to delay the removal from the Zingsterstraße by even a few days, had still not taken possession of the flat.

In addition to old acquaintances, a new visitor now wants to call. Mor's fellow-worker, Willi Selbiger, tells him that his acquaintance, who had sent the basket of cherries, would very much like to meet the recipients. Gine is very hesitant about meeting a strange woman under present conditions; but since she had accepted the cherries, she feels that she cannot refuse a visit. A date is therefore arranged.

At the agreed time, an inconspicuous woman appears. She is a few years older than Gine and introduces herself as Herta Naujocks. She has warm, expressive brown eyes and behaves as if she had known Gine and Ellen – the only ones then at home – for years. She chats without a trace of inhibition and mainly talks about herself and her family. She is of Jewish origin, but baptised. Her husband, Max, was a former German boxing champion. She has five children – a grown-up son, Fritz, two adolescent daughters, Gertrud (Trudchen) and Gisela, and the two youngest children, Helga and Irmhild, who are, respectively, one year older and younger than Ellen.

When they part, Gine and Ellen have the feeling that they have known Herta Naujocks for years. She says that she intends to return soon, and dismisses Gine's reference to the Jewish Star at the door with a wave of the hand. After that, she returns frequently – and never without bringing something to eat.

Finally, the over-cautious Gine initiates her into her plans to go into hiding. Mrs Naujocks joins Lisa's reaction by welcoming the idea with enthusiasm. She shares the view that hiding offers the only chance to survive this terrible time with a minimum of damage. She invites Gine and her family to visit her in Malchow. They could sit in their garden and take fruit away with them. This invitation offers a gratifying prospect. Herta Naujocks has an unobtrusive way of spreading encouragement.

In the meantime, the practice of informing Jews of their impending 'evacuation' has been dispensed with. The collectors now just ring the door bell and simply arrest the occupants. Many potential victims therefore no longer answer the bell. Some of them jump out of rear-facing windows, especially if their flat is at ground level, and try to escape. Deportation, which used to be confined to the hours of darkness, now takes place at any time. It is combined with the introduction of *Rollkommandos* – lorries circulating through the streets, whose crews indiscriminately pick up people wearing the Jewish star and deliver them to the Gestapo's collecting depots.

Family Weiß has agreed on a special knock and bell signal which is known and observed by all members and friends.

Gine now sews Jewish stars onto garments in such a way that they are only lightly affixed at the internal and external corners. Everybody must now practise the stars' instant removal by tearing them off. During these rehearsals, Gine untiringly replaces the stars for further attempts until the technique is mastered. The remaining question, however, is whether an emergency will be recognised in time; if so, whether one will be able to act quickly enough, and moreover, whether such an action will pass unnoticed.

The possibility of living illegally is now a subject of constant discussion. For Gine the matter is a foregone conclusion. She wants to take this step as soon as possible; but the reclamation documents which Mor continues to receive as a skilled worker from his employers, 'Epeco', seem to him to offer current protection for the family.

The Zitrin family has completed all its preparatons. One of Martin's former colleagues has offered to provide accommodation for them at his home. They are just waiting for the 'right moment'.

Lene continues to turn down the idea, even though she now accepts the fact that the substitution of new detainees for fugitives is not realistic; but she simply doesn't know how to abandon her regulated way of life. Moreover, she is still waiting for news of her husband.

Löwenthals are offered shelter by an old acquaintance, but they don't feel inclined to accept it. They do not see how they can exist without their own home, totally deprived of food rations. Their son Kurt tries desperately, but without success, to change their minds.

Max and Käthe Weiß could find a hideout in a fellow-inhabitant's flat in their block, but they regard it as a senseless idea: you cannot hope to remain unrecognised in your own building.

Anita and Reinhard could find a refuge with acquaintances, but Anita decides to delay a decision. As a nursing sister at the *Jüdische Krankenhaus*,

where she was also able to find a job for Reinhard in the metal workshop, they are both in a relatively protected position.

The new sub-tenant, Werner B., has also made appropriate provision for himself.

Werner Czerninsky is the only person who knows no-one to whom he could turn for help. This causes a great deal of worry to Gine, who is concerned about his future safety. Everyone has grown to regard him with affection.

August 1942

Despite the ban on the use of public transport, and the curfew regulations, the family manages to meet regularly. Gine and Berta occasionally gather at Lene's flat, which is situated half-way between them.

Ellen, when calling on Aunt Leni, sometimes visits her friend Golda Steiner, who lives in the Lothringer Straße with her mother, a slightly older brother and a grown-up sister, Rahel. Mrs Steiner is always very friendly and hospitable.

During one of her visits to Golda, Ellen is stopped by two strange men at the entrance door to their flat. They demand to know her name and enquire about the reason for her call. She replies, and they continue a cross-examination by asking where Steiners have gone and when she expects them back. Ellen has no idea. She visited them in the expectation of finding them at home.

One of the men turns rough and disagreeable. He wants to know whether the Steiners have any relations, friends and acquaintances, their names, and whether Ellen has ever met any of them. Ellen knows none of these things. Apart from Golda, her mother, brother and sister she has not met anybody else.

The second man believes her and suggests to his colleague that they should let her go. This will not do for the inquisitor. He repeats his questions with increasing vehemence. Surely, he suggests, she must know one or other detail. He becomes more and more insistent and threatening. The other man has pity on her. He says: 'Don't be afraid. I also have a little daughter who is your age. We're not going to harm you.'

That sounds fine, but his colleague is not interested in these soothing words. He asks and asks and insists that Ellen must know something. While he catches his breath during this inquiry, the nicer man says to her: 'It's alright. You can go'.

Without waiting for the inquisitor's reaction, Ellen turns round, rushes

down the stairs and out of the house. She races along the streets, up the stairs to Aunt Leni's flat, and rings the bell. When her aunt opens the door, Ellen nearly falls into her arms. Not until the door is closed behind her does she regain a feeling of confidence, and breathlessly reports her fearful experience.

After this event, Gine no longer allows her daughter to go anywhere by herself. The only exception, however, has to be made in the case of shopping.

It is virtually impossible for one person to cope with this task. Although only minute rations are allocated to Jews, they have to be bought from a variety of retailers, like bakeries, potato shops and grocers. Moreover, shopping has to take place between 16.00 and 17.00 hours, and even then Jews are only allowed to make their purchase after all the 'Aryan' customers have been served.

On one occasion Ellen awaits her turn in a grocer's shop, meekly lined up against the wall; but the stream of customers shows no signs of diminishing. Suddenly the saleswoman says to her: 'It's been your turn for ages! Let me have your cards'. Ellen declares that she has to wait until all the other people have been served. The saleswoman thereupon turns to the two remaining customers. 'This child has been waiting so long,' she says, 'and after five o'clock I'm not allowed to serve her any more'. The two women allow Ellen to buy her supplies.

Summer 1942

The flat lies opposite the railway lines between the stations Börse and Alexanderplatz. From the window one can watch the passing trains of the *S-Bahn* (District Lines) and *Fernbahnzüge* (long distance trains). The goods wagons frequently carry a slogan in big white letters: *Räder müssen rollen für den Sieg!* – wheels must roll for victory.

The market halls are situated underneath the railway arches. Werner Czerninsky occasionally helps with the loading and unloading of lorries, although this is strictly forbidden. He is usually rewarded with a present, and invariably shares it with 'the Family': a head of red cabbage becomes a delicacy when sometimes mixed with the available potatoes, and thinly sliced tomatoes provide a rare spread on slices of bread. Most popular, however, is the odd water melon with which he sometimes returns. Everybody then gets a 'huge' slice, and one can sink one's teeth into the juicy, pink fruit.

At night, Ellen suffers from a recurring nightmare.

She runs along a street and is pursued by an SS-man in a black uniform. She continues to run, but he follows her, catches up with her and finally stabs her in the back with a long knife. She falls forward and knows that she is dead.

The dream, repeated night after night, always follows the same sequence. She is scared of going to sleep but is afraid of telling her parents about it. She assumes that they won't believe her, because they know that she dislikes early nights. Finally she overcomes her hesitation and tells her parents about her anxieties. They are appalled and suggest that she starts the night by lying, not in her own bed, but in their big ones. She follows the advice and falls asleep peacefully and quietly. Later, her father carries his sleeping daughter to her own bed. This procedure is followed for some time. The nightmare disappears. It does not return when her parents subsequently let her go back to her own bed at the beginning of the night.

Late summer 1942

With tears streaming down his face, Hardi comes to see his Aunt Gine. He was alone in the flat when a policeman called and reported that his father had died of heart failure in Auschwitz. Gine tries to console him. Later she goes to Berta. Both of them decide to convey the awful news to their sister together.

In the evening they appear at Lene's flat, accompanied by their families. On her return from work, Lene is astonished to find this numerous assembly waiting for her. When told the reason, she breaks down in despair. Each of the grown-ups present pretends to remember occasions when Wolfgang had 'looked ill'. Perhaps he had really been suffering from a heart disease which, undetected, had remained untreated.

Lene knows that it is not true and refuses to be consoled by this excuse. Before long, she begins to construct her own explanation: in a huge camp like Auschwitz errors can easily occur. Perhaps it is only a case of mistaken identity. She uses all her energies to give moral support to her children.

Early autumn 1942

More and more Jews now stop opening their front doors when the bell is rung. The abductors therefore try to use master keys in their attempts to gain access. They have just called at Lene's flat. Inge was by herself, because Hardi has now been directed to forced labour at the

Jewish cemetery. She showed documents to the callers which were intended to protect the family by confirming that her mother was employed at the *Reichsvereinigung.* It caused the collectors to leave, but Inge was petrified.

Autumn 1942

Gine calls on Mrs Pieritz at the back premises of the house to pay her rent. Ellen stays in the flat. Returning to the living room after having been to the toilet, she hears a loud, irregular knock at the entrance door. She stands motionless and waits. The knocking continues with increasing strength. She therefore retreats to the bathroom and in turn begins to hammer with her fists on the locked door leading to Mrs Pieritz's flat. There is no reaction. Ellen knocks more wildly. Nobody hears her. She cautiously returns to the front. On reaching the living room she hears a noise which sounds like a key turning in the lock. She panics, runs through the lounge, the boys' room and the bathroom into the toilet and climbs out of the window. She stands on the window sill on the first floor above the courtyard and wants to reach Mrs Pieritz's adjoining flat by this route. She clings to the brickwork, takes a big step and lands on the next window sill. The window happens to be open, but the room is empty. She wants to jump in, but her upbringing triumphs over her fear – one must not invade someone else's empty property; and so she clings to the brickwork and pulls herself along. She presses her head against the wall to avoid having to look down. While working out the next move, she sees a woman on the opposite side who wags a warning finger at her. She is a neighbour who is not personally known to Ellen because they were not allowed to establish contact with 'Aryans' when moving into the house. She apparently thinks that what she sees is a piece of childish exuberance, and her gesture may be a well-meaning warning, but it makes matters worse.

Ellen now stands outside a closed window, in panic fear of the Gestapo, terrified by the hazards of clinging to a narrow sill, and also spied on by an observer. Her only options are either to retreat, or to continue her advance. She decides to carry on. The distances between some window sills are wider than others and such gaps do not seem to be negotiable, but sheer terror drives her forward, and she manages to reach the end of the wall. So far all the rooms she has passed have been empty. She is now forced to turn the corner of the building to reach the kitchen window. Somehow she manages to get there. Through the window curtains she can discern the outlines of people in the room. She knocks on the closed window.

In the kitchen, Mrs Pieritz, Gine and the landlord's agent, who lives in the front premises, are seated round a table. Suddenly Gine sees Ellen's red sleeve appear outside the window. She is appalled at the thought of suffering from hallucinations and tries frantically to concentrate on something else. At that moment the agent says: 'Mrs Pieritz, somebody has been knocking on your window!' Mrs Pieritz replies that no one could possibly knock on her window. It is an answer which the agent doesn't feel able to contradict. Ellen knocks again. Now everybody hears it, and Mrs Pieritz opens the window.

Ellen jumps into the kitchen. Her mother is dumbfounded. Ellen explains what has driven her on this extraordinary venture.

The trouble is that no one knows who has been knocking at the door of the Weiß family. How can one find out? The agent, previously unknown to Gine and Ellen, immediately joins the plot. She suggests that Ellen should enter the block through the front staircase and, if challenged, should say that she is her niece, paying her a visit. She would, of course, not be there, and Ellen could then leave again. (*See p. 422*)

Ellen enters the house lobby with palpitations and at the door to her flat finds – Anita! She had returned from her night shift and, on trying to open the front door, had discovered that a key had been left in the lock on the inside. She had rung the bell and knocked in accordance with the agreed code, but Ellen hadn't heard it because she was in the toilet. With growing impatience, Anita had then begun to knock loudly, and finally had used a hair pin in an attempt to push out the obstructing key.

Ellen is immensely relieved to have met Anita at the door, and not the Gestapo. With this happy news she returns to Mrs Pieritz.

Now all the participants find themselves outside the Weiß family's flat, but the keys are stuck on the other side of the door. The only practical possibility of regaining access is Ellen's return by the way she left – though on this occasion she can start from the neighbouring window. In view of the experience she has just gained on the outward expedition, she regards this as a ridiculously easy task. Gine, on the other hand, is beset by mortal fears, although she supports her daughter during her climbing effort to the best of her ability. Ellen conquers the small distance with the acquired hand and foot expertise and finally jumps back into her flat.

Not long after this, Anita is good for another surprise. Entitled to the use of a travel permit on the tram, she makes the acquaintance of a woman who invites her to her flat. Gine is appalled. Anita should not under any circumstances visit a total stranger who might harbour evil intentions. But Anita does not change her mind. Her host's name is Adele Baur

(*Name changed.)* She lives near the Brunnenstraße, entertains Anita with coffee and cake and tells her that she is employed to look after an elderly woman. Anita notices that Adele is not a qualified nurse and doesn't seem to have any experience. She gives her much useful advice, is glad to be able to help and visits Mrs Baur occasionally.

November 1942

Werner Czerninsky is summoned to 'the Burgstraße' (the infamous Gestapo centre known among Jews by its location) because a severe infection on one of his arms has forced him to report sick in connection with his forced labour at a joinery. It is common knowledge that many of those ordered to appear before the Gestapo do not return; and that most of them suffer severe maltreatment during their cross-examination.

Gine and Ellen hope and wait for Werner's return, while all the other members of their small community are at their various places of work. Hours of waiting pass with agonising slowness. Werner eventually comes back unhurt. He has suffered no violence, but is instructed to return to work without fail the next day. Gine and Ellen are filled with joy and relief. Ellen gives expression to her emotion by coyly stroking Werner's arm.

Obeying the Gestapo's orders, Werner next day reports for work at his joinery. His carbuncle continues to be further contaminated by sawdust. He is taken seriously ill and is admitted to the Jewish Hospital.

On 22 November 1942, Werner dies of blood poisoning, aged eighteen years.

End of 1942

Karl-Martin Fenske, who has not been called up into the *Wehrmacht* because he is hard of hearing, is now recruited into the *Hilfspolizei,* the Auxiliary Police. Regular policemen are usually known as *Schupos (Schutzpolizei)* or, because of the colour of their uniform, *die Grünen* (the 'Greens'), and the *Hilfspolizei,* or *Hipos,* as *die Blauen* (the 'Blues').

Mr Fenske's task consists in patrolling the streets in the evening to ensure that the blackout is properly carried out.

His own call-up makes him aware of the fact that even men with considerable medical defects are now being mobilised. He is therefore beginning to worry that hiding Mor, who is of military age and looking as fit as he actually is, would constitute a risk. While therefore willing to offer shelter to Gine and Ellen, he is no longer prepared to hide Mor.

Gine is exasperated. This would upset all her plans: either all three would enter an illegal existence, or none of them would do so.

Suddenly rescue appears in the person of Anita's new acquaintance, Adele Baur: she offers shelter to Mor.

Mrs Baur spends the night, and indeed much of the day, in her patient's spacious flat in the Brunnenstraße. She is therefore able to put her small, one-roomed nearby flat largely at Mor's disposal. She would, of course, be paid for this service.

December 1942

Chanukah is no longer celebrated. Nobody is in the mood. One does not even consider the possibility.

End of December 1942

Arnold and his fiancée Sylvia go into hiding. Sylvia is arrested a few days later. Mor and Gine remain in touch with Arnold.

Beginning of 1943

Anita collects food from the Jewish Hospital for a nursing couple who have reported themselves as sick but who have, in fact, already gone into hiding. The couple receive the food from Anita. Gine points out that this whole business is likely to be discovered and that Anita's ability to supply food to her acquaintances is in any case bound to be limited to only a few days. This does not deter Anita from trying to give every possible support to her colleagues.

A few days later the whole project collapses. Anita denies any knowledge of the illegal existence of her acquaintances, or who collected it. The investigators have no evidence to substantiate their accusation. Anita and Reinhart are, however, ordered to take up immediate lodgings at the hospital.

A tearful Anita packs their possessions. Gine and Ellen also cry. They do not know when they will see each other again, since Anita's travel permit will now be cancelled; but Anita promises to visit them, even if it means walking. She keeps her promise.

January 1943

Martin Zitrin's employment on the Jewish cemetery is stopped. He is

now ordered to collect persons who are selected for deportation. He declines, and his refusal appears to be accepted. Instead, he is ordered to collect the bulk luggage left behind by the deportees. This he agrees to do.

Beginning of February 1943

Martin, Berta and Heli are collected for deportation.

Gine is beside herself. She and Ellen go to Lene.

Inge and Ellen happen to stand in front of the house in the Lottumstraße when they are surprised to see Aunt Berta appear in the company of a strange man. The expression on her face reveals that she is desperately trying to preserve her composure. She cursorily strokes the girls' heads before entering the house. After getting over their surprise, they follow her into the flat. They find the strange man in the living room and the three sisters in the kitchen.

In the Gestapo prison centre in the Große Hamburger Straße, Berta had heard that detainees suffering from toothache could obtain an exit permit for the purpose of visiting a dentist. She felt that this sounded highly improbable but decided to try it anyway. In the event she did receive the requested permit because she had to leave her husband and child behind. A guard was detailed to accompany her. On the way, she confessed to him that all she wanted was to say good-bye to her sisters. The man, a Jew who had been ordered to undertake this task, agreed.

Now she stands in the kitchen, weeping, while her sisters try to soothe her. Surely things would not turn out to be as awful as they now seemed. Moreover, all three of them were fit, and Martin was ever so strong and reliable. He would surely protect her and Heli.

Suddenly Berta says, sobbingly, 'Whenever I think of my little Heli ...' Ellen will never forget these words. Berta then embraces her sisters and nieces and leaves with her guard.

Martin, Berta and Rahel are deported to Auschwitz concentration camp soon afterwards. (*See p. 419*)

In Hiding

Mid-February 1943

Gine makes the final preparations for submerging into an illegal existence. There is no time left for hesitation. A date for the family's

arrival is agreed with Lisa and Adele Baur. The relatives, Anita and Werner B. are likewise informed.

Gine is in charge. She declares that during the illegal existence no one with whom one is in touch should be informed of the names or addresses of other contacts. One should only ever refer to them by their first names.

Mor is re-named 'Kurt', because Gine somehow regards 'Mor' as sounding Jewish. She also wants him to grow a moustache as soon as they have left the present flat.

As far as Ellen is concerned, the impending separation from Papa is played down. He undertakes to phone regularly, and they would meet as often as possible. Mutual visits are ruled out for the time being.

The feeling of unflappable competence with which her parents approach this undertaking transmits itself to Ellen. She recognises the necessity of living separately and is, moreover, conscious of her father's closeness in what is, after all, the same city.

In contrast to the removal from the Zingster Straße, the fact of having to leave the Dircksenstraße doesn't worry her at all. On the contrary, she is glad to escape an atmosphere in which she has had to live through so many grim experiences and constantly found herself in fear and under pressure.

Second half of February 1943

The last essential possessions not yet taken away by Lisa Fenske are packed in two small bags. Large pieces of luggage can't be taken in order not to arouse suspicions when leaving the house. Gine and Ellen say good-bye to Mor as if he was going to work. Then they leave the flat together.

Lisa receives Gine and Ellen as if it was a holiday. She and her mother have baked a cake, laid the table for coffee and made everything look festive. 'Uncle Fenske' has now become 'Karl-Martin'. (The length of his name has even caused 'Uncle' to be omitted) .

Ellen is immediately captivated by the relaxed atmosphere. She once again feels at home in this attractive flat. Since she was frequently accompanied only by her mother during her visits to the Fenskes in the past, and without her father, she does not, at first, regard this as unusual. Moreover, they immediately talk about Mor, so that he remains part of the company.

While seated around the coffee table the door bell rings. Ellen instinctively winces. 'But Ellen', says Aunt Lilala, 'you don't have to worry when the bell rings here!' She goes to open the door, and Ellen

hears her say that they have visitors and therefore can't spare the time. It is all so simple and normal. That is how they used to behave in their own home, but it all seems so long ago!

Gine and Ellen sleep in the *Mädchenkammer* – a room designed for a maid – behind the kitchen. It is a half-size but airy room, which can just take a bed and a wardrobe. The window looks out onto the courtyard. It used to serve as a storeroom. Gine and Ellen share the bed, which is not too uncomfortable. They spend the day in the rest of the flat and only retreat into their chamber when the bell rings, until the 'all-clear' is sounded.

In daylight everything looks very different from what it seemed the night before.

Gine and Ellen now wait for Mor's telephone call. Although their farewell was unceremonial and exactly according to plan, they are now under enormous tension. Eventually he does phone. Ellen rejoices, and they arrange to meet.

This get-together sets the pattern for the new order: one meets, discusses everything, duly separates and knows that they exist for each other.

Gine is concerned about the burden which her demands on Fenskes' food rations inevitably make. Lisa won't hear of it. Gine should spend the first couple of weeks resting and recovering from her excitement, and think of nothing else. After that one could see how things would develop.

Gine finds it impossible not to try and influence the course of events. She broods upon the prospects of how she can secure food for her husband, Ellen and herself. Although Mor pays Adele Baur for his accommodation, and had previously presented her with pieces of cloth left over from his market stall, it is not enough to feed him.

Gine contemplates a visit to Mrs Greiser, who would undoubtedly be willing to supply her with fruit and vegetables. Elli Greiser would in any case be pleased to see her again; but she lives in the Soldiner Straße, which is only a quarter of an hour's walk from the Zingster Straße. Gine therefore doubts the wisdom of such a meeting.

Then she remembers her parents' former neighbour, who runs a vegetable shop and next to which she had lived right up to her marriage. She decides to pay her a visit. Perhaps Mrs 'X' could be persuaded to let her have a regular supply of fruit and vegetables for a slight extra charge. Gine had frequently told Ellen about these neighbours and now takes her along.

They set out on their visit and use a tram for the first stage. That journey is a pleasure which they had long been denied. It is followed by a leisurely stroll through the streets. They are deeply conscious of being liberated from wearing the Jewish Star. They stop in front of a butcher's shop and look at the display, knowing that it is out of their reach; but that doesn't matter just now. They can enter the shop without worrying about the time of day.

'Shall we go in?' asks Gine. They look at each other like conspirators and enter. 'Actually', says Gine when they are inside, 'I think I'll buy the sausage tomorrow'.

They leave the shop and laugh about their prank on reaching the street.

Before entering the shop of her old neighbour, Gine makes sure that there are no customers inside. Mrs 'X' has not seen Gine since 1934, when her mother moved out of the next-door flat and is extremely surprised to see her again. She demonstratively remains standing behind the counter when Gine approaches her.

'So you haven't been deported yet!' she exclaims, and then wants to know why Gine isn't wearing her Jewish Star. In spite of Mrs 'X's dismissive attitude Gine trusts her and explains that she is now living in hiding. Mrs 'X' is appalled. She says that she would never have thought it possible for Gine to break the law. Apart from committing that offence, she doesn't think that Gine would stand a chance of hiding herself for the rest of her life. Mrs 'X' is evidently convinced of a final German victory. Ellen is afraid that they would be reported and only wants to get away as quickly as possible. Just as she tugs her mother's sleeve to attract her attention, Mrs 'X' terminates the meeting by asking Gine not to bother her again. She must know, after all, that she is not allowed to establish such contacts.

When they are back on the street, Ellen wants to catch the next train, regardless of where it takes them – she wants to get away as far as possible. Gine pacifies her. She is sure that Mrs 'X' will not denounce them. Nevertheless she, too, is gravely disturbed. How could this be the neighbour with whom she had shared many years of her childhood and youth, who had sought her mother's help and advice when her own children had been sick, who in turn had always been kind to her neighbour's children and who still addresses her as 'Du', as she did when Gine was a small girl?

The cheerful mood which they shared only a short time ago has evaporated. Reality has caught up with them. They are Jews, they are without rights, and they are condemned to live in fear.

1 March 1943

In the evening, they all sit together in the dining room at Fenske's. The air raid alarm sounds and Lisa immediately goes to the air raid shelter in the cellar, because she has been appointed as 'fire fighter'. She must therefore report for duty without delay. Her mother accompanies her.

Contrary to instructions, however, her husband remains in the flat and occupies himself with his stamp collection in his study. Gine and Ellen remain seated at a small table next to the window. When the anti-aircraft fire increases in intensity, they move to the sofa opposite.

Suddenly they are shaken by a tremor, which is accompanied by a deafening crash. They jump up and run into the lobby, where they meet Mr Fenske. Mrs Wolter appears at the same moment, to ask all three of them to join her in the cellar. In their excitement they forget to put on their overcoats, which hang in the lobby, and run past them.

While Karl-Martin turns left to go into the official air raid shelter, Aunt Hedwig turns right and leads Gine and Ellen into their private cellar, which is situated near the end of the corridor. Then she rejoins the other residents.

Gine and Ellen are now alone, freezing and in total darkness. The window facing the courtyard is broken. Outside one sees nothing but the red glow of burning. The buildings in the Prinzregententraße opposite are in flames. Glowing sparks fly past their window, and some of them are blown into the cellar. Gine and Ellen press their bodies against the opposite wall. The crashing of detonating bombs continues to increase. The sound of voices from the air raid shelter, which was just audible, suddenly ceases. Both of them are now in total, dark isolation and stare in terror at the glow which fills the window frame.

It seems an eternity before the outside din subsides and the 'all-clear' is sounded. They wait in the corridor until all residents have left their air raid cellar before they, too, go upstairs.

The flat presents a chaotic picture. The enormous air pressure has shifted various pieces of furniture from the walls into the centre of several rooms. All window panes, with the exception of one that happened to be open, have been shattered. Everything is covered in broken glass.

After recovering from the first shock, everybody starts the process of clearing up. The end of several hours of intensive work reveals to everyone's surprise that, apart from the window panes and the glass top of a small table, nothing has been destroyed. The furniture has not even been damaged.

Gine and Ellen are very worried about Mor's survival of the air raid. He can't be reached on the telephone. The period of waiting for news is a severe test for their nerves.

2 March 1943

At last he phones them during the morning. His voice sounds depressed, but he is very surprised to learn from his wife about the previous night's air raid. Hardly anything had happened in his district, and he had so far heard nothing about the destruction around the Prager Platz, the neighbourhood in which the Helmstedter Straße is situated. Why, then, does he sound so depressed, asks Gine.

'Max and Hanna have had a visitor,' he replies. She understands the coded message. His brother and sister, and their families, have been deported.

3 March 1943

The Weiß family meet at the Bayerischer Platz. Mor recounts how he had visited his brother's and sister's flats in turn and had found both homes to be sealed.

It turns out that – with very few exceptions, and apart from those who were partners in a 'mixed' marriage – all Jews still living legally in Berlin were collected for deporation from their flats and forced labour places on the 28th of February.

Among them also were the Weiß and Löwenthal families. They were deported to Auschwitz at the beginning of March. Helene Hirsch, as an employee of the *Reichsvereinigung,* as well as Anita and Reinhard Frank, working in the *Jüdische Krankenhaus,* were temporarily exempted from deportation.

Gine remains in touch with Lene and Anita.

4 March 1943

Ellen feels unwell. She has a headache and runs a temperature. Gine assumes that she has caught a cold when they stood freezing in the cellar on the 1st of March.

5 March 1943

The temperature turns into a fever, and Ellen's body is covered with

red blotches. Since she has already had German measles, Gine comes to the conclusion that they are now faced with scarlet fever. It doesn't stop her from sharing her bed with Ellen – she is convinced that she will not catch it. Her only concern is to find medical help without delay. She therefore decides to seek the help of her parents' former doctor, who had also treated her before her marriage. He had then been at the start of his career. She intends to take him into her confidence and tell him that they live in hiding.

6 March 1943

Mor phones to enquire about Ellen's health. Gine brings him up to date, and they agree to go and see the doctor together.

They meet somewhere in the North of Berlin. Mor waits on the other side of the street, while Gine and Ellen mount the stairs to the consulting room. They are told that the doctor is on leave and that his place is now being taken by a colleague. Gine turns to go and tells the astonished crowd of waiting patients that she had not expected to find such a queue in the waiting room. She would ask for a doctor to call at home. They offer to let the fever-ridden child go in first, but Gine declines with thanks and disappears as quickly as possible.

Downstairs, Ellen feels very sick. She has to vomit. Mor suggests that they should go to Adele Baur, who lives not far away, so that Ellen can lie down. Perhaps Mrs Baur knows a physician.

Adele knows a woman doctor, and is prepared to introduce Ellen as one of her twin daughters, who live in Königsberg. Ellen could decide whether her name was Heidelind or Erika *(Both names have been altered)*. She chooses 'Erika'. Suddenly Adele has second thoughts. Erika, she confesses hesitatingly, is mentally retarded. Gine is appalled. Heidelind remains the only option.

Both women take Ellen to see Dr Godelmann, who confirms scarlet fever. Ellen, she says, must immediately be admitted to a hospital. Ellen protests. Gine, introduced as an aunt, also tries to raise objections; but Dr Godelmann remains firm. Scarlet fever, she says, is a 'notifiable illness', and she is duty-bound to arrange an admission to a hospital. She accordingly makes all the necessary arrangements and calls an ambulance.

On the way to the *Reinickendorfer Kinderkrankenhaus* – the children's hospital – Ellen has to absorb her new personalia while afflicted with a temperature of 40.4 degrees. Her age is increased by one and a half years, Adele becomes her mother, and 'Mutti' becomes 'Aunt Gine'.

On arrival at the hospital, Ellen cries. So does her mother. Adele jokes

with the nurses in an East Prussian dialect. One young nurse observes to Gine that it is remarkable for her to take her niece's illness so much to heart, while her mother remains totally unmoved.

'Let me tell you something in confidence', says Gine. 'Her mother has never really cared for the girl. She has spent most of her childhood with me, and I feel as if she was my own child.'

That naturally explains everything, except for the fact that Heidelind apparently arrived from Königsberg quite recently. But in the general turmoil nobody seemed to worry about this. Since her 'mother' is able to prove her own identity, the absence of Heidelind's papers does not seem to cause concern. The failure to produce her ration cards, however, raises questions. All patients have to hand them over on admission to a hospital; but as Heidelind allegedly arrived in Berlin to visit her mother, it is believed that her people in Königsberg forgot to give her the ration cards.

After a tearful farewell from Gine, Ellen is taken to her ward. They can hardly wait for the arrival of the next visiting hour.

7 March 1943

A clerk comes to see 'Heidelind' to obtain some additional information. She wants to know whether the surname is spelled 'Baur' or 'Bauer'.

'Bauer', says Ellen.

It may be grammatically correct, but is factually wrong.

Is she Protestant or Catholic, the lady next wants to know.

'Catholic', replies Ellen.

After the woman has left, Ellen is beset by doubts about the correctness of her answers, especially in connection with her faith. In any case, she decides to tell her mother everything.

8 March – 16 April 1943

One hour per day is set aside for visits on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. That is a very short time for a sick child who is longing for her mother's presence. The isolation ward is situated on the ground floor. All visitors have to remain outside the building and converse with the little patients through closed windows. The beds are, in turn, moved to a 'window position'. The relatives stand outside, densely crowded together. The atmosphere is full of glad expectancy at the beginning of the visiting hour, and sad at the end.

During the first visit, Ellen tells her mother, quite casually, about the additional information she was asked to supply, and the answers she had

given. She has the impression that her mother gives an almost imperceptible jerk.

'Oh, well', 'Aunt Gine' then says, 'you were, after all, suffering from a high fever!'

Ellen realises that she has made mistakes, but her mother's reaction does not strike her as particularly alarming.

'And you needn't be too upset about not being able to attend the BDM just now', adds 'Aunt Gine', to remind Ellen that she has reached the required age for joining. (All girls must belong to the *Bund deutscher Mädchen* on reaching the age of ten years). 'As soon as you are well again you will be able to rejoin them.'

Ellen is in the picture. She nods briefly. Gine knows that she has understood.

As time goes on, this is the method by which she conveys new information, or anything which is of importance. Ellen just nods, and no one notices anything untoward. From now on, both can communicate without problems or the risk of misunderstandings, by means of a look, a gesture or a word, regardless of the number of people surrounding them.

A few days later, Ellen encounters the most difficult test of her stay in the hospital. The charming ward sister appears with a fair-haired student nurse and says that she has a great surprise in store for Ellen: the nurse comes from Königsberg, like herself!

This is a surprise indeed. Ellen is dumb-founded.

The radiant young nurse tells her that she had worked at the hospital at the Königssee. Where, she wants to know, has Ellen gone to school? Ellen is speechless,, and instinctively does the only sensible thing: she keeps quiet. The nurse is surprised. Had she, by an chance, gone to the 'X'-School?

'Yes', says Ellen.

'But then you must also know the hospital at the Königssee', insists the nurse.

Ellen feels that she has reached the end, that she cannot outlast this challenge. At this very moment the nurse is called away. She leaves with the assurance that she would return as soon as possible.

Ellen is now in a constant state of fear and tension. During the next visiting hour she tells her mother about the new acquaintance, who has not so far returned.

'That is ever so nice', says 'Tante Gine', 'I think I'd like to meet her myself', and disappears. After a few minutes she returns.

'What a pity', she remarks, with an encouraging smile, 'the nurse was transferred to another ward immediately after she left you, and that is why she is not allowed to revisit you in the isolation ward.'

Ellen fells immensely relieved.

No one notices a minor inconsistency which occurs a little later. Ellen is asked how it comes that she speaks without her home dialect. Mindful of her mother's constant attempts to overcome her tendency to speak with a Berlinese dialect, she explains:

'My mummy has always been most careful to stop me from speaking with an East Prussian dialect.'

The only problem with this answer is the fact that her 'mother', Adele Baur, speaks with nothing but a native dialect. But as she does not visit the hospital, most of the sisters in any case think of Gine as Ellen's mother; and Gine does nothing either to encourage or to contradict this impression.

The highlights of the stay at the hospital are two visits from 'Uncle Kurt', who has meanwhile grown a moustache. Gine doesn't allow frequent visits in a district in which he used to have a stall in the market, and in which he might be recognised. 'Uncle Kurt' and 'Heidelind' are happy and very moved to see each other again. Surprisingly, 'Uncle Kurt' occasionally confuses his niece with a person who is called 'Ellen'.

An agreeable side effect of the unpleasant stay in hospital is the good food provided there. It includes everything needed to cure sick children. For Ellen this means things she has not seen for years, or which were denied to her.

Since her enrolment at school she had progressed from a bad to a normal eater, but never to a strong one. The sight of open sandwiches served for breakfast, however, gives her an uncontrollable appetite. Every child can get as many of the thinly cut slices as it wants to eat. Ellen consumes up to five sandwiches for breakfast, preferably those with hard boiled eggs.

The stay in hospital for children suffering from scarlet fever is normally estimated at forty-two days. After twenty-one days they are allowed to get up and may get out of bed a little earlier to wash and go to the lavatory.

When Ellen duly gets out of bed and picks up her towel from the hook, her legs suddenly give way. She doesn't understand what is happening to her, tries to get up and falls down on the floor. The other five girls with whom she shares the room roar with laughter because they think that 'Heidelind' is giving a performance. Ellen tells a nursing sister, who has come unsuspectingly into the ward, that she is unable to get up because her legs collapse under her. With the help of a colleague, the nurse lifts Ellen back into her bed. While the two discuss what to do next, Ellen develops a shivering fit. This, too, is a new experience for her.

She does not comprehend why she is unable to lie quietly. She tries to bring her body under control, but it shakes so violently that the bed under her rattles and her teeth clatter. The shivers gradually disappear, but Ellen's general condition is not good. A doctor is brought in before the next routine visit. He starts a number of examinations which go on into the next visiting hour. During their busy life, the nurses forget to remove the temperature graph from the back of the bed.

When Gine arrives for her visit she appears just in time to see a blood sample being taken from Ellen. She also catches sight of the fever curve, which shows that the temperature is constantly fluctuating between high fever and sub-temperature. She is deeply shocked and rushes to the senior nursing sister to enquire about 'Heidelind's' condition.

A sign at the door bears the inscription: 'The greeting demanded here is the German Salute "Heil Hitler"!' Gine knocks, then opens the door and begins her question, 'Excuse me ...'

'Have you not seen the sign at the door?' demands the senior sister.

'I am desperately worried about Heidelind's condition', replies Gine.

O well, that explains everything, even such a serious omission. The sister now replies to the enquiry by professionally playing the whole affair down. Gine points to the rapidly oscillating fever curve.

'You have no right to look at the temperature curve!' the sister screams at her.

'In that case you should not leave it on display', replies Gine. Her nerves have reached breaking point. She no longer pays any heed to the fact that she is living illegally – her sole concern is to know what has happened to Ellen. Surprisingly enough, her opposite number now becomes more accessible and tells her that the medical examinations have not yet been completed and she could not give any precise details; but Gine could return at 9 o'clock on the following morning for the latest information. She has to be satisfied with that.

That same afternoon Gine sees Anita during one of their regular meetings. She describes Ellen's symptoms as if it was the illness of another child in the same ward.

'The scarlet fever has turned septic', says Anita with authority.

Gine's reaction reveals the true identity of the sufferer to her. She quickly corrects her verdict and describes a number of alternative possibilities which might have resulted in these complications.

Next morning, when Gine meets the Yugoslav staff doctor at the hospital and asks about Heidelind's condition, he explains that yesterday's complication had been entirely harmless, and that it had already been overcome. Approximately three weeks after the onset of scarlet fever the

patient's skin begins to peel. In Heidelind's case, this process had taken place too rapidly and had therefore led to this violent reaction.

She could go and convince herself of the present condition. Gine gratefully accepts the offer and can hardly trust her eyes when she finds her daughter lively, fever-free and delighted to see her.

The recovery continues to make good progress, although in the course of the following weeks a small complication occurs in the form of a gland inflammation. This is treated with hot compresses to such good effect that it is cured within a few days.

Ellen is the only one of the six children with whom she shared the room to be discharged after forty-two days. She gained five pounds during her stay in hospital.

17 April 1943

Gine is overcome with happiness to be able to take Ellen into her arms again. When they leave the hospital together she thinks that nothing worse could happen to her than what she had to suffer during the past six weeks.

On the way 'home', she prepares Ellen for their impending departure from Aunt Lilala's flat. Through Ellen's sickness Karl-Martin had become fearfully aware of the complications caused by an illegal existence. He had asked Gine to look for another hiding place, but at the same time had assured her that she could stay with him for as long as she needed to relocate herself. Lisa is outraged that her husband, who had in the first place offered shelter to the whole Weiß family, then limited it to Gine and Ellen for the whole period of the illegality, now had withdrawn the entire offer.

The situation is embarrassing for Gine. Whatever happens, she wants to avoid being the cause of marital tensions between the Fenskes. She has therefore resumed contacts with Mrs Greiser, and Mor has been in touch with Emma Selbiger, the wife of his former colleague. (Willi Selbiger has meanwhile been deported to Auschwitz, following the commitment of a minor offence, although he should have been preserved from this fate through his Christian wife.)

Ellen is dismayed. The apparent security in Aunt Lilala's flat has now been lost as well.

Her mother can, however, ease her departure a little. For a start, Adele Baur can offer them accommodation for a short time. This will enable them to celebrate Ellen's birthday with Papa. Gine has been presented with a few food coupons, which she can hand over to Adele to cover her feeding of the Weiß family.

The mere fact that they can once again live with Papa easily compensates for the sacrifice of the relative 'At Home' at Helmstedter Straße 14. What is uncertain is the location of their next hideout, since Adele Baur can only offer them shelter for a few days.

There is no need for a great farewell from Aunt Lilala and Aunt Hedwig, because Karl-Martin permits Gine and Ellen to visit them whenever they wish, and also to phone them at any time. Gine arranges with Lisa that she becomes the only person who is constantly kept informed of the names and addresses of all persons who offer shelter to the Weiß family. She wants to make sure that there is at least one person who knows their whereabouts at any time.

Second half of April 1943

The reunion of the family is wonderful. One can't stop cuddling each other.

Although Mrs Baur spends most of her time with the old lady for whom she cares, she appears quite often in her own small flat, where she occasionally also sleeps.

One morning after Gine's arrival the postman delivers a letter for which a signature is required. Adele declares that she has mislaid her reading spectacles and asks Gine to sign on her behalf. Gine doesn't like doing it, but can't refuse it. When Adele repeats her request for a signature a little later, it becomes apparent that she is illiterate. Gine feels sorry for her.

At the same time, however, she also notices a few other things. Recently, Adele presented Mor with a large cigar, and later offered all of them chocolates which are unobtainable on ration cards. This seemed strange, but did not cause Gine to give any further thought to the sources of supply.

That evening, she places her small gold wrist watch (the only valuable article which she failed to deliver during the confiscation of jewellery) on a table. Next morning it is missing. She searches everywhere, but the watch has disappeared without trace. Adele confirms having seen it, but now agrees that it's just gone.

While staying with Mrs Baur, Gine tailors, makes alterations and sews a new dress for her. She asks whether she might also make a blouse for an acquaintance (Mrs Greiser). Adele agrees. Having already become suspicious, Gine shows her the cloth, discusses its colour with her and tells her that she would hang it over the back of the chair to stop it from being creased. Next morning it has gone. Gine can't make it out. It is particularly embarrassing, because the cloth doesn't belong to her.

'Adele', says Gine imploringly, 'I showed you the piece of silk yesterday which I hung over the back of the chair. Perhaps you have removed it by mistake while clearing up.'

Adele remembers exactly that she saw the cloth on the chair, but that is all she knows. It is the most extraordinary thing that has ever happened to her!

This state of affairs is hard to bear, but nevertheless all three are thankful for every hour they can spend together. Moreover, they are most grateful to Mrs Baur for everything she did for Ellen during her illness.

She is obviously a good-natured and helpful person who has apparently been adversely influenced in some respects by the conditions under which she has had to live. It is noteworthy that she hardly ever tries to use the proceeds of her thefts to her own advantage. Whatever she takes from one person becomes a present to someone else. It seems to be a compulsive habit.

End of April 1943

It was agreed at the outset that Mrs Baur could only accommodate Gine and Ellen over the 27th April. The time for parting from Mor has therefore arrived. Emma Selbiger can find shelter for them for a few days with her sister, Agnes Minke, in the Bellermannstraße, which is about two minutes' walk from the Weiß family's old home in the Zingster Straße.

The danger of being recognised is acute, not only where former fellow tenants are concerned, but also by customers of Mor's stand in the Market, where he was often assisted by Gine. The Market Place in the Badstraße is a mere five minutes' walk from the Zingster Straße, as well as from the Bellermannstraße.

Gine and Ellen therefore wait for the evening before going to Mrs Minke, to arrive in darkness. They also intend to leave the house on only one occasion – and then only in the evening – to visit Mrs Greiser, who is meanwhile trying to find a further hideout for them.

Gine sews for Mrs Minke in order to earn their food. While she is working at the sewing machine, Ellen kneels on a pile of bed linen lying on the sofa, in order to remove her handbag from a high chest of drawers. She hasn't noticed that there is a large ceramic bowl under the pile of laundry. This now slides forward, breaks into fragments and causes a deep cut in Ellen's left knee. It bleeds fiercely. Gine has no doubt that medical attention is required.

The only doctor known to Agnes practises in the Badstraße. Gine

applies a temporary bandage to the knee and puts Ellen into a push chair lent by Mrs Minke's daughter-in-law. She then dons a borrowed hat with a broad brim, puts on dark sun glasses and sets out on the way to the doctor. She tells Ellen to hang her head so that she cannot be recognised at first sight. She suffers great anxiety while on the way to the consulting room.

Gine provides a rather unfriendly doctor with imaginary personal data. He is said to have been an Army doctor during the First World War and seems to prefer dealing with brave soldiers rather than scared children. He says that the wound must be stitched, and Ellen must first be given an Anti-Tetanus injection. She starts to cry, and doesn't want the cut to be stitched. He thereupon refuses to continue treatment.

Gine succeeds in persuading him to change his mind. She assures him that her daughter will keep perfectly still, and the mother's look convinces Ellen that she must do as she is told.

While the doctor gets his instruments together, Gine whispers: 'Pull yourself together! Think what is happening to little Heli just now!'

Ellen tries to pull herself together, but the Anti-Tetanus which the doctor injects into the wound is very painful, and his stitching up is also pretty rough. Finally, he says that Ellen must return in a week's time to have the stitches removed.

Emma Selbiger learns of the whole drama when paying a visit to her sister, She invites Gine and Ellen to be her guests for a few days. There is a nice lady doctor in her neighbourhood who would pull out the stitches. Gine is happy to be able to get away from the Bellermannstraße, and gladly accepts the invitation.

Beginning of May 1943

Gine and Ellen move over to Emma Selbiger, who lives at the Braune Weg. Mor can also visit them there, because he is unknown in this neighbourhood.

The current problem is to explain to the local doctor why the stitches are not being removed by the physician who inserted them. Gine hits on the idea that the accident happened in Cottbus, but that she had to return home and therefore could not finish the treatment at that place.

Ellen is beside herself. Königsberg was bad enough, now she doesn't want to bear the excuse of Cottbus. She'd rather go back to the ruffian and let him pull out his stitches. But her mother will not give in. She is not prepared to run the risk of returning once again to the Badstraße.

The lady doctor recommended by Emma Selbiger proves very nice

and obliging. She wants to divert Ellen's attention from the treatment and asks her how she liked Cottbus. Why not tell her something about her journey?

Gine immediately intervenes and says that it is difficult to get a word out of her daughter when she is scared, but the visit to her relations had been great fun. She then continues to chatter gaily about Cottbus, which she knew intimately from her youth.

The removal of the threads takes only a few minutes. The doctor is so careful and expert that Ellen doesn't experience any pain at all. She is relieved in every respect, thanks the doctor and says with delight that the whole procedure was entirely painless.

'O good,', says the doctor with a broad smile, 'now you've found your voice again after all. And if you have to come back to see me ever again, I'm sure you'll want to tell me about Cottbus.'

First half of May 1943

Elli Greiser has succeeded in finding short-term accommodation for the Weiß family with an acquaintance, Mrs Brehme, who owns a plot at Schönholz, a northern suburb of Berlin. Her spacious house consists of two flats, one of which is occupied by her and her companion, who is a policeman; the other by her son – who has been called up – and his family. All of them are decided opponents of the Nazis.

Mrs Brehme keeps rabbits and chicken, and generally doesn't seem to suffer from any shortage of food. She finds a great deal of work for Gine with her sewing, and keeps Mor busy looking after the house and its grounds; but it seems clear that all this work will come to an end in about two weeks' time, and that an alternative shelter will have to be found by then.

Mor and Gine have been given the address of a family living in the Anklamer Straße. They are likewise Nazi opponents. Gine decides to visit them, offer them her services as a dressmaker and see whether this might solve the problem. It does. A new shelter is found.

Second half of May 1943

'Minna Joram' *(the name has been changed)* is the housekeeper in a building in the Anklamer Straße. Her husband has another job. They live in a basement flat.

Her married daughter, Mrs R., occupies a flat on the second floor of the same house. Many old-fashioned buildings in the poorer districts of

Berlin contain several living units which consist of a bed-sitting room and kitchen within a flat. As a result, one passes from the public staircase through an entrance door into a flat with a corridor from which one gains access to these living units.

Mrs Joram's daughter lives in such a unit. Here, all rooms lie on the right-hand side of the corridor, the kitchens on the left. Bathrooms do not exist. Lavatories are situated in the courtyard outside the house.

Mrs R.'s husband has been called up for military service. She therefore now lives with her baby in her parents' basement flat, and so she is able to put her accommodation at the Weiß family's disposal. Neighbours on the corridor are told that the Weiß's home has been bombed, and that Mor has been discharged from military service for medical reasons.

Under present conditions, the Jorams live in relative abundance. Their son-in-law is stationed in France. At regular intervals he sends them big parcels with food and tobacco.

Minna Joram is a person of generous proportions and rough manners. She keeps Gine busily sewing from morning to night – there doesn't seem to be any limit to the amount of work waiting to be done.

On one occasion, Gine feels unwell. Mrs Joram is quite unmoved and comments: 'Just keep on working, keep on working! That'll soon make you feel better!' Her daughter protests, without success, at what she describes as inconsiderate conduct and says that Regina should be allowed to lie down. Gine is told to carry on. Ellen is deeply hurt and feels helpless. All she can do is to sit next to the sewing machine and try to encourage her mother.

Ellen, however, is treated with kindness by 'Aunt Minna'. From time to time, Mrs Joram bakes several tins of doughnuts. The whole flat is filled with its ravishing smell. Ellen is presented with one of these delicacies. Gine is offered none; and Mor, who spends his time in the flat upstairs, is not even considered.

Ellen tries to give her mother a share of her doughnut, but Gine suffers a sudden loss of appetite. Ellen therefore puts the whole doughnut on one side. Minna, watching her, asks whether she doesn't like doughnuts. O yes, she does, replies Ellen, but she wants to keep it for the evening. Minna has no objection. That evening, Ellen takes the gift upstairs into their flat, where her parents simply can't refuse to accept one third of her doughnut each – but the partition is performed by Mutti.

Mor, always an active and ambitious man, suffers from being condemned to total inactivity. The worst aspect of this dilemma is the confinement to his room upstairs. He is painfully aware of the way in which his wife is forced to slave away downstairs to earn food and shelter

for all of them. Gine tries to cheer him up by assuring him that the job of earning a family's keep must always be performed by the person who happens to be able to do so. One evening, when she returns to the room upstairs in a state of near-exhaustion, he firmly embraces her and says, 'One thing I promise you: if we survive these times in good health, I shall never allow you to work again!'

Waldemar *(name is altered)* is no better than his wife – possibly worse. Occasionally, when Mor is invited to join them downstairs, he opens up a tin of tobacco and begins to smoke without offering a single pipeful to him.

Ellen's heart aches at the sight of this behaviour.

When Joram's son-in-law, Ernst R., returns home on a few days' leave, his wife tells him that the Weiß family are Jewish and are living with them illegally. Ernst is a kindly young man. Witnessing his father-in-law's crude conduct, he promptly offers Mor some of his own tobacco.

Ellen feels most grateful to him.

*

Mid-June 1943

Gine remembers Herta Naujocks' invitation, extended to her in the Dircksenstraße, to visit her at Malchow sometime in the future. She suggests to her family that now is the time to make use of this opportunity in order to get away from the oppressive atmosphere they have to endure at the Jorams. Mor and Ellen greet this idea with enthusiasm.

Their journey takes them via Weißensee, where they have to change, to Malchow. They alight in the village main street, and Ellen suddenly finds herself in a rural environment which she had never encountered before.

They turn right into the Wartenberger Weg, then left, and finally enter a narrow lane known as 'Wiesenhöhe'. *Lauben* – allotment huts – line this passage on both sides. Instead of only being used during the summer months, as usual, they serve as permanent homes.

Wiesenhöhe 8, the plot rented by the Naujocks family, is the last enclosure on the left-hand side. Mrs Naujocks is delighted to welcome the Weiß family.

Was the visit inconvenient in any way? asks Gine. Herta Naujocks is surprised. 'Inconvenient' is an expression which doesn't exist in her vocabulary. Anyone can come and go whenever it suits them, especially if it concerns people in distress. This includes Belgian forced labourers and *Geltungsjuden* – people officially classified as Jews - who find themselves under threat. Naturally, she also conducts 'normal' relations with people

like her sister's family, and some neighbours.

Now she extends a welcome to her visitors and shows them round the grounds. Standing at the fence, one looks into the front garden, at this moment filled with a multitude of flowers in a riot of colourful blossoms. A bush of blackcurrants stands on the left of the entrance gate, and on the lawn to the right a huge apple tree is so over-laden with ripening fruit that its branches have to be propped up with wooden supports.

The flower garden leads to the *Laube* with two entrances – one in the front and another, roofed-in, at the back. It consists of two rooms, a kitchen and a veranda and has water and electricity connections. The fully enclosed and glazed-in veranda was added by Mr Naujocks. A little hut, containing the lavatory, is outside the house.

Past the house, a path leads to the back garden with numerous gooseberry, redcurrent and whitecurrent bushes on the left, and cherry as well as plum trees on the right.

Still further to the right, past the fruit trees, the ground slopes sharply downhill towards a ditch filled with water, which marks the borderline with the adjoining fields. This geological formation evidently explains the exceptional size of the garden, as well as the descriptive choice of *Wiesenhöhe* -'Meadow Heights' – for the path through the allotment colony.

Apart from Herta, only her youngest, eight-year-old daughter Irmhild, is at home just now. She is gentle, brunette, and with her smiling, brown eyes and her trusting manner greatly resembles her mother. They put up collapsible garden and deck chairs under the apple tree, and Herta serves refreshments. Before long, her ten-year-old daughter Helga appears. She is likewise of a friendly and welcoming disposition, but in appearance completely different from the other two.

Finally, in the course of the afternoon, the host and the two eldest daughters, Gertrud and Gisela, return home. The son, Fritz, has been conscripted to a labouring job.

Max Naujocks is of medium height, with a grey fringe of hair and has the genuine appearance of a boxer, which, in fact, he used to be. At the same time he radiates warmth and goodness and conveys the impression that his heart is as soft as his muscles are hard.

It is now apparent that the oldest and the youngest daughter very much take after their mother, while Gisela and Helga resemble their father. The sixteen-year-old 'Trudchen', with her radiant eyes and slightly waved, dark hair, is the most beautiful girl Ellen has ever seen up to now. She can't stop gazing at her. Mor and Gine also find her as pretty as a picture; but above all they are captivated by her charming and open manner. Ellen looks upon her as very much grown up.

All four Naujocks children know that the Weiß family are Jewish, are living illegally, and that they must not disclose this fact to anybody. But harbouring people in distress is nothing unusual for them – they regard it as very much an everyday event.

Gine recounts their living conditions with Jorams, though naturally she does not mention their names. Then the conversation turns to other topics.

It does not strike anyone as unusual that Herta disappears for a short time. When she returns, she mentions that she has just had a chat with an acquaintance, who lives on her own in a two-roomed *Laube,* since her husband has been conscripted, and her son is working in the *Arbeitsdienst* – the 'Labour Service'. Mrs Baumann is scared of living by herself and would welcome people occupying one of her rooms, so that she would have someone around her in the house at night. Herta had told her that the Weiß family had been bombed out of their home in town, with Mor discharged from military service for medical reasons. They were frightened by their air raid experiences in the city and wanted to live on the outskirts of Berlin. This explanation may have convinced Mrs Baumann, as she could assume that the family was not familiar with this area.

A small ammunition factory, called *die Feuerwerkerei,* is located in the immediate neighbourhood, where fireworks were manufactured before the war. It has now become a prime target for air raids. Moreover, Malchow is supposed to be situated in the innermost belt of anti-aircraft batteries around Berlin.

Herta's proposal seems highly attractive, but it also raises the problem of how they should earn their keep without obtaining most of their food through working for the Jorams. The Naujocks can't even begin to understand this reasoning. Their six ration cards, supplemented by lots of fruit and the possibility of obtaining vegetables and potatoes from farmers in the neighbourhood should surely be enough to feed three more people!

Mor and Gine are overcome by the sheer extent of the natural goodness which the Naujocks are extending to virtual strangers. They eventually accept the offer with joy, but also with hesitation and the promise that they will somehow try to contribute additional food. They are promptly introduced to Mrs Baumann.

On returning to Anklamer Straße, Gine explains to Mrs Joram that she doesn't want to inconvenience her and her daughter any longer and has therefore managed to find alternative accommodation for herself and her family. She would, however, continue to be at her disposal for sewing, and would be grateful for any food she might receive in return. Minna agrees with these arrangements.

A few days later Mor, Gine and Ellen move to Malchow.

Mrs Baumann is a simple, friendly woman who doesn't ask many questions and lets her spare bedroom for a small rent. Her *Laube* is even simpler than that of the Naujocks. The walls consist of single wooden planks, through whose knotty holes the wind tends to whistle.

During the day, all three of them stay with the Naujocks, where they also partake of their meals. The astonishing fact is not only that the members of the Naujocks family treat all this as a perfectly natural state of affairs, but also that the Weiß family sheds the feeling that they are a burden.

It is part of the current safety precaution that Mr and Mrs Naujocks are only addressed by their First Names; but while Ellen considers the usual style of, for instance, 'Aunt Agnes', 'Aunt Emma' and 'Aunt Minna' as purely neutral, Max and Herta Naujocks are emotionally raised to the level of *Uncle* Max and *Aunt* Herta. At the same time, all the Naujocks children also elevate Mor and Gine to the true level of 'Uncle Kurt' and 'Aunt Gine'.

Here, too, Gine attends to tailoring work whenever necessary, helps with the housekeeping and occasionally cooks meals, but she performs all these tasks as member of a community. In between, she visits Jorams in the Anklamer Straße to sew for them and earn food in return. From time to time, Mor also succeeds in obtaining food on the 'black market' with the help of the very supportive Mrs Greiser.

End of June 1943

Gine, who continued to meet Anita regularly, now learns that she and Reinhard have been deported to Theresienstadt.

She continues to visit her sister Lene at regular intervals. Ellen was allowed to accompany her on one occasion, shortly after her birthday. Aunt Lene congratulated her belatedly, but most affectionately. When she left with her mother, Aunt Lene waved good-bye to them from the window. It was the only time she did so; or at any rate the only time that Ellen recalls her doing so.

End of July 1943

Helene Hirsch is informed that, together with her children, she has been earmarked for 'evacuation' to Theresienstadt. The advance notice, as well as the disclosure of the intended destination, probably represent concessions granted to her as an employee of the *Reichsvereinigung.* Gine is therefore able to say good-bye to her and the children.

Hardi shares the hobby of collecting bomb splinters with most boys of his age. He therefore asks his aunt to take over this job on his behalf during his absence. He specially points out that he only collects bomb splinters, not those from grenades, and shows Gine samples of both to emphasise the difference between them. Gine promises to fulfil his wish.

In the course of time, Gine had to come to terms with the fact that her sister Lene could not be persuaded to take the leap into illegality. Her position had always been clear and had remained unchanged. Gine therefore feels relieved that her sister and the children were at least heading for Theresienstadt: the rumour had spread that this camp had been designated as a place for inspection by the International Red Cross and therefore appeared to be different from the other concentration camps.

Gine begins to collect bomb splinters for Hardi; but when a substantial pile has accumulated, she stops.

Summer 1943

Spending the day with Naujocks, and sleeping in Mrs Baumann's hut, Mor, Gine and Ellen live a life of relative normality. Both the Weiß and the Naujock families contribute to the livelihood and, above all, to coping with the problems of daily existence. One works collectively, plants and harvests, cooks and cleans – in short, one lives together like an extended family.

Mor and Max harmonise exceptionally well. When Max is at home they keep each other company; when he is away at work, Mor carries on work on his own. He loves gardening, enjoys looking after the rabbits, and above all he is in his element because he appreciates being able to use his own judgment about what needs to be done.

Meanwhile, tobacco has become scarce, even for ordinary ration card holders. Max therefore looks for an alternative, and soon discovers it in the form of a plant called *Huflattich,* which is said to be remarkably similar to tobacco. He therefore plants it in his garden. After the harvest, the leaves are perforated and suspended from a line tied to the trees. When dry, the leaves are carefully cut into small strips. Whatever the taste of burnt Huflattich, and regardless of its effect – if any – both men evidently enjoy their product.

The air raids are becoming heavier and more frequent. The nearest refuge for the inhabitants of the *Lauben* is the official air raid shelter in the village, which is not much used.

Mor is of the opinion that they should construct their own *Bunker.* The escarpment in the garden lends itself perfectly for this task. They

dig a quadrilateral hole into the slope. The resulting cave is high enough for a man and has three natural walls. Some iron bars are fixed above the entrance aperture, branches are placed on top, and a lot of the excavated earth is piled up above it. A simple brick wall, reaching up to the roof construction, is erected in front of the structure and here, too, earth is piled up against the brick wall. The entrance itself is located in such a way that it forms an angle to the interior of the shelter.

Mor proudly shows the creation to his wife. He explains that the three natural walls are 'practically bomb proof'. It was unlikely that a bomb would hit the small area occupied by the roof, which therefore only serves as a protection against splinters.

'But what happens', asks Gine, in keeping with her inquisitive nature, 'if a bomb falls in front of the brick wall?'

'That would be a bull's eye', he replies.

Gine is now a little less tense than she was before and during the start of their illegal existence. Herta's balanced and even-tempered nature has a beneficial effect on her. Herta is a rare mixture of energy and equanimity. She acts whenever she considers it necessary, is available for everyone who needs her help or asks her for a favour, but she does not allow anything to worry her.

When one of the children feels sick, she takes her to see the doctor at Weißensee, carries out what he prescribes and doesn't for a moment imagine that the course of the sickness could be anything but favourable, or develop complications. She is not worried when her husband is caught up in an air raid on his way home from work and is delayed, because she is utterly convinced that nothing terrible will happen to him.

Ellen has meanwhile formed a friendship with Irmhild and Helga. The three girls do everything together. They play, run across the fields and pluck red and white currants straight from the bushes. Max also allocates to them the fallow ground at the foot of the hill for 'cultivation'. They sow carrots and radishes, water them, pull out the weeds, generally look after their plants and proudly present the harvest. Their horticultural efforts earn them the unrestrained praise of the adults.

Carrots and radishes were precious delicacies a year ago; now they are no more than the benevolently welcomed products of the children's games. This, too, represents a return to relative normality, and one which has taken place virtually unconsciously and unnoticed.

One day, when Gine and Ellen are returning from a visit to the Jorams and waiting for a bus to Malchow at the Buschallee in Weißensee, Ellen suddenly says to her mother: 'You know, Uncle Max, Aunt Herta and the children are completely like real relations for us.'

'Yes', replies Gine, 'they really are.'

Ellen is now also allowed to visit the cinema with Helga and Irmhild. They take the bus to the Antonplatz in Weißensee to see 'Quax – the Crash Pilot' with Heinz Rühmann. Some time later they go to see a comedy with the title 'Kohlhiesel's Daughters'. These first-ever visits to the pictures are among Ellen's most memorable experiences.

In the course of time, more and more neighbours build bomb shelters in their gardens. They mostly consist of earthen constructions above the ground, which actually offer little more than protection against splinters. Only the *Bunker* in Naujocks' garden really provides a measure of safety because of the geographical features of the ground. The Weiß family and Mrs Baumann immediately run across to the shelter from her house as soon as the nightly alarms are sounded. Max and Mor have, however, also built a shelter at Mrs Baumann's allotment, for use in cases where the suddenness of a raid may prevent them from getting away.

During his illegal existence Mor remains in contact with his brother Arnold. An acquaintance has offered him shelter in a *Laube* in Hessenwinkel, a suburb of Berlin. On one occasion, Mor and the family are even able to visit him there. The joy of reunion is great.

Gine and Ellen now regularly see Elisabeth Fenske. Life at her home remains unchanged.

In the course of the year, however, Karl-Martin has run into severe professional problems. He is constantly being urged to join the Party, and he equally constantly refuses to do so. At first he is threatened with the withdrawal of orders from the War Ministry, but this fails to change his mind. It is followed by the actual cancellation of many orders for the impregnation of uniform cloth. This also does not induce him to join the NSDAP. Finally his status as an official war supplier is withdrawn, and this leads to the call-up of employees previously recognised as being in reserved occupations.

The economic consequences of these measures are considerable. What depresses him most is the effect on his employees. Many of them had been members of his staff for long periods and now find themselves in the front line through the indirect effects of his action.

But his conviction remains unshaken. He will not support a system which fills him with loathing. Both his wife and his mother-in-law support him in this attitude.

Before the war Lisa was employed as an office clerk by the firm which Karl-Martin inherited from his father. That was how she met her husband.

Following the acute staffing problems, she has now resumed work in

the factory. This also enables her to avoid possible direction for work in strange enterprises. The more men are called up for military service, the greater is the demand for women in what are mostly firms working for the armaments industry.

The control over telephone conversations is becoming more and more intense. One frequently hears a crackling sound during a call, which indicates that it is being tapped. Whenever Lisa has to be phoned, Ellen is therefore sent to speak. A child's voice is less liable to give rise to suspicion. The making of appointments and the conveyance of messages also require the use of 'uncrackable' codes. Ellen is completely familiar with them, both in transmission and reception.

Illegality, with all its manifold side effects leads, amongst other things, to Ellen's intuitive understanding of codes of behaviour which are logically in conflict with each other. On one hand, the rule which forms an unchangeable part of her upbringing continues to prevail: it proclaims the need for sincerity and honesty. It is understood to apply to the private domain. On the other hand, lies have become an essential part of survival strategies. Recognition of their necessity makes their use appear natural.

Ellen regards honesty and deception as naturally and equally existing side by side. They neither exclude each other, nor do they merge. Each of them has its meaning, validity and logic in her life, like light and darkness in the course of a day.

Autumn 1943

Gine wants to go to Mrs Joram to attend to her sewing. Ellen accompanies her. While on the way to the village street she runs ahead to see whether the bus is coming. The wind blows into her face. Suddenly she finds herself short of breath. She feels as if someone is strangling her. As she manages to reach the bus stop post, red flashes appear in front of her eyes. She can no longer recognise anything.

From a distance, Gine sees how her daughter grasps the pole and slowly slides to the pavement. She rushes to her and asks what has happened.

Ellen is not aware of having slid down to earth. She sits on the ground, says that she had been unable to breathe, and that everything had turned red in front of her eyes. Gine has heard of things turning black in front of people's eyes, but not red. She therefore repeats her question; but Ellen maintains that she had seen red.

Whatever the colour, Gine cannot imagine what has happened to her

daughter. She is deeply shocked and wants to return to the *Laube* with her; but on no account will she allow her to walk. She therefore tries to pick up the protesting Ellen to carry her back. Two women, who just happen to pass with an empty push chair and notice that Ellen is unwell, offer to put her in it. As they share most of the way, Gine accepts gratefully. When they reach the point where their ways should part, the women offer to take them home, but Gine declines with thanks. She explains that they have nearly reached it and that she can carry Ellen that short distance.

Ellen, who has meanwhile recovered from her breathing difficulties and can also see normally again, recognises the problem and declares that she now feels well again and can walk unaided. She clambers out of the push cart without waiting for an answer. Gine is visibly relieved. The two women depart with their best wishes.

Mor is surprised to see his family back so soon. Gine tells him what has happened and declares that she will now stay at home. This obviously puts her in an embarrassing position as far as Mrs Joram is concerned, who doesn't know what has happened; but Gine is not prepared to leave Ellen under any circumstances.

Herta, on the other hand, can see no reason for her continued presence. She spreads a thick layer of butter on a roll, boils an egg produced by one of their two chickens and puts this temptation in front of Ellen. In her view, this refreshment will result in a complete cure.

Ellen, who has meanwhile recovered completely from the attack, consumes the offered meal with great appetite. This state of affairs, Mor's presence and Herta's unflappable confidence finally persuade Gine that she can, after all, go to town.

December 1943

Fritz Naujocks' employment in the Labour Service is terminated. He had not been taken for military service either because he has an artificial eye, or because it is discovered that he is not of 'pure race'. At any rate, the whole family is pleased that he has rejoined them for the festive season.

After his return he learns of the conditions under which the Weiß family is living. He accepts their presence with the same matter-of-factness as all the other members of his family have done right from the outset, and shows them great kindness.

Mid-December 1943

Mr Baumann has also returned home, although in his case it is only a temporary stay – he is on home leave.

He has already been informed of the Weiß family's presence through his wife's letters and has no objection; nor does he mind having to make do with one room during his short stay.

25 December 1943

After a two-year interruption, caused by the enforced wearing of the Jewish Star, the Weiß family once again visit the Fenskes on Christmas Day. Karl-Martin has no objection to also receiving Mor, because he thinks that the festivals are subject to a reduced risk.

It feels almost like the 'good old times'. A little smaller than before, standing on a low table instead of on the floor, the Christmas tree is shining in the radiance of long candles mysteriously obtained. The cake diffuses a delicious smell, and Christmas carols resound from the gramophone.

Ellen imbibes this festive atmosphere and is delighted to be able to celebrate it together with Papa. It lessens the awareness of her illegal existence in her consciousness. The Fenskes, too, have special cause for joy: Lisa's younger brother, Fritz, is visiting them while back on home leave.

The women are busy in the kitchen before dinner, the men continue their conversation in the dining room. Gine and Ellen are just on the way back when, still in the entrance hall, they overhear through the open door Fritz's account of his unit's deployment in the execution of Jews. Completely forgetting that Ellen is by her side, Gine stands stock still and continues to listen. Fritz describes the scene in great detail. He could not, and would not, take aim, and fired into the air. This led to considerable trouble with a superior officer who had noticed his conduct; but the incident had no serious consequences for him. This might have been due to the fact that he developed jaundice as a result of the excitement and had to be admitted to hospital.

Since Fritz Wolter is as opposed to the Nazis as the rest of his family, knows that Gine is Lisa's close friend and that she and her family are living in hiding, it is not surprising that he had refused to shoot helpless human beings. It is the terror of his report which overwhelms Gine and Ellen. When they enter the room with horrified expressions, Fritz realises that he was mistaken in the belief that his audience was limited to the

two men. He tries to alleviate the effects of his account. It was, of course, a most dreadful crime, but it was probably confined to a single incident. His explanation does not sound particularly convincing and cannot mitigate the horror induced by his account.

Ellen sits at the festively laid table, in sight of the Christmas tree, and the pictures of horror engraved in her mind. She listens to the conversation around her, but is unable to free her imagination of the dreadful events which Fritz reported.

31 December 1943

Naujocks do not celebrate the New Year in a particularly merry fashion, but the atmosphere is at any rate quite relaxed. They are happy to have their son at home, and he is equally glad to be with his family. They are joined by the Weiß family and the Baumanns.

The room is decorated with colourful paper streamers. Fritz plays a few jolly tunes on his accordeon, and some of those present join in.

3 January 1944

The year opens with very mild weather. It is pouring with rain.

The evening again starts with an air raid warning. The Weiß family are still with the Naujocks, and they are joined by the Baumanns. There are twelve people in the shelter, with Max, Mor annd Fritz standing in the entrance.

Mor and Max, who had both been in the First World War, usually spend the beginning of a raid in the open in order to watch what is happening in the sky. As soon as the raid becomes more intense, Gine asks her husband to come inside the shelter. If he doesn't, she simply joins him outside. This technique is invariably successful. It continues to be so tonight. Max Naujocks follows Mor into the shelter.

The attack continues to grow in intensity. It seems to concentrate on the area around Malchow. It crashes, bangs and whistles. The air seems to explode amidst the noise. Suddenly Mor shouts: 'Down!' Everybody hits the ground. Gine notices having Helga, Irmhild and Ellen underneath her. The deafening explosions continue. When the noise eventually diminishes a little, Mor asks everybody to lift up their heads and take a deep breath. Mr Baumann feels that as a serving soldier he is more experienced and should take charge of the proceedings. He therefore countermands the order and tells everybody to stay down.

'Take a deep breath,' repeats Mor. 'You don't know how soon you

may need it.' Everybody, including Mrs Baumann, follows his advice. When they lift their heads they see an enormous hole in the piled-up earthen wall. Mor doesn't let anyone return to their seats. He gropes along the walls and finds them perforated by shrapnel – especially the back wall, just as he had expected.

'Where's our Fritz?' asks Max Naujocks just then.

'I reckon he's caught one,' replies Mr Baumann.

Max and Mor go into the open and bring Fritz inside. He is wheezing and unconscious.

Herta and Gine do their best to look after him. They tap about in almost total darkness. The electric torch is out of action. The first aid box is inadequate. Fritz is bleeding heavily. Gine carefully examines him and notices that the blood comes from the head. She presses scarves against the wound. That is all one can do at present, because the second wave of aircraft are just flying over Malchow.

When the raid is over, Max and Mor carry the seriously wounded casualty outside. They put him under the small, undamaged roof of the back entrance, to protect him against the pouring rain. Gine places him on top of one of the two woollen blankets which she has brought with her into hiding and on to Malchow, and covers him up with the other one.

Max runs into the village to ask the police for help. Mor insists on accompanying him.

On the path in front of the garden the men find a torn and damaged high tension cable. Covering himself with the sleeve of his coat, Mor slings the cable across the fence. The sleeve is burned from top to bottom. He himself remains uninjured and returns to warn everybody not to touch the electrified fence. Then he follows Max, catches up with him and accompanies him to the Police Station, but does not enter it. An ambulance is ordered which calls a little later to collect Fritz.

The *Laube* presents a picture of devastation. The roof above the rooms is almost totally destroyed and the kitchen roof is also badly damaged, but still offers partial protection against the rain. The structure of the building has been badly affected.

The garden, likewise, has not escaped unscathed. A cherry tree has been uprooted by the blast of the explosion and has been hurled into the neighbouring garden.

Baumann's *Laube* has collapsed like a pack of cards, and their shelter has been crushed.

The wardrobe containing the Weiß family's clothes remains in one piece. It has been buried by the walls of the building which have fallen

on top of it, but shrapnel has penetrated it at one end and has emerged at the other, lacerating the entire contents in the process. At present, the wardrobe is inaccessible, and the destruction is such that one can't even begin to think of salvage.

At daybreak one begins with the clearing-up work. Now the full extent of the destruction becomes apparent, as well as the loss of blood suffered by Fritz. The blanket on which he lay is drenched with his blood, and it has left a large stain on the cement floor at the back entrance.

One tries to create some order out of this chaos, but lack of suitable material makes this rather difficult. Herta meanwhile supplies everyone with food. They sit in the kitchen under umbrellas and half-heartedly attempt to laugh at themselves.

The police appear by mid-morning to find out how the Naujocks are getting on and to establish the extent of the damage. The destruction has been caused by a bomb which dropped on the far side of the ditch in front of the wall facing the entrance of the shelter. The distance from the shelter to the crater is measured. It amounts to six metres. The size of the crater suggests that a ten-hundredweight bomb was involved. The officiating policeman is full of praise for the construction of the *Bunker* and thinks that all of its occupants owe their lives to the bad weather. The rain had softened up the ground to such an extent that the bomb penetrated deeply into the earth before it exploded. Fritz appears to have ducked when a splinter ricocheted from a beam at the entrance and penetrated his skull.

After inspecting the remains of the *Laube,* the official thinks that Naujocks could not possibly spend another night in it. They should go to the official shelter that evening and sleep on the camp beds provided there.

Gine goes to the Baumanns to find out how one can salvage property from the collapsed building. While she is still there, the news reaches Naujocks that Fritz has succumbed to his injuries in the hospital. The diagnosis is: 'Brain injuries caused by bomb splinters.'

Irmhild, Helga and Ellen are in the garden when they are told the terrible news. Herta is said to have collapsed in the kitchen. Ellen wants to rush to the Baumanns to inform her mother when Gine returns from there. She hurries to Herta in the kitchen, where she also finds Max and Mor. Max, who is himself deeply affected, tries to console his wife. They all try to help. The children are naturally also very sad. Everyone tries to comfort everybody else and to keep up each other's spirits.

After a while, Gine sits in a corner and cries. Max goes over to her and asks what is the matter.

'It is all this excitement', replies Gine, 'and on top of that I don't even know where we can spend the night.'

'But Gine', says Max and firmly takes her by the shoulders, 'wherever we go, there you will also be.'

The police have informed the Naujocks that they will be accommodated in the public shelter that night. That evening, the six members of the Naujocks family and the three of family Weiß go there. Gine is hidden behind Max's broad back in the camp bed, and Ellen behind that of Aunt Herta; but Mor is too big to hide behind anybody. He must therefore lie in a separate bed, fully covered with a woollen blanket. In case anybody questions his identity, Max will describe him as a cousin who is helping with the repair work. That could, of course, have dangerous consequences.

During the night, a policeman actually does appear to check whether everything is in order. He doesn't switch on the light and accepts Mr and Mrs Naujocks' fulsome thanks for the accommodation. After that he leaves, and everybody heaves a sigh of relief.

Next day, Max and Mor decide to repair the *Laube* to such an extent that it becomes habitable. They actually manage to achieve it.

The Baumanns' *Laube* is destroyed beyond repair. Mrs Baumann finds alternative accommodation, while her husband returns to his unit. His leave was in any case coming to an end.

Max and Herta regard it as natural that Mor, Gine and Ellen should move in with them. The daughters Trudchen (Gertrud) and Gisela must therefore share a bed. The one now vacated by them is put at the disposal of the Weiß family.

Mor and Gine lie facing in one direction, Ellen in the other. The only one who can manage to sleep in this crowded condition is Ellen.

Next night, Ellen is provided with new accommodation. Two wicker chairs are placed together to provide alternative sleeping accommodation for her. They prove somewhat short for a girl who is nearly ten years old. In the morning, they are therefore extended by the addition of two chairs. This construction is now regarded as final, and Ellen sleeps magnificently on it.

Beginning of 1944

Karl-Martin Fenske had meanwhile had to pay the price for his upright conduct. His employees were gradually called up for military service. Finally only twelve remained, and he was forced to close down his enterprise on the pretext that it was no longer viable.

He himself was forced to serve full-time in the Police, in which he

had previously only been on duty on a part-time basis. He must also spend many nights in the police barracks near the Alexanderplatz.

Following the closing down of her husband's enterprise, Lisa becomes liable for directed work. She is now employed at the Alte-Jacob-Straße, not far from where her own business used to be located.

1 March 1944

Max and Herta have their Silver Wedding today. As recently as the end of last year Herta had planned a big celebration and had bought a silver garland for her hair and a matching twig for Max's buttonhole. That joyful anticipation had been destroyed by Fritz's death; but eventually Herta's courage and energy had once again prevailed. She wants to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of a marriage in which she and Max have created such a firm and fulfilling communal life. Her daughters, too, need a little cheering up. She therefore invites a few close relatives and one or two neighbours.

Gine is responsible for everything to do with baking, which consists of several varieties of pudding tarts and fancy cakes. She also gives a hand with the other preparations.

In the past, she had often composed poems in honour of special occasions, for recital by Ellen. Gine wants to do this again here; but Ellen now feels a little more grown up and doesn't wish to be a mere mouthpiece for maternal poetry. She wants to have a go at producing rhymes herself. Gine raises no objections, and so Ellen's first poem is born. In its original form it begins with the following words:

> My wish for the dear Silver Wedding Pair is
> That it may live a hundred-and-twenty years,
> But may the second half of their lives
> Give them more joy, happiness and health ...

Gine doesn't like the 'tapeworm-word' represented by 'Silberhochzeitsehepaar'. She also objects to the calculation on which the second half of their lives was based, since Max is only fifty years old, and Herta just forty-five. Gine therefore suggests the following opening lines:

> My wish for the dear Silver Pair is
> That it may live for a hundred years ...

Ellen is not in favour of this shortening of the life expectancy of Uncle Max and Aunt Herta. She also objects to the interference with her literary achievement. But in the end she reluctantly gives in.

Meanwhile, the great day has arrived. Herta wears the silver garland in her hair, and the silver twig adorns Max's buttonhole. The celebrants, the children and the guests are dressed in their festive best.

Ellen recites her poem amidst everybody's great applause for her first opus. Aunt Herta is greatly moved, and Uncle Max also enjoys it enormously.

It is a blessing that Herta is so fully occupied that she has little time for reflection. It is more difficult for Max. He faces no special duties today. Gine finds him standing apart from the others, brooding pensively in a corner. She says nothing, but merely squeezes his arm a little. He understands this gesture, smiles sadly and says: 'You know, we are very fortunate to have the four girls, but I do miss the boy so very much!'

Spring 1944

The Fenske family suffers a tragic blow. Fritz is reported missing in the Crimea.

Everyone is greatly depressed. When Gine and Ellen visit them, Ellen, as usual, joins Aunt Hedwig in her room. Her old-fashioned chest of drawers often yields unexpected treasures. From the top drawer she now produces a tiny package, wrapped in tissue paper and a glass jar filled with cotton wool. The tissue paper reveals a fair baby's curl, which his mother kept as a memento of little Fritz, whose hair later turned dark; and, wrapped up in cotton wool, the jar contains the first milk-tooth which Fritz lost.

Aunt Hedwig now turns increasingly to the laying of cards, which invariably seem to reach the same prediction: 'Fritz is far away from her and tries to return – but the Queen of Spades is preventing his efforts.'

Fritz Wolter never returns.

27 April 1944

Ellen's tenth birthday is celebrated modestly with the Naujocks. Mutti has sewn a summer dress out of a cloth remainder, and Papa has gone into town to buy her a present.

She just happens to stand in the front garden when her father returns. With a secretive smile he hands her an oblong box. She opens it and finds a necklace made of white porcelain pearls whose large front pieces have a

slight pink hue and are embossed with a relief. Ellen is overcome with joy by this jewel, and her father is delighted by the success of his choice.

End of April 1944

The approach of spring is clearly noticeable. The buds on the trees are opening up, many spring flowers are beginning to blossom and the bushes are starting to carry fruit, though as yet unripe. Helga is of the opinion that gooseberries are ripe when one can see their pips from the outside. That, in fact, is the case, and so the children pick the fruit and eat it. But Helga's horticultural expertise doesn't seem to be entirely reliable. The berries turn out to be hard, sour and altogether unpalatable. Nevertheless, she wants to continue with her experiment, but Irmhild and Ellen refuse. They suggest that they should wait a little while until the fruit is really ripe. It shouldn't take all that much longer.

Beginning of May 1944

Mrs Baumann has dropped in for a brief chat with Herta. She soon returns to the village, where she has now found new accommodation. Herta, going to the shops, and Gine, who is on her way to the Jorams accompany her. Ellen remains at Malchow today.

On arriving at the village Street they meet Police Officer Bär on his bicycle. Suddenly he dismounts from his bike and approaches them.

He first turns to Herta: 'Oh, Mrs Naujocks,' he says, I've heard a rumour that you are hiding a Jewish family with a child.'

'What, *us*?' exclaims Herta in utmost astonishment. 'That can only be a confusion with my cousin, who came over to help us when our Fritz was killed.'

'And you', says the policeman, turning to Mrs Baumann, 'are also thought to have hidden a Jewish family.' Gine holds her breath for a terrified second. What is Mrs Baumann, who was never informed of her true identity, going to say?

'These were also relatives, who came to help me salvage belongings from my wrecked *Laube*', replies Mrs Baumann with calm confidence.

'Well, that's alright, then', says Mr Bär, 'I just wanted to warn you.' Then he remounts his bike and continues on his way.

He has neither asked Gine for her name, nor demanded to see her identity documents.

Mor and Ellen are standing in the kitchen, immersed in conversation, when Gine rushes in.

'Away!' she screams, tears Ellen's coat from its peg and pushes her into it, grabs Mor's overcoat and throws it into his arms, 'Let's get away quickly!'

Both want to know what has happened. Gine merely repeats, 'Away! Not along the street – keep to the fields!' It is evident to both that something menacing must have happened. They don't ask any further questions, run through the garden, jump over the small ditch, which presents no obstacle for Mor and is crossed by Ellen every day during games with the children. Gine, however, is totally out of practice, stumbles, falls and sprains her back. She refuses to rest, although she suffers considerable pain. While they continue their escape across the fields, she tells her family what has happened. They run to the edge of the village, catch a bus into town and go on to the Jorams, who were in any case expecting to see Gine. Their daughter, Mrs R., once again puts her unused flat at their disposal.

With Herta, who did not consider the danger as imminent as she did, Gine had arranged a future meeting during their hurried return to the *Laube*. They agreed to let a few days pass to find out whether the meeting with Mr Bär would have any consequences. On an agreed date Gine and Ellen should then pay an experimental visit to Malchow.

First half of May 1944

Both of them begin their journey on the appointed day. To their great surprise, they find Irmhild waiting for them at the Buschallee bus stop.

'Mutti is waiting for you over there', she says and points to a small Café on the opposite side of the Berliner Allee. 'I have to go to the Rennbahnstraße to collect Helga, who is waiting for you there. We just didn't know where you would be getting off.'

It is evident that something must have happened. Herta sits in the Café, greets them in her usual, equable manner and tells them that during the night following their escape from Malchow a house search had taken place. According to her account it took the following form:

> Mr Bär, still on duty, knocks on the front door and, before anybody opens, addresses Mr Naujocks in the fraternal 'Du': 'Max, I have to conduct a house search because you are suspected of hiding Jews. Just take your time getting dressed – I'm not in a hurry.'
>
> He neither watches the back door, through which one could escape, nor the garden, where one could easily hide behind the bushes. On the contrary, he suggests to Max, when he opens the door, not to switch on the light,

because he doesn't want to wake the children. He has a pocket torch which would be quite adequate. With that he shines into the beds and finally says:

'You really have no Jews hidden here. That's exactly what I thought!'

And so he departs.

Under one of the beds there stands a suitcase which contains all the personal documents which Gine had taken with her into her illegal existence. It includes the three identity cards overprinted with the large 'J'.

The suitcase now stands under the table, next to Herta and filled up by her with the clothing belonging to the Weiß family. Ellen is very sad that she can't come to Malchow any more, but Aunt Herta cheers her up: they will, of course, meet regularly and she will, whenever possible, also bring along Irmhild or Helga, or even both, and they will also occasionally organise an excursion. These plans, and the prospect that she would not be cut off from contacts with the children has the effect of raising Ellen's morale.

Finally, Herta reaches into her handbag, passes a set of ration cards across the table and says quite casually to Gine:

'I've brought these along for you so that you are at any rate provided with the most important necessities. From now on I'll let you have a set every month.'

Gine doesn't trust her ears. 'But you can't do that', she says. 'You need this food for yourselves!'

Now it is Herta's turn to be very astonished. What difference can it make whether one gets five or six sets of ration cards? As far as she is concerned, it just isn't noticeable.

Gine is torn between her scruples of depriving the Naujocks family of some of their rations, and the temptation of gaining a secure source of food supplies for her own family.

'Go on, now!' urges Herta encouragingly.

As Gine reaches for the cards, she suddenly stops again. 'But Herta', she says, not trusting her eyes now, 'these are children's ration cards!'

'So what?', asks Herta as if she had just been accused of handing over an inferior present.

'You know exactly what I mean! On holidays, children are entitled to extra sweets, and I'm not going to deprive yours of them', declares Gine with determination.

'My children quite often get something to nibble, while Ellen gets nothing', replies Herta, and adds with well-pretended impatience that it's now high time for Gine to put the ration cards away.

And that is the end of the discussion.

Middle of May 1944

Life at Jorams is just like it was in pre-Malchow times. For Gine it amounts to heavy labour, combined with humiliation; for Mor it is even worse as he is confined to one room in which he spends brooding for hours on end.

Gine begs him to leave the house as little as possible because military controls are becoming more intense. When he goes out, either to obtain food, or just to enter the street, she sends Ellen with him whenever possible. Although constantly worried about her daughter, she remembers the dream she had during the unforgettable night of 15 November 1941, when they had been earmarked for their evacuation, and since when she attributes protective powers for the family to Ellen. Gine therefore feels more reassured when Mor has Ellen by his side.

While returning to their flat after a walk, they are caught in an air raid. They seek shelter in a public *Tiefbunker* in the Bernauer Straße, deep under the market place.

Following the sounding of the All Clear, a loudspeaker announcement is broadcast, requiring all men to pass through a military control. They are ordered to present their identity cards to Military Police lining both sides of the exit, while women are told to leave through the middle. Ellen is terrified. Mor grasps her hand and talks to her soothingly while they slowly ascend the stairs from the bottom, engulfed in a dense crowd. When they reach the last section of the stairs, Ellen sees the square of bright daylight surrounded by the steel helmets of the soldiers who are controlling the men emerging from the *Bunker.*

Mor releases her hand and whispers: 'If they stop me, you just carry on!' Ellen doesn't answer. She thinks: 'I shall most certainly not go on without him!'

The bright square of daylight steadily gets bigger as they ascend. The steel helmets are sprawling on both sides and spreading even to the middle of the exit. There is no escape. The square gets ever larger; and still they advance, step by step. The square becomes huge. The steel helmets are swarming. One cannot possibly get past them unseen. And still they mount upwards, step by step. Now the moment has come – there is no escape. The top of the staircase has been reached. Controlling soldiers are everywhere. Mor and Ellen slowly advance through the middle of the crowd. Surely it is impossible: the soldiers must notice them! And still they proceed, merging with the crowd streaming out of the *Bunker*, across

the market place. They reach the Brunnenstraße, cross it and turn off to the right.

Mor once again grasps Ellen's hand firmly and reassuringly in his. She suddenly begins to shed liberating tears.

Second half of May 1944

The horror of the bunker episode still dominates their minds; but the idleness to which he is subjected is so depressing for Mor that he is constantly tempted to venture outside again. After the latest event, Gine's concern for her husband's safety is greater than ever, but she can't help but sympathise with his predicament and therefore doesn't oppose occasional outings which only take him to well-known and reliable people; but she tries, even more than previously, to ensure that he is accompanied by Ellen.

They are both travelling together in a tram, when he joyfully greets a tall, imposing woman, accompanied by a smaller, chubby one. They are obviously old acquaintances. While Ellen watches the encounter with some surprise, the little chubby one, with a pretty face, presses a pointed, conical paper bag into her hand. It is filled with sweets. Ellen is unsure whether she is merely meant to hold it, or whether it is a present, and therefore hangs on to the bag without saying a word. An elderly woman, with educational ambitions, urges her to behave properly and to express her thanks when presented with a gift. The small, chubby one doesn't worry about it. She tells Ellen that the sweets are intended for her. Ellen thanks her courteously but also shyly, because she does not quite grasp the situation.

They all get out and continue their conversation in the street. Mor's acquaintance apparently enjoys his confidence. She introduces her friend, Charlotte Kinder, and adds that they could speak quite frankly in her company. Her fiancé had been incarcerated on political grounds in Sachsenhausen. Mor therefore tells her that he and his family live illegally. His acquaintance, Mrs Rich, invites him, his wife and Ellen to visit her. Mor accepts the invitation.

Gine reacts to the news with caution and treats Mor's assurance about Mrs Rich's reliability with reservations; but eventually, and contrary to her usual habits, she allows herself to be convinced. Since it concerns one of her husband's former girl friends, she is also interested in her looks. Mor hesitates, because he is not very good at describing people's appearances, but Ellen's reaction is spontaneous: 'She is big, broad and has a moon-like face', she declares. Mor protests. Although his affair lies twenty years back, and it was not 'serious', he doesn't want to have a reputation of courting a girl with a 'moon' face.

Ellen insists: Mrs Rich *has* a moon face; and her mother finds great satisfaction in this view.

On the appointed day, all three visit Ellen Rich in her flat in the Große Frankfurter Straße. Her husband Emil is serving at the front. Her flat is shared with her mother, Mrs Hase. She also has a black, long-haired dachshund named 'Purzel'. It is a kind of children's substitute for her.

One talks about this and that, during which Gine can't help mentioning that the choice of Ellen's name was entirely left to her discretion and had nothing to do with Mor.

Although this is a fact, Gine doesn't normally regard it as a subject for conversation. Ellen's fortuitous sharing of her first name with Mrs Rich, however, assumes an unusual significance. The clarification of this point is therefore important for Gine, and having done it somehow has a liberating effect.

Both women gradually develop good relations with each other. Ellen Rich has every sympathy with the Weiß family's present living conditions and repeats her invitation to them for the following week.

During their next visit they meet a Mr Piefke, who is fully informed of their situation.

Gerhard Piefke is a nice-looking, friendly man, in his late thirties who, with his wife Edith and daughters Marianne and Anita, has been transferred to Hirschberg, in Silesia. That is where his employers, a war-reserved firm, had been moved. His two-roomed flat at the Kottbusser Damm, in Neukölln, is therefore currently standing empty. He himself is now on a visit to Berlin for only a few days.

He would be leaving again in two days' time, he says; and turning quite unceremoniously to Mor and Gine, he says that there is no reason why they shouldn't move in. They could, of course, also use everything in it. He would leave the keys with Ellen Rich.

Soon afterwards he says good-bye, because he still has to attend to various other things. In his wake he leaves a family which is completely overtaken by surprise and overwhelmed with joy.

End of May 1944

Mor, Gine and Ellen move into the flat on the Kottbusser Damm, consisting of living and bedroom, kitchen, bath and entrance hall. Once again they live like a family in their 'own home' and can hardly grasp their good fortune.

Herta Naujocks' ration cards ensure a 'secure' basis for their food

supplies. Moreover, Gine can earn modest additional supplies in payment for her needlework.

In addition to all this, Ellen Rich, who is employed in the Telephone Exchange, offers to place her postal identification card at Gine's disposal. Although it doesn't carry the same validity as an Identity Card, it stands a chance of being accepted during a fleeting control. She would then report the loss of her identification paper and apply for a new document. One problem, however, is that the postal card carries a photograph – in this case, Ellen Rich's likeness.

Gine tells the Fenskes about this good but unfortunately not practicable opportunity of getting hold of an identity document. Suddenly, Karl-Martin produces an astounding idea, which reveals inspiration as well as courage: from his police station he will get hold of two instruments – one for removing Mrs Rich's photo from her identity card, and one for stapling Gine's picture into its place.

Gine and Ellen call on him in his closed-down factory, which is not far from the Police Headquarters, and he replaces Mrs Rich's photo with Gine's so skilfully that it isn't noticeable.

But the card bears a stamp in such a way that part of it occupies a corner of the photo. Gine's picture therefore lacks a section of the stamp. Karl-Martin finds a solution for this problem, too. He takes a normal copying-pencil and retraces the missing section of the circle with his usual accuracy. Then he replaces the missing letters 'F e' which begin the word *Fernmeldeamt.*

The imitation is now perfect. Although it wouldn't pass a detailed examination, it escapes detection at first sight.

First days of June 1944

Family Weiß are now living at Kottbusser Damm under the name of Krüger. As arranged with Mr Piefke, Gine tells the other residents that they were distant relatives and had recently been bombed out. Her husband had not been called up because he was unfit.

She tries, however, to keep such conversations to a minimum. Nevertheless it seem advisable to give some explanations to the caretaker woman who lives on the floor above them. And the two very kind elderly ladies from the ground floor are also a bit curious.

6 June 1944

The news of the invasion fills Mor and Gine with indescribable joy.

The end of the war, and with it that of Nazi rule, appears to have moved into tangible reach.

First half of June 1944

Gine develops a toothache. Using a false name, she visits a neighbouring dentist. They begin to discuss the war situation and instinctively feel that they share a common approach.

The dentist is of the opinion that further developments will not only be determined by the invasion, but that there was also 'something going on from the inside'. Gine immediately reports this conversation to Mor, but neither is able to reach a firm conclusion on these hints.

Mid-June 1944

Arnold loses his hideout at Hessenwinkel. Mrs Rich can arrange new accommodation for him with a woman friend of hers.

26 June 1944

Mor is going to Mrs Greiser. On this occasion he doesn't take Ellen with him – probably because it is already quite late. When he eventually returns, he is full of enthusiasm. At Elli Greiser's he had met a woman who had learnt from her that he was a Jew and that he was living illegally. She had shown great sympathy and said that she could get hold of some butter for him. This was an exceptional rarity, which he particularly wanted to obtain for Ellen. He had therefore made an appointment to call on her the next evening.

Gine is appalled about this contact with a complete stranger. She implores him not to go: they now have their own home and the security provided by Herta Naujocks' ration cards. Moreover, she earns additional food through her sewing, and Mrs Greiser also supplies things from time to time.

The end of the war seems to be imminent, and so it really isn't worth while to run such a risk. All common sense argues against such action; moreover, all her feelings rebel against his project. She continues to beg him to desist, but he is not prepared to give in.

27 June 1944

The family spend the afternoon having coffee with Ellen Rich.

Following this visit, Mor intends to call on the strange woman, who had introduced herself as Betty P.

Towards the evening he leaves. Ellen says good-bye to her father and then returns to the doll's dress which she is sewing just now. He comes back once again to give her another kiss. She feels a little inconvenienced, as she had already said good-bye to him. Gine follows him onto the stairs and calls out 'Be careful!' after him. And so he departs.

Gine and Ellen remain at Mrs Rich's for supper and then go home. Mor is not there. Gine sends Ellen to bed.

Later that evening she wakes her up again. 'Papa has not come back', she says.

Ellen screams: 'I AM AFRAID!' Gine has never heard her scream like that before. Altogether, it is contrary to her normal behaviour. Whenever her father had gone out by himself and was late returning, it was always Ellen who had soothed her fears.

Gine supposes that they might have misunderstood each other and that, instead of going to the Kottbusser Damm, he might have returned to Ellen Rich. In that event, however, it is not clear why he did not continue his journey home when he discovered his mistake. In any case, Gine now decides to revisit Mrs Rich. As a precaution, she wants to leave a message for Mor. She grabs a piece of paper, but in her excitement can't find a pencil. She therefore uses her lipstick for a short message, which she leaves on the table.

Mrs Rich is appalled when she is told that Mor has not returned home. Although it is now very late, Gine decides to go to Betty P. in order to find out what has happened. She leaves Ellen with Mrs Rich. When she returns, she reports that the woman seemed very strange to her. She had insisted that Mor had not called. Moreover, she had declared that she was very interested to discover what had happened. She therefore wanted Gine to bring her up to date, and this was to take place tomorrow at two o'clock in the afternoon – neither earlier nor later, because she had to fit it into her crowded time-table. For Gine it is a foregone conclusion not to go; partly, because she is indifferent to the woman's interest, partly – and this is the most important reason – because she is suspicious of her behaviour.

Gine, Ellen, Mrs Rich and Mrs Hase examine every conceivable cause which might have prevented Mor from returning. Perhaps he suddenly felt unwell; or he might have suffered a minor accident and been admitted to a hospital. But which hospital, and under what name?

It is already late, and Mrs Rich regards it as natural that Gine and Ellen should spend the remainder of the night with her. It is likely, in any case, that public transport has stopped running.

Mrs Hase thinks that there is no point in staying up. They all lie down. Ellen falls asleep and wakes up at dawn. She remembers how her father was late coming home a little while ago, after her mother had sent her to bed. When she woke up during that night she had gone into the corridor, found his hat and overcoat there and returned to bed with her mind at rest.

Now she gets up and goes to the hall, full of confidence that her father's things will be hanging there today. But they are not. Now she knows that he has not returned. The shock is dreadful.

From early morning onwards they debate what to do next in order to find out what has happened to Mor. Telephoning the hospitals near the route he followed on his way to Betty P. seems the most obvious solution; but under what name should one enquire about him? It is a fact that he carries a workers' log book on his person, which Max Naujocks had given him to cover all eventualities, but it seems doubtful that he would try to use it and thereby endanger Max. On the other hand, he could hardly call himself 'Krüger', or use any other name without being able to produce an appropriate identity paper.

Ellen Rich suggests that they should just wait a little longer. It is the most difficult of all solutions, but they have to face the fact that it is impossible to come up with anything more sensible; and the uncertainty also gives tentative rise to the hope that it may all be due to a harmless explanation. For some strange reason they all share the feeling that any message would reach Gine here. Mrs Rich therefore suggest to Gine that she and Ellen should stay with her for the time being, and Gine gratefully accepts this offer.

One or two days later a Mr Kirstein appears. He is a 'Helper' – a Jew from a 'mixed marriage', who has been forced to perform this duty at the Gestapo's prison located in the Schulstraße, within the Jewish Hospital. He reports that Mor has been caught by the Gestapo and delivers a letter from him, together with the money he had on him, and his wedding ring.

Gine sits in front of the ring, crying. Mrs Rich has not introduced her, and Mr Kirstein evidently doesn't want to know her name; but he tends to address her, speaking of Mrs Weiß in the third person, and so delivers his message for her in this form. He also seems to regard Ellen's presence as obvious, although he never mentions her by name.

Mor and Gine had divided the remaining savings between them, and had always carried them on their persons ever since they started to live in hiding. Mor hid his share in the inner pocket of his jacket, Gine in a specially sewn-in pocket of her suspender.

Mor's share now lies on the table, less the amount he had paid to the messenger. Gine is overcome with gratitude and appreciation for Mr Kirstein and wants to give him a further reward. He firmly declines: he had already tried to refuse Mr Weiß's money and had only accepted it to pacify him, but he would not take another Pfennig. Mrs Weiß would need the money for herself and her child. He also assured her that he would continue to convey messages to and fro.

Gine opens the letter in front of her. After the opening words it continues:

'Mrs Betty P., black haired, has brought me to the place where I now find myself!'

Gine folds the letter. She will read it later. She will read it again very many times. The most pressing task now is to find out whether, and if possible how, one could help Mor.

Mr Kirstein sees two possibilities:

1. Mrs Weiß should try to apply for an exchange certificate to Palestine. The German 'Templers' still living there want to return to their home country and are only exchangeable against Jews. As things now stand, traffic in both directions has ceased, but persons who could be registered would not be deported. He knows people who have been registered for the exchange and who are now kept in the Schulstraße without being sent away.

The exchange is arranged either by the Swiss or the Swedish Embassies, or possibly by both of them – he is not quite sure. He advises that the Swedes should be tried first, since, as far as he knows, the Swiss Embassy is being watched in an attempt to catch another illegally living woman and her child.

2. An attempt to escape from a hospital ward under Gestapo control stands a reasonable chance of success. Mor would be transferred to a ward if he developed a fever while detained at the Schulstraße. He himself is prepared to smuggle malaria injections to Mor.

Next morning, Gine and Ellen make their way to the Swedish Embassy. On arrival, Gine requests a personal interview with a senior official.

They are shown into a room in which a tall, slim, middle-aged man rises from the chair behind his desk and goes to meet them. Gine explains that she is a Jewess, lives in hiding, and that her husband was arrested by the Gestapo a few days ago. The diplomat's face expresses his personal sympathy.

'Please, Madam, do take a seat', he says and points to a small easy chair.

Ellen is speechless. She has never seen anything like this in her life!

You attend a public office, declare that you are Jewish and are invited to take a seat – and, to cap it all, in such a courteous form! And calling a Jewess 'Madam'! It is a form of address which she has never heard before, and which sounds very grand to her.

But disappointment follows promptly. The friendly diplomat informs her mother in his charming way, and with great regret, that he is not in a position to help her.

He knows about the exchange arrangements, but these matters were being dealt with exclusively by the Swiss Embassy.

Gine and Ellen therefore go on to see the Swiss representatives. They are received in the large entrance hall, but they can't get beyond it. They are told it was correct to assume that the Swiss Embassy was responsible for dealing with such applications, but the gentleman concerned with them was currently engaged. Gine wants to wait for him. That, she is told, is out of the question. Any one of his colleagues could record her appropriate details. A member of the Embassy staff in due course performs this task, and at the end of this procedure Gine and Ellen are firmly shown off the premises.

Both of them doubt whether this action is likely to achieve anything. They feel dreadfully helpless.

Gine pays a short visit to the Kottbusser Damm to change her underwear and take a few clothes for herself and Ellen to Mrs Rich's flat. The message, scribbled by her with her lipstick, which she had left on the table, glares at her as if painted in blood. She grasps it in horror, tears it up and throws it away.

She now gives serious consideration to the thought that she should voluntarily surrender herself to the Gestapo in order to share Mor's fate. She therefore travels with Ellen to Lisa to discuss the matter. She also asks her whether, in such an event, she would take care of Ellen.

Lisa assures her that she would always assume responsibility for Ellen whenever the need might arise. Gine knows that she can rely on this, and that Lisa would never allow anyone to challenge her decision concerning Ellen – not even Karl-Martin, who would probably not want to do this anyway. Lisa nevertheless strongly advises against such a step.

Ellen is beside herself with anxiety and begs her mother not to surrender herself. Gine finally gives up her plan.

She revives it just once more when she discusses it with Mr Kirstein. He, too, is totally opposed to this project. Even if it were to fail stopping Mr Weiß's deportation, he could bear it more easily in the knowledge that his wife and child were in safety.

Mrs Rich suddenly comes up with the suggestion that Ellen should produce a hand-made present and send it to her father at the Gestapo detention centre. Gine is somewhat doubtful, because she thinks it might increase the danger in which Mor finds himself. Ellen likewise doesn't feel entirely happy about this; but as Mrs Rich gets rather disgruntled, Gine finally agrees, with some hesitation. Mrs Rich now cuts two matching heart shapes out of a piece of black cloth and passes them to Ellen, together with various coloured pieces of felt, sewing-silk and embroidery cotton and asks her to turn it into a small pouch. Ellen sews some of the felt pieces onto one side of the heart, stitches the two halves together and lines them with the embroidery cotton. As she can't quite see what her father might do with an empty cloth pouch, she also composes a poem, which she inserts.

It says:

This heart I give to you!
Because it is my very own.
It should bring you nought but joy
And keep you from all fear.
May't bring my thoughts to you,
And spell them out,
Each one by one.
(The two next lines cannot be recalled)
Now you'll know
What this heart is meant to do,
And that it should preserve you
From all grief.

Original German version:
Dieses Herz, das schenk ich Dir,
Denn es ist das Herz von mir.
Dieses Herz soll Dich nur freuen
Und jeden Ärger von Dir scheuen.
Es soll meine Gedanken zu Dir tragen
Und Dir jeden einzeln sagen.
*
Nun weißt Du ja, wozu das Herz bestimmt,
Und daß es Dir jeden Kummer nimmt.

Mr Kirstein delivers this heart with the same reliability as the letters.

Gine has meanwhile obtained the address of a woman doctor who might be prepared to hand over the required malaria injections. Accompanied by Ellen, she goes to see Dr Heinrich, whose practice is

located near the Neanderstraße Underground Station. She reveals that she is Jewish and describes the situation in which she finds herself. The doctor thereupon hands over a carton containing several capsules, together with the appropriate number of syringes. Mr Kirstein smuggles them into the Schulstraße.

In his subsequent letter Mor reveals that he had tried to inject himself, but that the needle had broken off. He regards this as an omen not to try this approach, and that he would instead prefer 'to have a look at the landscape as a healthy person'. This is a coded message in which he indicates that he will try to escape during the transport.

13 July 1944

Mor has been deported to Auschwitz. Mr Kirstein delivers his farewell letters. He also brings a letter from a fellow-prisoner who tries to console Gine by describing their life together. His message ends with the words: *Er war ein Kamerad wie selten einer!* – 'He was one of the best comrades I ever had!'

15 July 1944

Gine and Ellen return to their flat at the Kottbusser Damm. Mor's absence is almost physically tangible and the depressed atmosphere descends like a dreadful burden on both of them. Their conversation is almost entirely confined to him, and they try to reinforce their confidence by reassuring each other that he is so fit and strong that he can surely survive his detention at the camp.

That evening, Ellen moves from her usual sleeping place on the sofa in the living room to Mor's bed and lies next to Gine. This proximity has a soothing effect on both of them in this situation.

Contrary to normal customs, Ellen is allowed to read in bed for as long as she wants. She has a big volume of *Deutsche Sagen* – German Sagas – which Mrs Rich presented to her recently, reads the same story again and again without understanding its meaning in her present state, and eventually gives up. Tonight, she prefers to talk to her mother.

From now on, Ellen avoids the expression, 'I am afraid!' Her fluency enables her to substitute words like 'being scared'.

Gine meets the caretaker woman on the stairs and tells her that her husband has now been called up, despite his poor state of health. That is why she and Ellen had temporarily gone to stay with friends.

20 July 1944

Mrs Rich and Mrs Hase want to go away for a few days and have therefore asked Gine and Ellen to move temporarily back into their flat to look after dachshund 'Purzel'. They travel by public transport to the Große Frankfurter Straße.

As they are about to leave the Underground Station Alexanderplatz, a strange woman rushes up to them from the opposite direction. She grasps Gine by the arm in a state of extreme agitation and asks, 'Have you already heard the news – an assassination attempt on the *Führer?*' 'No', replies the baffled Gine, 'and what has happened?' The woman can hardly master her excitement and exclaims in tears: 'Providence has protected him!'

That is all they need!

Gine and Ellen rush to Mrs Rich. On the way they speculate whether this news is merely a rumour; and *if* the assassination attempt has actually taken place, whether it has succeeded and whether one should try to keep it secret.

The news comes as a total surprise to Mrs Rich. They all dash to the radio. One newscast follows another, and with each one the situation becomes clearer: an assassination attempt has taken place, and it has ended in failure.

They speak of Mor, who is on a transport to Auschwitz, of Emil Rich, who is fighting at the front, and of Gine's relations who, she believes, are still alive in concentration camps. They also think of the brave people who have risked their lives to put an end to this evil, and of their families. Why, on earth, did this attempt have to fail so cruelly?

Second half of July 1944

Mrs Rich and her mother have left.

Purzel is a good-natured little dog, who has got quite used to Gine and Ellen. He doesn't mind staying behind in their company.

But he is mortally afraid of alarms and, contrary to regulations, had always been taken into the air raid shelter by Mrs Rich. For this purpose she had sewn a specially designed cloth shoulder bag in which he was then hidden. When she said, 'Come, Purzel, we go "bunkering",' he would stand there, trembling, and wait to be picked up and put into the bag, which was then covered with a loose, soft top. Mrs Rich carried the bag in such a way that it hung horizontally around her neck and was suspended on her chest

This now becomes Gine's task and fills her and Ellen with considerable

tension, because they fear that Purzel may be discovered. In Mrs Rich's case it would only result in a warning and perhaps some further inconvenience. In theirs it would lead to a disclosure of their identity, But under given conditions, Gine could not refuse Mrs Rich's request.

Purzel reacts to Gine's invitation to go 'bunkering' in exactly the same way as he does to his mistress's. He also knows that, once he is in the shelter, he must not move, because there is something taboo about it. It all seems to be going without a hitch.

On the evening before Mrs Rich's return, Gine, Ellen and Purzel are once again seeking shelter in the *Tiefbunker* at the Alexanderplatz. They are sitting on a bench in one of the rooms into which the shelter is divided. Suddenly a woman sitting next to Gine screams: 'A rat! There's a rat here!' Gine suspects what has happened. She reaches under the seat and pushes Purzel's damp nose back into the pouch.

Meanwhile the panic has spread to the remainder of the room. Although bombs are exploding outside, and nobody knows whether they will find their home intact, most of the women present are terrified by the thought that there might be rats among them. Nearly all of them jump onto the benches and babble excitedly. A shelter warden comes in and wants to know what the noise is all about. He's not altogether convinced by what he is told and looks under the benches with a critical mien. Gine and Ellen hold their breath. They dread the risk that, in his search for rats, he might move all pieces of luggage.

At this very moment salvation comes from the side opposite. A woman is convinced that she has seen a rat running out of the room and into the corridor. 'Well, that's it', says the warden with a relieved voice, 'now you ladies can sit down again.' He adds that he will continue to look into this matter.

30 July 1944

Ellen writes a poem for her mother in an effort to console her. It reads:

BE LIKE THE SUMMER
The Original is reproduced on pp. 423–5

1.
Oh, my dear Mummy,
You should not always be sad.

2.
The summer works in every corner
As if he had a thousand hands.

3.
The sun helps him busily -
  Now you must not be sad either,
Because it is best
  If the three of you
Work together.

4.
Because, if you are so sad,
  A cloud will soon appear
In the blue sky.

5.
And when it has arrived,
  Others will follow quickly.

6.
The clouds will blot out the sunshine,
  And the summer can't achieve anything
On his own.
  That's why you must always
Be cheerful.

7.
Because, if you forget it
  After summer's work is done,

8.
There will be rain,
  And everything will get wet -
The beautiful flowers
  And the fresh green grass.

9.
Now you will think:
  They all need rain,
The tree, the grass,
  The tulip and the carnation.
Otherwise they will all wither.

10.
But if there is rain,
  There will also be puddles,
And the flowers,
  The meadows and the lawns
Will sink into the mud.

II.
But above all remember
To take care of yourself
And not to wither yourself.
You can believe me,
My dear Mummy.

Beginning of August 1944

Gine and Ellen return to the Kottbusser Damm. This time it is simpler than on the first occasion. They have already lived through the dreadful experience of coming home without Mor, and in some ways actually feel relieved to escape their immediate dependence on Mrs Rich and to be able to return to their own 'four walls'.

Both share the feeling of having to assume responsibility for each other. Gine considers it necessary to fill Ellen's father's place as well, while Ellen is determined to assume some of her father's duties. A visible symbol is her cleaning of the shoes. It was something which Mor used to perform for the whole family.

Altogether, Ellen now becomes Gine's partner, the person with whom she discusses everything, regardless of what the subject may be. Even before now she used to describe Ellen as 'so sensible'; now she says: 'Ellen is really grown up.' Ellen considers these remarks as essentially correct and tries to put right any childish inadequacies which she detects, so that she lives up to the expectations placed in her.

Since Mor's arrest, Gine has become considerably more nervous than she already was; but she displays an astonishing patience in continuing her daughter's education. She does this even more intensively than before – probably, because she now has more time at her disposal. She teaches her German grammar and orthography, does arithmetic, recites from the wealth of literary works which she knows by heart, like Schiller's *Glocke* and *Bürgschaft,* parts of *Wilhelm Tell,* Goethe's *Erlkönig,* poems from Ludwig Uhland and much else. But she criticises Ellen's handwriting. No one could have imagined that during her two years of regular schooling she had gained a 'Very Good' mark. Ellen takes the view that, for the time being, good writing was quite unnecessary. She would regain her former accomplishment as soon as she returned to school. It is still not clear whether this deterioration of her handwriting was due to carelessness or to the experiences through which she had passed.

At any rate, Ellen loves reading, and does it a great deal. Mr Piefke had given her special permission to browse through all books belonging

to his daughter Marianne, which include many so-called 'girls' books'. Ellen frequently reads aloud to her mother, who listens patiently; but she also quite often withdraws into a solitary corner accompanied by one of the books.

Her favourite volume is entitled 'Kommerzienrats Olly'.

> The heroine bearing the book's title is the duty-conscious daughter of a widowed commercial counsellor. Her dress is always buttoned up to her neck, and her attire is altogether rather unfashionable, because she has no time for trivialities. Her hair is severely parted at the centre and piled up on top of her head.
>
> Despite ample household staff, she assumes responsibility for all essential domestic duties. She loves human beings, animals and plants. This shows itself in the way she cares for everyone and she always waters the flowers around her.
>
> Surprisingly enough, most people in her environment misunderstand her, while her younger, very lively but also very lazy sister is generally popular. A young man of good character, whose vision of essential virtues is temporarily dimmed, courts the younger sister and describes Olly as 'the ugly duckling'.
>
> Only her father knows how to value her true virtue, but can't bear her demeanour any longer. He persuades her with some difficulty to join a party. On this occasion, therefore, she hands over her domestic tasks to their housekeeper, interrupts the constant watering of her flowers and lets her hair down.
>
> This last action suddenly opens the eyes of the decent but deluded young man about her true nature. He now ignores the superficial sister and devotes his attention to Olly. Still deeply offended by his earlier mockery, she rejects him halfheartedly and politely points out that she is, after all, no more than 'an ugly duckling'. Remorse thereupon seizes the young man. He becomes aware of the long-harboured affection for Olly which had grown all evening and now threatens to overwhelm him. He gazes deeply into her eyes and says to her: 'My swan, my beautiful, noble swan'.

The story is enchanting. Ellen reads it again and again and uses it, in her father's absence and the resulting void of a natural, male element in the family, to form an image of love and of men.

17 August 1944

Ellen presents the following poem to her mother on the anniversary of her parents' wedding day. She has illustrated the drawings, using the few coloured crayons at her disposal. (*See p. 426*)

1.
On your wedding anniversary
I wish you both all the happiness
Which the world can bestow.

2.
Next, I wish
That both of you are blessed with peace
And all else that you value.

3.
And that, starting with today,
The sun will always shine
On the two of you.

4.
Health may be the guardian of you both
And your lives be filled with joy.

5.
You will not be upset, I know,
If I ask to take up a third
Of one of my wishes
Although it is your wedding day!

6.
Good luck will chase evil and misfortune
Away from both of you,
So that they dare not approach
Within ten kilometeres of your house!

7.
You well know our shared wish,
That, very soon,
We'll all be reunited
With Papa.

8.
Now you've known each other
For fifteen years,
And fourteen years ago
You were busy with your wedding.

9.
So now I want to congratulate you again
  On your Wedding Day;
And then I want to ask you a question:
  How do you like my poem?

10.
Will you think:
  'Poem she calls it,
The silly little girl?'

11.
So I had better ask:
  'How do you like this creation?'
I believe it was not too good,
  But once Papa is back,
You'll get a better one.

12.
But now you will say:
  'You've promised us Happiness,
Joy and much else besides.
  Now I want to see it.'
You *will* see it – it will happen soon.

13.
I don't make empty promises,
  As will be shown
In my poem.

14.
You are already
  Awaiting their coming
Although you have not heard them yet,
  But they will soon be arriving.

15.
It should not be necessary for you
    To wait for them much longer:
They are already on their way
    With cars, trains and in horse carts.

16.
So now I shall conclude my poem
    And send the persons to you
For whom you are waiting.

17.
Now the guests
    You have so long expected
Are arriving:

Captions related to the pictures reproduced on pages ooo to ooo

Peace: 'Good Day, my loved one!
Warmest Good Wishes! "Peace" is my name.'

I am the Sunshine -
hahahaha, hihihihi, the Sunshine.

I have also come.
My name is 'Health.'

Now I am coming: I am 'Happiness,'
and wherever I appear there is happiness.

Second half of August 1944

Herta Naujocks thinks that Ellen needs a change of scenery and fresh air. Therefore they should all embark on an excursion. Gine doesn't feel like it, but Herta insists. She points out how important it is for Ellen's physical and mental well-being, and finally manages to convince her. And so they set off on a communal trip to the Woltersdorfer Schleuse, on the outskirts of Berlin, accompanied by Helga and Irmhild. Whenever they meet, Herta tends to bring along at least one of her children, and preferably both, in order to enable Ellen to maintain her contact with people to whom she has become attached. Ellen is very happy about this, always inquires about the other members of the family, and naturally also includes the young Alsatian dog, Bianka, which she had watched growing up.

Anticipating Ellen's wishes, Herta unexpectedly brings Bianka along with her to their next meeting. Gine and Ellen wait at an agreed spot. Herta has to stop some distance away on the opposite side of the road to allow the traffic to pass. Suddenly Bianka recognises her old friends. She tears herself loose, rushes across the road and jumps up on Gine and Ellen with such joyful force that they nearly fall over, licks their faces and wags her tail. She can hardly be pacified. Passers-by watch this scene with emotion. Little do they guess the identity of the recipients of this Alsation's love; but Gine is anxious to avoid a repetition of this sensation. There are no further meetings with Bianka.

End of August 1944

The woman caretaker at Kottbusser Damm has a daughter of about Ellen's age – possibly a year older. The two girls establish contact with each other, but Gine wants to prevent it from getting too close in order to avoid the need for unnecessary explanations. On the other hand, she doesn't want to begrudge her daughter's company. The girl is nice, and invites Ellen to accompany her to the cinema on the opposite side of the street. Gine has no objections. She actually encourages her to accept the invitation, because Ellen is reluctant to go to the pictures while her father is held in a concentration camp. The excursion with Aunt Herta was something different. It didn't seem to matter, because it was, so to speak, a family affair. A visit to the pictures, on the other hand, fills her with scruples; but in the end she goes along.

Every feature film is preceded by a newsreel. It naturally concentrates on war reports.

Artillery salvos crash and soldiers fall from a wall. Ellen presses her hands to her face. She can't bear to see it. Her neighbour gently nudges her. 'Don't worry about watching this', she whispers, 'it's only the enemy!'

Summer 1944

Air raids continue to gain in intensity. Allegedly, 'the English' (not 'the British') 'come at night', and, during the day, 'the Americans'.

The radio broadcasts 'air situation reports' at fixed times, supplemented by transmissions in case of threatened attacks; but even during regular reports the mode of introduction makes it possible to judge whether an air raid can be expected. If they just say: 'Attention, we are transmitting an air situation report', all is clear. If they say 'Attention, attention!' it indicates that something is about to happen. The regional designation then reveals the imminence of the threat.

'Enemy battle units are approaching Schleswig-Holstein' indicates that the aircraft may not necessarily be heading towards Berlin.

'... approaching the air space over Hannover-Braunschweig' means that they are closing in on Berlin, but that there is enough time to reach the safety of a shelter.

'... approaching the Mark Brandenburg' reveals that they have nearly reached their target and that even a wild rush will barely enable one to reach the *Bunker* before the alarm is sounded.

One night, Gine and Ellen are overtaken by the sirens, and almost instantly the aircraft begin to drop what is popularly known as 'Christmas Trees'.

They consist of grape-clustered flares, which really look like Christmas Trees standing on their heads. They are used to mark out a square which has been selected for bombardment. The streets are as bright as daylight. A few other people have likewise been caught in the open. Ellen is scared out of her wits. Everybody runs as fast as their legs will carry them and they manage to reach the *Bunker.*

Generally, however, Gine and Ellen leave home in good time. Ellen then shoulders her small rucksack, which they got ready in preparation for the deportation expected on 15 November 1941. The outer pocket contains a selection of family photographs removed at that time from their albums. Slung around one shoulder, she carries their 'iron ration' in a brown leather bag, together with some bandages and a bottle of valerian drops; and around the other she suspends the pair of her mother's high boots, which had been obtained 'around the back' before going into hiding. Gine carries a large bag with clothing.

The *Fichtebunker* to which they make their way used to be an obsolete gas works in the Fichtestraße, which had been converted into a solid air raid shelter. The internal rooms in the spacious, round structure are reserved for mothers with infants and for pregnant women, who can spend the night on camp beds. The rest of the population is seated in the circular passages. One usually tends to congregate in roughly the same spot, and so one starts to chat with one's 'neighbours'. People have become tired of war. A phrase now widely used says that they would prefer to exist on dry bread and water if only the war would finish.

On one occasion, a soldier on leave sits next to Gine and starts a conversation with her. In his opinion, the fighting morale of the troops has been totally undermined by the air raids on their homeland. 'How can one fight', he asks, 'when you don't know whether your family at home is still alive?'

Each of the *Bunkers* can accommodate thousands of people, and has meanwhile been shown to be bomb proof. The *Hochbunkers* are so constructed that they absorb the shock effects even of near-by detonations, but the resulting vibrations seem to be magnified inside the concrete structure.

During a raid the *Fichtebunker* actually receives a direct hit. One bomb explodes on the roof above the entrance and against the wall above it. Only slight damage is caused, but a dull, yet powerful explosion is heard inside, and a strong vibration is felt. The light goes out. A warden's voice is heard over a loudspeaker: '*Das Denken ausschalten, das Denken jetzt ausschalten!* ('Switch off your thinking, switch off your thinking now!')

People begin to grumble. To be told not to think about the heavy retribution which they have to suffer, and which may possibly deprive some of them of their homes! One man – evidently knowing to whom he angrily refers – speaks of 'this pensioned teacher' who couldn't be expected to behave any differently! For the time being it remains dark, and the announcement is repeated at intervals. Ellen reflects on how it is possible to switch off one's thinking, can't find a satisfactory answer and asks her mother. 'Nothing but nonsense', she whispers in reply. That sounds convincing.

During another air raid alarm a shelter warden goes through the passages with a collecting box. He asks for money in connection with some war appeal.

Most people are tired, not only of the war, but also of collections. Little money is now left to them. Nevertheless, everybody tends to give a coin in order not to cause undue attention. When the collector asks Gine, she refuses. She had donated a contribution as recently as yesterday, her husband was at the front and she couldn't afford to give any more.

'But surely you can spare a *Groschen?*', says the warden.

No, she didn't have even that much left over, replies Gine. Ellen regards her mother's conduct as extremely risky. Ten *Pfennige* would hardly affect the course of the war, but her refusal could lead them into danger.

The man continues on his round. One can observe him for a short distance as he progresses along the curved corridor. Gine's 'neighbour' likewise declines to make a donation, and this example is followed by the majority of those present. Gine is delighted with her success.

Meanwhile, the entire population has turned itself into self-appointed experts on the subject of the destructive materials which keep on raining down on them. According to the 'predominant view' they are divided into 'air-borne mines', 'high explosive bombs', 'phosphorous canisters' and 'sticks of incendiaries'. The nature of their effect differs, but the ultimate result is further war destruction. Burnt-out and collapsed buildings increasingly determine the scene in the streets. The facades of adjacent buildings which have escaped direct hits are peppered by shrapnel fragments from bombs and grenades. Window panes become victims of heat or blast. In the early days, broken window panes used to be replaced. Then the supplies of glass dried up and people began to transfer the inner glass panes of double windows to the outside. (In Berlin it is common to instal double windows except in kitchens and bathrooms). Finally, people extracted glass from pictures, mounted them in wooden borders and affixed them to the window frames. The remaining openings

were covered with sheets of cardboard. Most window panes have been replaced in this way.

The rooms are becoming ever darker. The lucky ones have some pictures in reserve, even more fortunate people may have a few genuine panes left; but there is hardly a window in existence which can boast of a full complement of its original glass. Each air raid adds to the ruins and to the number of afflicted folk. Sometimes it affects one district, sometimes another. Near Herrmannsplatz a cinema is burnt out. Only the outer walls remain standing. By an incredible fluke, the poster affixed to the front facing the street has remained virtually undamaged. The film it advertised bore the title: '*Die Täter sind unter uns*' ('The culprits are amongst us'). Many people turn up to have a look at it.

Late Summer 1944

One day after an air raid, Gine and Ellen are on their way to Emma Selbiger. Ellen stumbles, falls and her right arm crashes into a pile of broken glass which has been swept together in the kerb. Although the arm is largely protected by the sleeve of her coat, she suffers a deep cut below the hand, which leads to a heavy flow of blood. The sleeve turns red. Gine fears that the cut may have severed an artery and immediately wants to rush to the lady doctor who had previously removed Ellen's stitches from the knee. Ellen resolutely refuses to go. She has no intention to run the risk of having to answer any further questions about Cottbus.

Arriving at Emma Selbiger's, Gine carefully washes the arm and finds that the cut did not affect the artery. The wound soon stops bleeding and subsequently heals well.

Early Autumn 1944

Herta Naujock hatches another plan for an excursion. With Gine, Ellen and her children she wants to visit Friedrich II's Sanssouci Palace. Needless to say, she translates her intention into action.

When they leave the station in Potsdam, Ellen is dumbfounded as she looks down the street. No houses are destroyed, and the windows contain all their original panes. Ellen draws her partners' attention to this remarkable feature. They duly note it and carry on walking; but Ellen continually stops and gazes up at the windows which, without exception, have no cardboard fillers, but are still in possession of their normal, full-size glass panes. It is an experience for her which fascinates her.

She doesn't find the park of Sanssouci particularly attractive. The trees trimmed to fancy shapes are not to her liking.

In the Palace, only four rooms are open to public inspection, including the music room of Friedrich II. Many valuable articles have disappeared and are replaced by signs which indicate that they have been removed for safe keeping.

One not only can, but must, put on huge felt slippers which slide over the precious floors. One could, of course, also walk in them, but sliding is so much more fun!

Autumn 1944

Through the medium of an SS-man, Willi Selbiger in Auschwitz was able to establish continuous contact with his wife. The SS-man delivers letters in both directions and also takes small packets for Willi.

Now Emma receives a letter from her husband in which he tells her that he has met Mor in Auschwitz. Gine and Ellen are deeply moved and relieved to hear from him. Gine asks whether she might add something for him. Emma enquires and comes back with a positive answer.

Hectic activity now develops at the Kottbusser Damm. Gine and Ellen collect anything that could be described as 'good things'. In addition, Gine prepares sweets made with oatmeal – a delicacy which she has not made for years because it requires too much fat and sugar. Gine and Ellen are very excited and imagine how Mor would be delighted with his parcel.

Gine wants to divert some of the confection to her daughter, but Ellen resolutely declines. It would only get stuck in her throat. Nothing will replace her ardent wish to devote everything possible to her father.

Gine hands the parcel to Emma and begs for a sign of life from her husband. It does not have to be a letter. Two or three handwritten words would be quite enough.

No answer is ever received.

Late Autumn 1944

Ellen's so-called 'collapses' happen with increasing frequency. They are not, strictly speaking, attacks of dizziness like the one she experiennced in Malchow, but rather like a feeling that she is being strangled and can't breathe. When it happens, her face turns as white as a sheet. Usually such attacks occur during exceptionally cold or hot weather, or when facing strong wind. Occasionally no specific cause can be identified.

Fortunately, Ellen can get back to normal fairly easily. She takes a big gulp from a bottle of valerian, which she always carries with her, and lies down flat. Whenever possible, for instance while lying on a sofa at home, she allows the head to hang over the edge. Although the attacks are disagreeable, they can generally be overcome after a few minutes.

Ellen again suffers from this shortness of breath while out with her mother. Not far away, Gine sees a bench, settles Ellen onto it and loosens the upper buttons on her coat.

A woman stops and looks at Ellen pitifully. 'The poor little 'un', she says, 'this war makes us all *kaputt*. Me cousin's girl's also had an attack like this, and she's a goner.'

Gine is cross, but pulls herself together. Her daughter urgently requires to be left in peace, she says as calmly as her tension permits.

'Well then, all the best', replies the woman in a kindly fashion and moves on.

Ellen wants to know where her cousin's daughter 'had gone'. Gine reacts with impatience. 'That is irrelevant', she replies. This suddenly makes it clear to Ellen that the woman's young relative has not survived her attack; but since she has not known the girl and she herself is feeling better, this recognition has no influence on her condition.

Early Winter 1944

It is getting ever colder, and Gine has no heating material. In the flat, conditions are uncomfortable, and outside the low temperatures are difficult to bear when one already feels frozen as one enters the street.

Ellen has frost-bites on all her toes and one big reddish-blue spot on the inside of each leg. The affected spots are irritating, particularly because of the itching they cause. Moreover, blood circulation is impaired in her growing feet, which have to be squeezed into shoes which are much too small for her. This may also be a contributory cause for her so-called collapses, which now occur at short intervals.

Gine feels helpless and takes Ellen to see Dr H., who had supplied her with the malaria injections for Mor. The woman doctor is very kind and advises them to bathe the frost-bites with potato water, and generally try to spend as much time as possible in heated premises, like Post Offices.

The advice is well meant, and probably also quite effective if one can follow it. The available supply of potatoes, however, only provides a very diluted bath, and one can't spend lengthy periods in Post Offices, or indeed in other public rooms, without attracting attention.

Winter 1944

Gine again resumes contact with Mrs Krüger, whom she hasn't seen since leaving Dircksenstraße. She uses the code name 'Mutterchen', which she acquired during her diphtheria attack, to convince Mrs Krüger that the message really comes from her.

Mrs Krüger nevertheless fears that this might lead her into a Gestapo trap; but in the end she overcomes her doubts and arrives at the suggested meeting place. She is delighted when she sees Gine and Ellen, but is greatly saddened by the news of Mor's arrest.

They arrange another get-together. This time they meet at the Neue Markt.

A thick layer of snow meanwhile covers the ground. A beaming Mrs Krüger appears with a big shopping bag. With a meaningful expression she dips into it and produces a pair of new, brown laced-up boots for Ellen, who is delighted. She wants to put them on immediately. The two women accompany her into a lobby, where the fitting takes place. The boots are found to be much too large, but Gine doesn't mind this a bit. All that is needed is for Ellen to put on thick socks to fill up the extra space, and she would no longer have to squeeze in her feet.

While Ellen and her mother discuss the most efficient way of utilising the boots, Mrs Krüger removes a bottle from her bag. It contains a vitamin juice which she has managed to get hold of.

25 December 1944

As usual, Gine and Ellen spend Christmas Day with the Fenskes. Lisa is determined to celebrate Christmas in the most festive manner, despite all adverse conditions and regardless of ever-diminishing means.

The Christmas tree looks magnificent, the home-baked cake tastes gorgeous, and the Christmas carols still convey a festive atmosphere, despite the worn-out condition of the gramophone records.

Following the afternoon coffee, Ellen goes to the toilet. She crosses the lobby into the small corridor which leads to the back of the flat.

Suddenly she has the sensation that her father is dying. This feeling is overwhelming. She leans backwards against the wall, presses her head against it and thinks: 'He is dying right now. Sometime I shall find out that he died today'. She remains in this position for a short time and then continues into the bathroom, where she stays for a little while to regain her composure. She mentions nothing about her sensation on returning to the livingroom.

The impact of this experience gradually diminishes in the course of the next few days and eventually disappears. Ellen then completely regains the deep conviction that her father will return unharmed from the concentration camp.

January 1945

Lisa conveys an extraordinary invitation to Gine. Her friend, Frieda (known as 'Friedel') Landvoigt suggests that Gine and Ellen should live with her for a while in Friedersdorf, near Königswusterhausen.

Lisa and Friedel have been close friends ever since their youth. The Weiß and Landvoigt families later got to know each other through Lisa. The Landvoigts own a two-family house with a petrol station and a large and particularly lovely garden in Johannisthal, in the south of Berlin. Georg Landvoigt, a motor mechanic, had acquired the property through hard work.

Worn down by the economic crisis, and politically evidently not very mature, he was at first attracted by the ideas propagated by the National Socialists. He joined the Party as early as 1933.

Despite this, he continued to maintain his contacts with the Weiß family and used to invite them in the summer to spend a long, sunny day with them in their garden. He condemned the discrimination against the Jews and said: 'I am sure the *Führer* knows nothing of this. He would never allow it'. It seemed incredible that he was not aware of his *Führer's* attitude towards the Jews.

These contacts continued until about 1940. Mrs Landvoigt even gave Gine a pair of shoes for Ellen. They were in good condition and had belonged to her son Klaus, who was a year older than Ellen.

The Landvoigts knew the political views held by the Fenskes, and were also aware of the details of their continued, friendly relationship with the Weiß family. They had been told about their illegal existence and Mor's arrest.

The present invitation nevertheless comes as rather a surprise. Friedel Landvoigt and her three children – 11-year-old Klaus, 2 1/2-year-old Karla and six-month-old Krista (all names deliberately spelled with the same initials) – have temporarily moved to Friedersdorf to escape the air raids.

Although she has rented a small flat there which belongs to acquaintances, and her husband, released from active service because of a heart disease, visits her regularly, she evidently feels rather lonely. Gine also suspects that Georg Landvoigt meanwhile no longer believes in a German victory and is looking for some form of reinsurance.

Being in occupation of her 'own flat', Gine hesitates with her acceptance of the invitation; but she eventually accepts it in order to escape the freezing temperature at Kottbuser Damm. She sews at Mrs Landvoigt's, as she has always done for people who help her. Today, everybody depends on modifications and alterations of clothing to remain properly dressed.

Friedel proves to be a well-meaning person who makes sure that Gine doesn't over-exert herself and shares her best food with her and Ellen. She clearly enjoys their company.

During Gine and Ellen's stay in Friedersdorf, the refugees from East Germany are beginning to migrate to the West. The house in which Friedel's flat is situated looks out onto the main road. An apparently endless convoy of horse-drawn carts, loaded with human beings and their last remaining possessions, slowly trudges past their windows. The refugees seek protection from the cold under woollen blankets and tarpaulins. Everything looks grey and very depressing.

One morning, Gine accompanies her acquaintance to the near-by food shop. It is very crowded as a woman bursts in and begs to be allowed to go to the front of the queue: her children are in one of the carts.

Most customers refuse. They had been waiting a long time and didn't want to be delayed any longer. The woman runs out of the shop without having been served. She doesn't want to risk losing her children in a convoy which rolls on without stopping. Friedel and Gine are appalled.

It is now clear to Gine that the end of the war is imminent. She therefore wants to return to Berlin, because she is convinced that her relatives will return from the concentration camps and will look for her in the Zingster Straße or try to find her through Lisa Fenske. She also wants to regain possession of the documents which certify her true identity. Friedel doesn't want to let her go, but nothing will now stop her. At the end of January she returns with Ellen to the Kottbusser Damm.

3 February 1945

Gine and Ellen have arranged to meet Herta in the morning at 'Tietz' (bearing the name of its Jewish founder, Hermann Tietz, and re-named 'Hertie' after its 'Aryanisation') at the Alexanderplatz. As far as Gine is concerned, this fine old building continues to be called 'Tietz-Alex'.

As usual, Herta hands Gine her ration coupons and then does a little shopping. When they finally leave the store together, the Alexanderplatz is bathed in radiant winter sunshine. Even while they remark on the

lovely weather, an air raid alarm is sounded. They therefore seek shelter in the *Tiefbunker*, located below the Underground Station, at the entrance of which they just happen to stand.

At the Alexanderplatz, lines A (from Ruhleben or Krumme Lanke to Pankow), D (from Gesundbrunnen to Leinestraße) and E (from Alexanderplatz to Warschauer Brücke) intersect. Their platforms are located at different levels. From Line E, which is situated at the lowest level, one descends into the shelter, a further four levels lower.

They go down to the lowest level. Soon afterwards they hear the sound of bomb explosions. To be aware of these detonations at all, they must occur in their immediate vicinity. No less than forty-eight crashes are counted during the raid. At the top, hell must have been let loose.

When the 'All-Clear' is sounded, the entire Underground traffic is suspended. Returning to the street, they can hardly recognise the place. The earlier sunshine has disappeared. The sky is covered with thick clouds and acrid smoke hangs above the Alexanderplatz. Most of the surrounding buildings are in flames. The entire public transport system has been paralysed. Herta and Gine bid each other farewell and depart in opposite directions to find their way home.

Gine soon realises that an attempt to follow any given direction is hopeless. Her first objective, therefore, is to try and just manage to get out of this devastated area, and then to enquire how one can make one's way to Neukölln.

While she is looking around, a tarpaulin-covered horse-cart with soldiers passes them. A few people jump on, helped by the soldiers. Gine sees a chance to get away and, with Ellen, tries to climb onto the slowly moving vehicle. The soldiers give them a hand as well.

They drive and drive, and whenever they hope to have covered part of their journey they find themselves back on the Alexanderplatz. Gradually, discouraged civilians and soldiers jump off. Only Gine and Ellen finally remain on the cart. Suddenly they hear the sharp crack of the coachman's whip and feel the horse's tremendous forward leap. A burning house collapses into the street immediately behind them, The coachman dismounts, comes to them and tells them that he can't take them any further. It seems obvious.

Gine and Ellen now try to fight their way through to Emma Selbiger's home – a distance of 'only' two Underground Stations. Ellen Rich, who had lived considerably closer to the Alexanderplatz, had already been bombed out some time earlier.

Through smoke and over rubble they finally reach the Große Frankfurter Straße and then the Frankfurter Allee.

The smoke has meanwhile become so dense and acrid, and they have been exposed to it for so long, that they can scarcely keep their burning eyes open. Gine removes a pair of her stockings from the 'iron reserve' kept in the emergency bag always carried by Ellen, and each of them ties a stocking over their eyes. Through this fairly dense artificial silk fabric they can see a great deal better than with unprotected eyes; but their misfortune is aggravated when, on top of it all, it begins to rain.

In the Frankfurter Straße the water mains have been hit. The road is flooded. The surface is obviously full of craters, but one can't see them because of the water. A few men have dumped big lumps of rock from the bombed buildings across the street. This indicates where the firm ground is. People clamber across the rocks in order to reach the opposite side; but it is exceedingly difficult for them to keep their balance on the points and edges of these rocks. Two men lend a hand to Gine and Ellen in their attempts to cross the street.

When they finally arrive at Emma Selbiger's home on the Braune Weg they find her engaged in evacuating her flat, in common with the other residents in her house. The neighbouring building is alight, and as a precaution they are trying to save everything they had prepared for removal during an emergency. Four extra hands are therefore most welcome. After carrying every portable item out into the open, Emma leaves her possessions in the care of some of her neighbours who are waiting for the transfer of their goods to a storage depot. She suggests to Gine and Ellen that they should accompany her to a cousin living in the neighbourhood, to take a little rest. At the same time she warns them not to utter any ill-considered remarks because her cousin's son, a *Fahnenjunker* (cadet) at an *Ordensburg* (party-political/military training unit), just happens to be home on leave. He is a '1,000 per cent Nazi!'

The cousin receives them with much kindness. They are relieved to be able to take the weight off their feet at last and are even treated to a hot drink.

The cadet, however, doesn't waste a moment before he launches his full-scale Nazi propaganda. Above all, he complains about the faintheartedness of the population, whose sacrifice of their homes is diminishing their enthusiasm for Germany's final victory. His tirade reaches its climax when he exclaims that Emma should be happy to have got rid of the Jew – meaning Willi. This proves too much for a woman who has resisted several Gestapo attempts to make her apply for a divorce

from her husband, incarcerated in a concentration camp. A violent quarrel erupts between them, which her cousin can only pacify with great difficulty.

Gine says good-bye and declares that she and Ellen will now try to struggle home. In the street they find out which public services are running again. Travelling along sections of their homeward journey, and repeatedly changing vehicles, they reach Neukölln towards the evening. They use the *S-Bahn* (City train) on their final leg, which takes them to Sonnenallee Station.

The rumour kitchen is now boiling over. One man reports that the *Fichtebunker* has been destroyed, and that all inmates have been killed. Gine and Ellen are horrified; but they heave a sigh of relief as they get off the train, breathe in fresh air without a trace of the acrid smell of burning and note that the area is virtually intact. It also becomes clear to them that the rumour about the *Fichtebunker* is nothing more than the result of exaggeration, caused by panic.

The first thing they do on arriving at home is to have something to eat. Their next intention is to go to bed and have a good sleep; but before they can do so, the air raid alarm sounds once more. They rush off at top speed and reach the undamaged *Fichtebunker.* They feel totally exhausted, but at the same time also greatly relieved.

Herta Naujocks had likewise managed to reach Malchow after spending hours on detours.

Lisa Fenske had been trapped in the air raid shelter below the collapsed building belonging to the firm to which she had been detailed. The cellars of all buildings lining a street section now have to be inter-connected. She and her colleagues, as well as all the other users of adjoining cellars, had therefore escaped into the open without injury.

The Alte Jakobstraße, in which she works, was in the centre of the air raid. Sparks flew across the street, and Lisa tried to extinguish them with her coat. Her only aim was to get to the water. She finally managed to reach the River Spree.

She, too, only managed to return home in the evening.

26 February 1945

Once more, there is an air raid in the morning. As usual, Gine and Ellen seek shelter in the *Fichtebunker.* When they return home after the 'All-Clear', they find that their house is on fire. From the opposite side

of the street they see that their flat on the first floor has escaped so far.

Gine wants to rush into the house to save all she can – especially Mor's letters, her own diary of their illegal existence, hidden in the book shelves, as well as Ellen's doll and the two suitcases which stand, ready-packed, in the corridor for just such an emergency. She wants Ellen to wait in the street, but Ellen is simply not prepared to do this and insists on accompanying her. Her mother won't let her come. In that case, says Ellen, she shouldn't go either, clings to her arms in tears and stops her from leaving.

A young soldier, who has been detailed to help the population and has watched the scene asks Gine whether she lives in one of the burning houses. She points to the building opposite and tells him that the flames have not yet reached her flat.

'Is there any easily accessible luggage,' he wants to know. She says there is, and mentions the two suitcases in the corridor. The soldier asks for the keys, bursts into the house and soon reappears with the suitcases. Now Gine wants to reenter in order to salvage further articles. The soldier urgently advises her not to do it. The staircase was no longer safe, he says; the retreat could be cut off at any moment. This warning, and Ellen's threat to follow her immediately, cause her to abandon her plan with a heavy heart.

The soldier finally gives her an address to which he advises her to go. It is a place where bomb victims are given immediate help. They are fed and provided with emergency accommodation, and then allocated to a more permanent place. They are also issued with 'bomb coupons' for clothing and domestic articles. Gine and Ellen naturally are unable to approach this office.

Both of them stand in the street, crying. Now they have once again lost their hiding place; but that, at this moment, is not the foremost thought in their minds. At first, they give no thought to the few belongings they have so far saved and kept in the wardrobes, which they have now lost, of Gine's carefully kept notes or the half-portion of vanilla pudding which they had denied themselves and saved for today's enjoyment. They only talk about Mor's letters and Ellen's doll. For quite a while, Ellen won't be able to rid herself of the vision of flames devouring her 'Käte'.

At first they find shelter with a family called Platörke, acquaintances of Mrs Rich's, in Kreuzberg. Yet again, Gine is kept busy with sewing from morning to night, and Ellen helps Mrs Platörke to the best of her ability in looking after her recently-born twins. They now become fully conscious of the loss of their own 'home'. In addition, their stay in Kreuzberg can be no more than a temporary solution, lasting just a few days.

In the end, they are once again accepted by the Jorams in the Anklamer Straße. To be precise, they move into Mrs R.'s 'flat', who, together with her little daughter, continues to live with her parents as before.

First half of March 1945

The battle fronts are moving ever closer, and this apparently also brings the Allies' air force bases nearer. Whatever the reason, the interval between situation reports and air raid warnings, and between the sounding of alarms and the arrival of the first planes is getting shorter all the time. In order to keep themselves informed, people are trying to tap into a transmitter called *Drahtfunk*, intended for the military or police forces and broadcasting coded messages about approaching air units, Some particularly ingenious people even manage to acquire copies, from mysterious sources, of *Drahtfunkkarten* – special maps which replace normal geographical names with descriptions like 'Anton-Anton', and whose grid system is replaced by circles. These self-appointed experts in cartography and decoding are five minutes ahead of everybody else in predicting when the first bombs are due to fall.

Since Gine and Ellen are denied access to the secret as well as revealing sources of the *Drahtfunk,* they have to guess the imminence of danger and accordingly shorten the time of their arrival at the *Bunker.* Ellen had already perfected a technique of placing her clothes on a chair in such exact sequence in the evening, that she was able to put them on in breath-taking speed. But this skill is no longer adequate for allowing her to reach the shelter in time. Both of them therefore now lie down fully dressed; and soon they even find it necessary to keep their shoes on and just lie on top of the bed, with sheets of newspapers under their footwear, ready to rush off at the first sound of the siren.

Suddenly, 'the English' change their tactics. They arrive punctually at the same time each night. It takes a few days before this procedure is recognised, but then one adjusts one's time of departure from home and in this way ensures one's safe arrival at the shelter without undue pressure of time. One becomes a member of a veritable mass migration in search of safety and on the way tends to meet the same people. One evening, as she turns a corner, Gine is approached by one of these quasi-acquaintances. 'Do you know that we have a jubilee today', he asks. 'It's the 25th time!' She doesn't know it, and he is pleased to have informed her.

This 'English' technique, presumably made possible by the weakening

of the anti-aircraft defence, is generally accepted as a humane gesture. It is recognised as a measure designed to enable the people, at any rate, to obtain personal protection from bombs.

End of March 1945

A *Volkssturm* unit (an Auxiliary Defence Formation) marches down the Anklamer Straße. It comprises 'men' from the age of 15 years to those well above the call-up limit, as well as invalids and others who have been rejected on health grounds.

Many residents lean out of their windows and watch this march-past of elderly men slowly moving in the direction of Arkonaplatz. They don't wear a uniform. An arm band is their sole identification. Each of them carries a rifle over his shoulder, and hardly any two models are alike. A few of the men limp, others are bent with age, and they are totally out of step.

Some of the 'audience' laugh and especially make fun of the weapons carried by the *Volkssturm* – 'the People's Storm' – now commonly called *Volksgesäusel*, 'the People's Whisper'.

'Them shooting irons have been pinched out of a museum', says a man leaning out of a near-by window, who seems to have escaped his conscription. With a sarcastic voice he claims to know that this troop is 'marching' to their swearing-in ceremony on the Arkonaplatz.

Ellen doesn't regard this business as funny. She thinks of this gloomy, creeping, limping pile down below as pitiful. She asks her mother why people have been mobilised who obviously aren't able to fight any more. 'This is the last call-up', replies Gine, 'and these people (meaning Hitler and his accomplices) will shrink from nothing when it is a question of prolonging their lives by a few days.'

Early April 1945

People have got used to being kept up to date by the routine Army announcements about the relocation of German troops during the process of their 'victorious withdrawals'. The place names which are now mentioned are so close to Berlin that Gine believes the war will finish before the end of this month. Ellen's birthday, she thinks, will be celebrated in peacetime.

For Gine, the word 'peace' represents everything that stands for the time after the end of the war, of National Socialism and the persecution of Jews. For years on end she has conjured up this vision for Ellen in

impressive pictures. 'As soon as there is peace…' is the phrase with which she tends to introduce her forecasts. At the heart of her description of this wonderful future dawn lies the phrase, 'As soon as there is peace, all the bells will ring and the prisoners from the Concentration Camps will be brought home in garlanded coaches'.

Her idea about the bells remains her secret. The type of transport which is covered by the term 'coaches' is not defined; and her belief that on their release the 'KZ' prisoners will receive particularly considerate treatment is understandable.

18 April 1945

Gine has arranged to meet Herta in Humboldthain, near the Zingster Straße. Never before, during their period of hiding, has Gine dared to get so close to her former home, apart from the unavoidable stay with Agnes Minke, lasting for several days.

Now she and Ellen put in an early appearance, and so they spend a little time walking up and down. In the park, slit trenches are just being dug by slim, child-like boys, about fifteen years of age. They wear steel helmets which slip down over their eyes. Gine watches them and shakes her head in disapproval. A soldier, who supervises the *Volkssturm*-Unit, notices the gesture and says: 'Believe me, if it was up to us, we wouldn't put these children here. Up there,' and he points to the adjoining bunker, 'an anti-aircraft battery was stationed which was manned by boys like these, and they were wiped out in a matter of seconds'.

The frankness of this man is astonishing. But most people are now so fed up with this war that they make little effort to hide their feelings.

Herta appears at the appointed time. She brings along five pounds of potatoes which she hands to Gine as an iron reserve. The Russians have now reached the outskirts of Berlin, and it seems likely that it will no longer be possible to go shopping during the impending battles.

Both agree on a meeting place for the time 'when everything is over'. It is the flat belonging to one of Naujocks' old acquaintances, a Mr Valenta, who lives in Weißensee. It is situated about half way between Malchow and the Anklamer Straße, and it is safe to predict that one would have to walk.

19 April 1945

Humboldthain is again the meeting place, this time between Gine and Mrs Krüger. While they stand there, talking, Russian planes suddenly

appear and deliver low-level, but apparently random attacks with their rattling machine guns.

Gine pulls Ellen underneath a tree, while Mrs Krüger rushes off in the direction of the bunker. 'Stay here!' shouts Gine, but Mrs Krüger rushes across an open lawn to the entrance of the bunker.

When the planes have disappeared, all three come together again, shocked but unhurt. They soon part again in order to gain the protection of their homes.

Gine pacifies Ellen with the assurance that the airmen most certainly would not aim at unarmed people on the ground, but adds that one would nevertheless have to take precautions during an attack. Ellen doesn't have to be told twice about this warning.

20 April 1945

During the morning one can clearly hear the thunder of the guns. Gine sends Ellen to buy bread in the small food shop on the opposite side of the street. In the shop she meets another customer, who excitedly reports that three buildings on the Rosenthaler Platz have already been destroyed by artillery fire.

Ellen rushes home with the bread to report the news to her mother, but Gine has already heard it. While she was wiping the floor in front of her door, a neighbour had told her about it in the following words: 'Well, you have a nerve to wipe the floor while the city is being laid in ruins!'

Gine immediately goes with Ellen to the Jorams, to obtain further news. She is astonished to find more and more fellow residents pouring into the basement flat, all discussing the latest rumours. The news which they spread overtake, and often contradict, one another. Finally, a man appears who communicates his news to the assembled crowd in a particularly dramatic way: 'Everybody listen to me', he says, taking a stance in the middle of the room, 'I have learnt from an absolutely reliable source that the Russians have conveyed an ultimatum to the Army Command: either Berlin capitulates by 1400 hours, or it will be razed to the ground'.

Ellen is in panic. She not only takes the ultimatum seriously, but also interprets the phrase literally, to the effect that they will 'raze Berlin to the ground', and therefore assumes that the city will be converted into a stone desert in the course of the afternoon. The only thing which, in her opinion, can resist such total destruction is the bunker.

Gine tries to pacify her daughter. The report can't possibly be correct. Wherever could this man have received such information?

It's all the same to Ellen. He insisted that it had reached him from an 'absolutely reliable source', and why should he want to invent such a thing out of thin air? Apart from this, the announcement of '1400 hours' seems absolutely convincing. That sounds really official, and therefore confirms its genuine character for her.

Since one has to leave the flat during a bombardment in any case, and the Jorams are not prepared to accommodate Gine and Ellen, all that remains for them to do is to seek shelter in the bunker. And so, Gine picks up two pillows, two blankets, some clothing and the remaining food. Only the potatoes are handed to the Jorams for safe keeping.

Then they proceed to the bunker under Ellen's suspicious supervision, early enough to get there before two o'clock in the afternoon. They go to Room 11, situated four floors below ground level, in which they have already stayed during air raids. That is why they already know several people. It is quite welcome in the present situation.

One prepares to spend the night lying on the floor and spreads out the blankets, with the pillows on top. The bunker is crowded, and so the people all lie close to each other. This soon results in disagreeable consequences, because the overcrowding leads to the overflow of the lavatories, and the filth is carried by the people onto the blankets. Epidemics are said to have broken out in the bunker. One speaks of typhoid and diphtheria.

Gine tries to keep her blankets clean, but that proves an impossible undertaking. Apart from this, her food reserves are rapidly running out. She prepares a slice of bread, spread with artificial honey for Ellen, who would love to have one more.

'There is only very little left', says Gine regretfully. Then she breaks into tears. It is dreadful to have to refuse food to her daughter, and she just cannot bear to do it.

'You get another slice', she says, 'we'll manage somehow'.

Now Ellen, who had given in to her instinctive desire for artificial honey, refuses more food. She is no longer hungry, she maintains. She merely had a little appetite, but is now so full that she couldn't eat another thing. Gine accepts the refusal with doubt, mixed with a sense of relief.

In the bunker one is constantly kept up to date with the Russian advance, by people who have crystal set receivers and other means of information at their disposal, The district of Weißensee is said to have allowed the Russians to pass through without a fight. In other districts the opposing forces are engaged in fierce battles. Some sectors, restricted to limited

areas, are contested with the defenders' last remaining strength without any apparent logic. This applies to the surroundings of the Brunnenstraße, in which the bunker is situated. The situation in this area therefore becomes the subject of a general discussion. Accordingly, the Russians are said to be 'on the left' at the Gesundbrunnen Station. 'on the right', close to the Rosenthaler Platz, 'on top' at the Danziger Straße and 'at the bottom' at the Stettiner Station – which means that the entire area is encircled. One therefore expects the arrival of the Russians at any moment.

The occupants of Room 11 now tell each other that they were always 'against it'. They assert that they had regularly listened in to foreign radio stations, and mention them by name. They are boasting with the 'English radio', the 'Atlantic transmitter' and even a Russian broadscast. Gine wonders whether she should disclose her Jewish identity and, in a remote corner, discusses it with Ellen. They decide against it.

Ellen suddenly feels unwell. She has a sore throat and headache, and develops a temperature which rises considerably towards the evening. Her worried mother mounts an anxious watch by her side through the night, while Ellen sleeps on the blanket. Next morning, Gine is totally worn out. Ellen urges her to lie down a little and promises to wake her up as soon as the Russians arrive.

After a while, having settled down again on her pillow, and plagued by a high fever, she hears an announcement by the bunker warden in the passage, but in her position on the floor she can't make out what he says. In Room 11 the occupants jump about in jubilation, babble in confusion and some even embrace each other. Ellen is in no doubt that the apparently eagerly awaited Russians have arrived.

She shakes Gine by the arm: 'Mutti', she says, 'the Russians are here'.

'Where?' Gine asks.

Ellen doesn't know the answer. She therefore reports the scene which she has just witnessed.

Gine takes in the commotion around her and turns to a man who yesterday avowed that he had always been 'against it' and had been 'a consistent listener' to foreign broadcasts.

'The Russians?' he replies, in astonishment. 'Haven't you heard the bunker ward's announcement? The English and Americans have concluded an alliance with us. Now we'll chase out the Russians, so that they'll loose their heels!'

Ellen, although barely eleven years old, is as speechless as her mother at the fact that people can be capable of such delusion. They look at one another in consternation and instinctively guess each other's thoughts.

'Thank God', say their glances, 'that we didn't reveal anything to them.'

Ellen's condition is steadily deteriorating. Gine therefore decides to take her to the Medical Room, although she is afraid that this might lead to a demand for her papers. In that case she decides to claim that, due to all the excitement, she had forgotten her documents at home.

To her surprise and shock she finds Frau Dr Godelmann as the bunker's duty doctor. She had admitted Ellen to the Reinickendorfer Children's Hospital in March 1943, but recognises neither of them. She suspects diphtheria, makes a test, forwards it to a laboratory which is still working, and instructs Gine to put Ellen on a camp bed in a remote corner of the hospital room, pending receipt of the test result.

Casualties are constantly being admitted. Gine asks Ellen to turn her face towards the wall to spare her the sight of the patients, many of whom are seriously wounded.

Several hours later the test result is received. It confirms the suspicion of diphtheria. Gine must remove Ellen from the bunker without delay. She wraps up her few possessions and the remaining bits of food, but leaves the two pillows and woollen blankets behind for the time being.

Both leave the bunker and, pressed close together, run in the direction of the Anklamer Straße. The shelling is currently a little more distant. As soon as it comes closer, they dive into a house entrance and press their bodies tightly against one of the walls. When the intensity of the shelling diminishes, they continue to run on.

When they eventually reach Jorams, they find that under these conditions they can't put them up; but Minna, as the housekeeper, holds the keys to the neighbouring basement flat, whose tenant has temporarily left Berlin. She feels that she can put this flat at Gine's disposal. Gine hesitatingly accepts this offer, although it is clear to her that the occupier would almost certainly disagree. At the same time she asks Minna to return the potatoes which had been entrusted to her care. Mrs Joram replies that regrettably these potatoes have been stolen by some unknown individuals.

There is nothing one can do about this. Gine moves into the neighbouring flat and first of all puts Ellen to bed. Then she closes the window shutters as a protection against shell splinters.

There is no electricity or water any more. With the shutters closed, the flat is plunged into total darkness.

Gine must leave Ellen behind in the gloom in order to call on Dr Schwarz, who used to treat members of the Joram family, and whose practice is at the nearby Zionskirchplatz.

Despite the shelling, the physician visits Ellen, gives her an injection

and warns her against getting up, because this might cause a risk of paralysis. He also recommends Gine to give her daughter regular compresses. Then he starts on his return journey amidst shell fire.

Gine now queues for water at the pump. Ellen suffers dreadful fear until her mother returns and begs her not to leave the flat any more. The available supply of water would do.

The sole available source of light in their possession is a so-called *Hindenburglicht* – a recycled brown candle, similar in form and size to a tea candle. It is only lit when the compresses have to be applied.

The water reserves and the last remains of food disappear rapidly. The shelling comes ever closer. When the *Stalinorgel* – a heavy Russian piece of artillery – thunders, Ellen jumps out of the bed, regardless of the doctor's warnings. Her horrified mother promptly puts her back again; but despite this disregard of her instructions, and the general complications in which she finds herself, Ellen is preserved from any form of paralysis.

27 April 1945

It is Ellen's eleventh birthday. The *Stalinorgel* thunders, all the available food has been used up, and there is only very little water left.

Ellen is crying. 'You have said that on my birthday there will be peace', she accusingly says to her mother, who also begins to burst into tears: she had really thought so. She was so sorry, but it would really only take a few more days, and somehow they would survive until then.

Now it is Ellen's turn to feel sorry. The childish disappointment about her wretched birthday is now replaced by her awareness of the futility of her accusations, and the grief she thereby caused to her mother. They console each other and try, with all their might, to give courage to one another. In this process, they even manage to laugh and forge plans for the time 'when peace has arrived'.

Round about mid-day, 'Aunt Minna' calls to congratulate Ellen. 'Here is your birthday present', she says and hands over half a dried-out pancake which has no doubt already seen a few days.

Gine, who knows that the Jorams have adequate food reserves at their disposal, is deeply offended, but at the same time is conscious of her debt of gratitude for the shelter she has been offered. The half-portion of the pancake is, after all, still edible. Although Gine has at first refused to join Ellen in consuming the birthday present, and Ellen complains of loss of appetite, they finally agree to share it.

A little later they receive a visit from a resident who had got to know

both of them during their stay in the flat of Mrs R., and who has learnt of the difficult situation in which they now find themselves. He brings a whole loaf of bread and two buckets of water with him. Both are overwhelmed. Ellen is speechless, and Gine simply cannot find enough words to express her gratitude. He replies that he has an adequate supply of bread. He could easily spare one loaf; and he had been glad to fetch the water because one could not, after all, leave a sick child by herself. When he learns that it is Ellen's birthday, he sits down with them for a chat, despite Gine's warning of the danger of infection. He tells them that he is of Polish origin, can speak a little Russian and has been living in Germany for many years.

After his departure, he leaves behind a feeling which resembles a birthday atmosphere. Ellen is particularly happy that her mother has been saved from having to queue for water amidst the shelling.

28 April – 1 May 1945

The days now seem to follow a regular routine. They begin with the thunder of artillery and end with compresses by the light of the *Hindenburglicht.* The intervals are filled with meals consisting of dry bread, more compresses, further 'normal' shelling, and in between there is the frightening noise of the *Stalinorgel.*

Once a day they are visited by Mrs R., Minna's daughter, who regales them with the latest horror stories. She tells them of people who have been mortally wounded by shells while queuing for water at the public pump. And that all persons who are guilty of any offence – which includes disloyal utterances – are hanged at the nearest trees. Finally she reports that a mentally deranged man, who had been persuaded by his neighbours to display a white flag, had been strung up at a nearby tree.

All this is horrible and frightening, the more so because one hears this while sitting in perpetual darkness and cannot escape. Ellen's main concern is to save as much water as possible, so that her mother doesn't have to go to the pump any more.

Gine sits by her side all day long. They talk to each other a great deal and in this way help to while away the time they are forced to spend in darkness and amidst the thunder of artillery.

Their expectation of an immediate end has vanished. One no longer hopefully looks ahead to the arrival of the Russians on the morrow, but expects the continuation of the shelling. One merely wonders how violent and continuous it is going to be.

2 May 1945

Shortly after eight o'clock, the shelling suddenly stops. Gine and Ellen assume that this indicates an interval in the shooting.

Gine decides to run to the bunker to collect the blankets and pillows which she had left behind. Ellen is afraid that the cannonade could start up again and begs her not to go; but her mother is not prepared to change her mind. She has decided to go, and go she will. She promises to take every care. Then she leaves the flat.

Ellen stays behind and is plagued by her fears in the darkness. She sits bolt upright in bed and at any moment expects the resumption of the shelling. She prays that the cessation of the firing might last until her mother returns safe and sound. The tension becomes unbearable. Time seems to stand still.

Eventually she hears how the front door is opened. Outside the silence continues, and her mother returns unscathed. That, above all, is what is important, what really matters now. She heaves a sigh of relief. The tension begins to ease.

Gine rushes into the room. 'The war is over,' she shouts, 'it is all over' (she means the Nazis) – 'the Russians are here'.

Ellen hears the words. Her brain takes in the message, but her soul cannot grasp it. So this is the day for which they have waited for so long, which they have always painted in their minds. Now it is all quite different from what she had imagined, both in outside appearance and in her feelings.

Her mother opens windows and shutters. She lets light and air into the basement flat. Then she reports what she has witnessed during her outing.

While she ran along the street, she noticed soldiers in a number of house entrances, furtively changing from uniforms into 'civvies'. Then, to her surprise, she saw several SA storm troopers lined up in a corner pub. She found this very strange but didn't pay any further attention and ran on in order to get back as quickly as possible.

In the Brunnenstraße she came across several small groups of people who were engaged in lively discussion. Now she could no longer master her curiosity, joined them and caught scraps of conversation which amounted to two bits of news: 'Hitler is dead', and 'They have capitulated'. She ran on to the bunker and into the medical room. There she reported to Dr Godelmann what she had heard and wanted to know 'whether there was some truth in these rumours'. 'I don't know if capitulation has taken place', replied the doctor, 'but of Hitler's death I heard on my crystal set'.

Gine clutched her blankets and pillows and rushed back upstairs. When she reached the Brunnenstraße she saw a real-life Russian soldier. She was beside herself with joy, ran up to him, slapped him on the shoulder and said: 'Well done, comrade, well done'. He thought that she was a little crazy, but also felt that she meant well. He therefore smashed a shop window with his rifle butt and with a gesture invited her to start looting its contents. Now she thought *he* was a bit mad, turned away and ran all the way home to tell Ellen everything that had happened.

Now Gine asks whether it would be alright for her to call on the Jorams, to bring them up to date on current events. Ellen doesn't mind.

Nothing untoward can now happen to her mother, and she herself concentrates on understanding the new situation which has arisen. While her illness continues to confine her to bed in the basement flat, she tries to grasp the fact that everything has now changed.

Soon afterwards, Gine comes back with a new story.

After having rung the bell at Joram's flat, and Mrs R. had opened the door, Gine exclaimed: 'Hitler is dead'. But before she could add that capitulation had also taken place, Mrs R. shut her up and pushed her into the kitchen.

'Are you crazy?' she shouted, 'the Political Supervisor is sitting next door. He has just told us that if we utter another word, we'll hang'.

Gine silently took her by the arm, led her out of the house and showed her the Russian soldiers who had meanwhile reached the Anklamer Straße.

When they returned, the 'Political Supervisor' had already disappeared. Shortly after their arrival, a young Russian entered the flat. All who had previously been there disappeared underground into the storage cellar, which could be reached by means of a ladder, so that Gine had found herself alone with the soldier. He had said something to her in Russian and showed her a sewing needle. From this she had gathered that he was looking for a thread, found one which matched the colour of his uniform, took the needle out of his hand, threaded it and handed it back to him. When he began to stitch a tear in his cap, she indicated with a gesture that he could let her continue. She then completed the repair with professional expertise. He looked at himself in a mirror, obviously found himself exceptionally smart, was clearly very pleased with the result, and so departed.

Gine had then looked up the house companion from Poland, told him that she was Jewish and asked him to teach her a few words in Russian, such as 'Jew' and 'husband'. He told her that 'Jew' was 'Yivre' and 'husband' – in which he had apparently confused family relationships –

was 'Papka'. Equipped with this Russian vocabulary, Gine returned to Ellen.

Meanwhile, the newly appointed administration has proclaimed that front doors must not be locked any more. Their door therefore remains unbolted and is simply left on the latch.

Before long, a Russian officer appears and puts an arm around Gine in a kind-hearted manner. She assumes he has already heard that she is a Jewess and has survived Nazi persecution. She points to herself and says by way of confirmation:

'I Yivre, Papka Concentration Camp Auschwitz.'

The man looks perplexed. He removes his arm and says: 'Understand, understand. Propaganda Goebbels, Papka Auschwitz'. He gives her a tap on the shoulder and, with a friendly smile, says: 'Good, good' and disappears.

Gine is disappointed. First he was so pleased to see her and then he promptly leaves. Oh well, it doesn't matter, one couldn't have talked to him very much in any case because of the language problems.

A little later two young soldiers appear in the flat. One of them hears the ticking of the big, old fashioned alarm clock on the bedside table, shouts, 'Uhri, uhri' and seizes the booty. The other one sees Gine, says something to his comrade in Russian, takes the alarm clock from him and replaces it on the bedside table. Then he pulls his sleeve and, with a beaming face, says to Gine: 'Nix uhri, uhri ... scram!'

After both have disappeared, Gine explains that the friendly young man was her protégé with his needlework.

Post-War

3 May 1945

The issue of bread is now announced. To be precise, this means that one must be registered somewhere, so that one can subsequently buy bread.

When Gine returns with the loaf, Ellen asks her to explain the process of acquisition in precise detail. Even more important than the article obtained is the fact that they have regained their entitlement to the distribution; and most significant for her is the fact that their claim is the same as everybody else's. That is something she has never experienced before. Again and again the wants to hear about the registration – with questions and answers – in much the same way as she insisted on having her favourite story retold time after time when she was a small child.



The Zwiebel Family in 1913. *(l. to r)* Regina ('Gine'), Berta, Gusta Zwiebel, Alfred ('Bob'), Sigmund Zwiebel, Helene ('Lene'). At the back, an acquaintance



Moritz Weiß first left, front row, in a field hospital in September 1915



Moritz Weiß and Regina Zwiebel in the summer of 1929. Mor's inscription on the picture: 'In remembrance of our first excursion'



Mor (front row, first on left) take a few days off at the Baltic in 1932. Gine is behind him.



The extended Zwiebel Family in the first half of 1933. From left, *front row:* Regina Weiß ('Gine'), Gerhard Hirsch ('Hardi'), Helene Hirsch ('Lene'), Gusta Zwiebel, Inge Hirsch, Wolfgang Hirsch, Berta Zitrin. *Back row:* Moritz Weiß ('Mor'), Alfred Zwiebel ('Bob'), Martin Zitrin



Gine with Ellen, first week in May 1934. Mor's caption: 'Our little daughter's first day home'.



Gusta Zwiebel, holding Ellen, and Cäcilie Weiß, on Mor's birthday, 2 August 1934



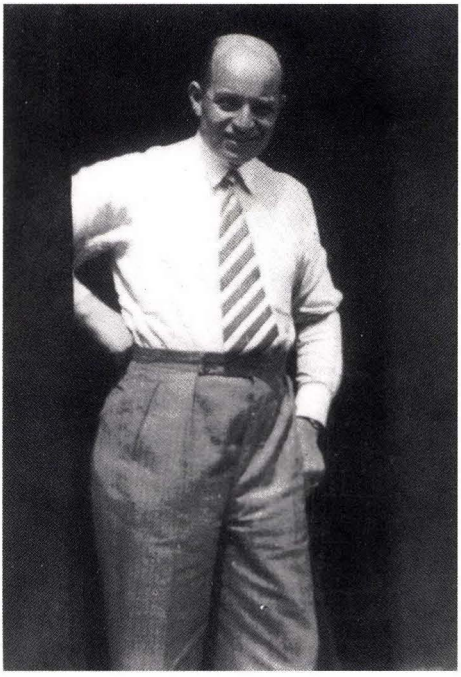
Ellen at her first home in Gubitzstraße...

with Mor...



and busily tearing off her father's buttons









Top left
Mor during a short holiday in the Riesengebirge, 1936

Top right
Ellen, beginning of 1937. Gine could never look at this picture without a sigh and remarking, 'That's what you looked like when I still combed your hair!'.

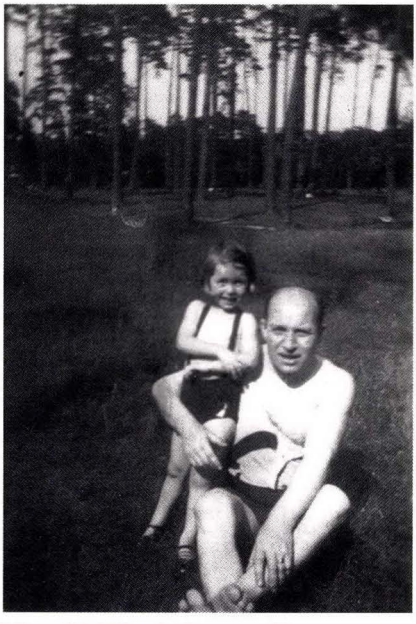
Ellen, on 31 July 1938



Johanna Löwnethal ('Aunt Hanna') with Ellen, 1935



Gine with Ellen on the balcony of their flat in Zingster Strabe, in 1936 or 1937



Mor with Ellen in Grunewald, 1937



Ellen, 1937

Top right
In the Grunewald, 1937. *From left, front row:* Wolfgand Hirsch, Hardi, Lene. *Second row*: Inge, Ellen. *In the back:* Mor

Bottom left
Berta Zitrin, first left, on her way to visit her mother and brother in Palestine in 1936

Bottom right
Inge and Ellen, 1938 or 1939









Inge and Hardi, 1939



Kurt Löwenthal, 1940



Rahel Zitrin ('Heli'), 1942



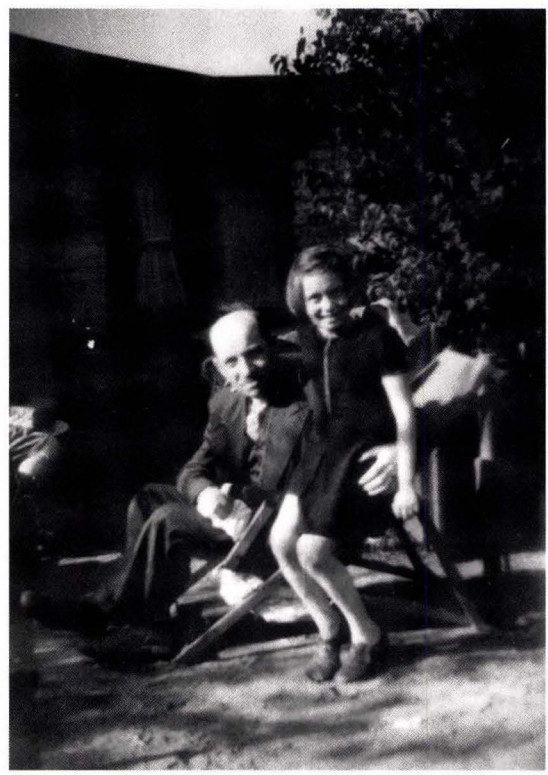
Ellen, 1939



Gine and Ellen, 22 April 1940. Ellen's first day at school



Malchow, Wiesenhöhe 8, Summer 1943. Gine on deckchair with Ellen on the left, and Irmhild Naujocks on the right. Big apple tree is on the far right.



Mor with Ellen on the path leading to the *Laube.* Summer 1943



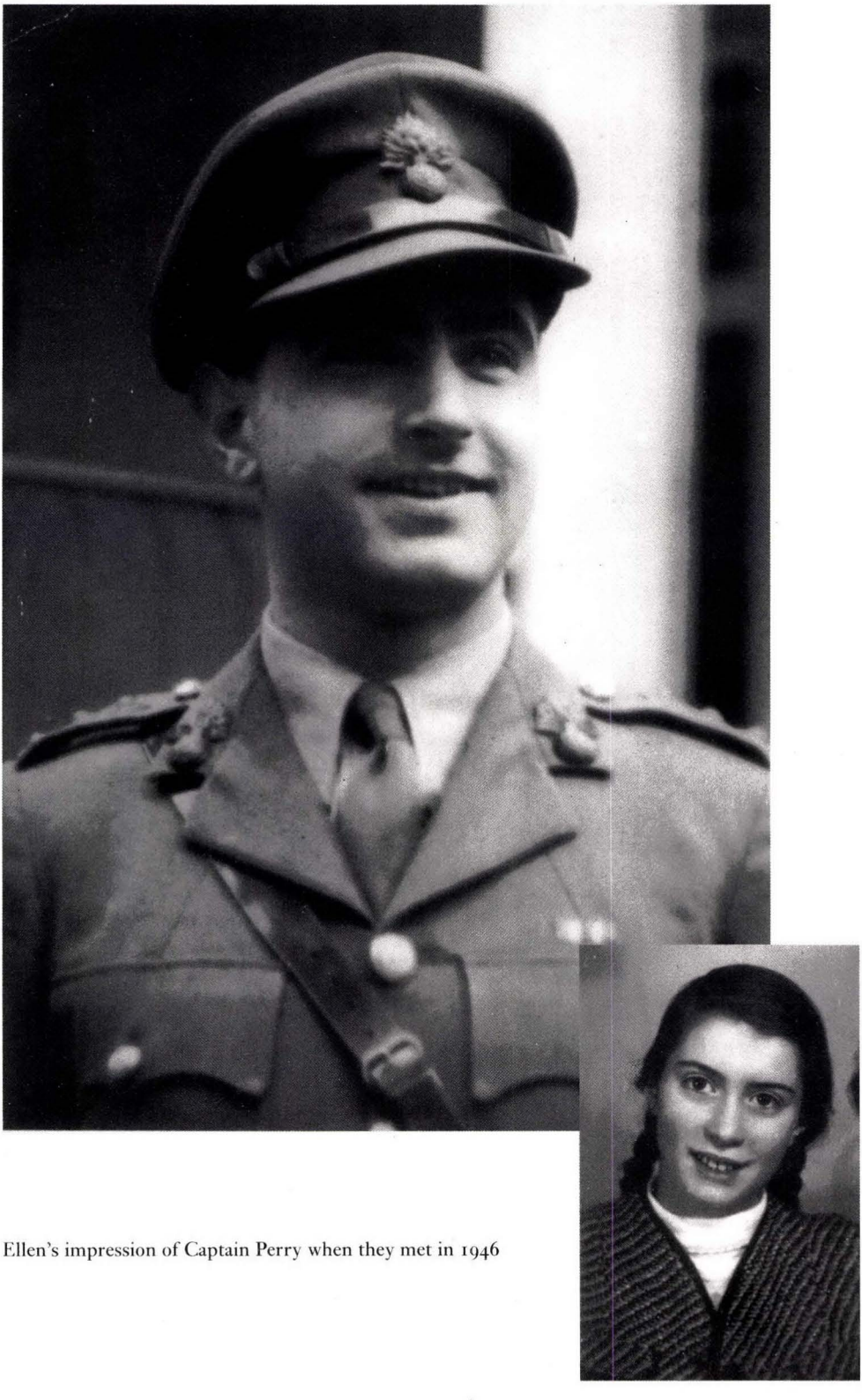


Top left
Gine and Emma Selbiger (on the right) alongside the *Laube* in front of the cherry trees. Summer 1943

Top right
Irmhild and Ellen. Summer 1943

Right
Silver Wedding of Max and Herta Naujocks, 1 March 1944. *Front row, l. to r.:* Betti Friedrich (Herta's sister), Edith Friedrich (her daughter), a neighbour's child, Helga Naujocks, Irmhild Naujocks. Ellen. *Second row:* A neighbour, Gine, Gisela Naujocks, Herta Naujocks, an acquaintance. *Back row*: Mor, Walter Friedrich (Herta's brother-in-law), Max Naujocks





Ellen's impression of Captain Perry when they met in 1946



Left: Gine, May 1944.
A photo for Ellen Rich's
postal identification card

Right: Ellen, December 1945.
Photo for identification card
issued for 'Victims of Fascism'





Gine, 1946



Max Naujocks and Ellen at a café in the 'Stalin Allee', formerly Frankfurter Allee, in 1954. The road was later restored to the original name.



Ellen in the 1970s



Gine at the Stölpchensee, Grunewald, in the 1970s



(L to r): Dr Rudolf Mayer ('Rudi'), Gine and Alfred Zwiebel ('Bob') in Brandes Street, Tel Aviv, in the 1960s

In the afternoon, Gine and Ellen return to the flat on the second floor. Mrs R and her family continue to feel safer living with her parents for the time being, and therefore gladly put their upstairs flat at their temporary disposal. Gine fulfils a long-cherished dream and goes to bed wearing a night shirt. This is regarded as a foolhardy action, but that makes no difference to her.

4 May 1945 and subsequent days

Ellen is now out of bed, fully dressed, walks up and down in the room and feels perfectly fit again; but her mother thinks that it is still too soon to allow her onto the street.

Every day now further items of food are released for distribution. Gine and Ellen relish this assurance of their daily food supply in particular and, beyond this, the very security of their existence.

Gine gradually returns to a semblance of normality. Ellen has never known one. She must slowly get used to a reality without persecution.

The first outing takes them to Dr Schwarz. He confirms Ellen's recovery from diphtheria, but finds her under-nourished. Fully dressed, and wearing shoes, she weighs 25 kg.

May 1945

Gine and Ellen feel the urgent desire to reestablish the interrupted contact with their friends and acquaintances and, of course, with Arnold, and to make sure that they have all survived the end of the war in safety. The sequence of visits is determined, not by the closeness of the relationship with the persons involved, but by the distance of the intended destination, because at this time public transport is still out of action.

The first 'outing' therefore leads them to Mrs Krüger in the Zingster Straße, which they can reach on foot in half an hour. They walk through the rubble-strewn Brunnenstraße, past burnt-out Russian tanks with charred corpses of soldiers next to them, and past women gutting dead horses, their arms covered in blood up to their elbows.

Gine tries to preserve her daughter from such impressions by constantly giving her instructions, like 'Look to your right', or 'Now turn your head to the left'. But that doesn't go very far. One has to pay careful attention to walk round or climb over debris; and in doing so you can't overlook the scene surrounding you.

At the Gesundbrunnen Station Ellen suddenly stops in her tracks: 'Are you sure that Mrs S. (a former fellow-tenant) can't denounce us?'

she asks. Of course, she can't – and Ellen also knows this deep down. To whom should she do it? But as they approach their former home, Ellen is gripped by an indefinable fear and tries to give expression to it. Her mother pacifies her with exactly the words she had expected.

They continue on their way. In the Behmstraße they find that the cinema 'Lichtburg' and the adjoining complex of nice, low-level shops are totally burnt out; but apart from this, the modern residential buildings, erected towards the end of the 1920s, have survived undamaged.

They turn into the Zingster Straße, pass their old Police Station and arrive at No. 9. They stop there, because under a new order by the Soviet *Kommandantur* front doors must now be locked even during the day. When they call out Mrs Krüger's name, former fellow-tenants appear at some of the windows, pretend to be delighted to see Gine again, shout words of welcome and throw down wrapped-up house keys. Mrs Krüger, beside herself with joy, adds hers to those already supplied. Gine makes straight for this one and enters the house with Ellen. They mount the stairs, each with her own feelings and sharing the banal statement that nothing has changed in the house entrance.

The door to their former flat has been broken open and is now standing ajar. Mrs Krüger comes towards them, takes them into her flat and tells them what had happened during the final days of the war. She mentions that her neighbour and his wife had beaten a hasty retreat before the arrival of the Red Army, who had then broken into the flat. It had been left in a terrible state.

Gine and Ellen want to inspect the scene and accompany Mrs Krüger across the landing. They are faced with a picture of devastation. The beds have been ripped open and the feathers have penetrated into all parts of the flat. In between there are piles of picture postcards. The entire crockery has been smashed to pieces. The broken fragments lie mainly in the kitchen, but can also be found in other rooms. The bathroom and its toilet have been defiled in an indescribable manner. The kitchen and living room furniture have largely been destroyed. The only pretence of tidiness reigns on the dining room table. Arranged in neat order is a collection of Nazi literature, a passport photograph of Mr Hinz, with a Nazi Party badge attached to it, and the copy of a threatening letter he had sent to his mother, signed 'Heil Hitler, Lothar Hinz'.

The next visit takes them to Arnold. Their route leads them across the dynamited Jannowitz Bridge. It lies in the water. This forces them to climb down a steep slope on one side, balance their way across some iron beams and, most difficult of all, makes them remount a slope on the other side.

After performing this somewhat acrobatic performance it is not much further to go to Arnold. The reunion with him is both joyful and melancholic. The woman with whom he still shares her home, and with whom he had previously lived illegally, had told him about Mor's arrest. She had heard about it from Ellen Rich.

After a long and absorbing conversation, in which they exchange their experiences, he accompanies his sister-in-law and his niece for the greater part of their way home. He takes them on a better route, which also avoids the destroyed bridge.

Soon after their visit to Arnold, Gine and Ellen set off on their way to Weißensee, to the address given by Herta as a rendez-vous. To their surprise and joy they find her there. Their last meeting on 18 April at Humboldthain seems an eternity away, and the news which they exchange is not all pleasing.

The *Laube* in Malchow has been severely damaged during the final days of the war, and the Naujocks have been found temporary accommodation in Weißensee. Ellen is particularly sad to learn that the Alsatian, Bianka, fell victim to the fighting.

But Herta would not have been Aunt Herta if she had not succeeded in immediately reviving a spirit of optimism. The members of her family have survived the end of the war in good health, and that, after all, is what matters. In addition, they believe that they will soon be able to return to Malchow.

Over some short distances, public transport has been restarted in the form of *Pendelverkehr* – an overcrowded point-to-point connection between a limited number of destinations. Others, not yet linked, have to be reached by walking there. An opportunity now exists for a visit to the Fenskes.

At last, in an exhausted and dust-covered but exceedingly satisfied state, Gine and Ellen reach the Helmstedter Straße. The loss of a few buttons and a torn strap are accepted as part of an unavoidable 'fare'.

Lisa, Karl-Martin and Aunt Hedwig have survived the war in good condition. Their flat has remained undamaged.

Aunt Lilala is not only appalled to hear of Ellen's diphtheria, but also that she had learnt about it only after the event. It is her firm opinion that she should always be aware of anything concerning Ellen's welfare. The fact that Ellen now appears before her in good health compensates her for the unavoidable temporary break in communication from which she had suffered.

End of May 1945

As soon as the administration looking after the block in the Zingster Straße has resumed its activity, Gine contacts them to be reinstated in her former tenancy contract. The office staff, who have always behaved nicely to her even in difficult times, are genuinely pleased to see her again. They know about the *Speer-Kündigung* and regard it as obvious that the former legal relationship should be reestablished.

There are several reasons why Gine wants to retake possession of her former living quarters. Apart from the fact that space is now very scarce, she expects that Mor and the other members of the family, of whose return she is firmly convinced, will first of all try to find her at this address. Apart from this, Ellen is irresistibly drawn back to the place where she spent her childhood.

Gine therefore now begins to restore the flat to a habitable condition, assisted by Ellen and Mrs Krüger. This job is completed relatively quickly, so that they can move in fairly soon. Both are very glad to be back in their former home, which they can once again call 'their own'.

Surviving Concentration Camp victims are now beginning to return in dribs and drabs but not, as Gine had previously expected, in garlanded wagons. They appear on foot and still wearing their prisoners' garbs. Whenever she goes out, Gine carries Mor's identity card photograph readily in her hand. and approaches anyone who can be identified as a Concentration Camp survivor, shows him the picture and asks whether the person concerned has by any chance come across her husband. They all respond with sympathy, use their thumbs to cover the fringe of his hair to gain the impression of a shaved skull, and then regretfully shake their heads.

In the meantime, the Jewish Community has been reestablished at the Oranienburger Straße 28. One goes there, gets registered, looks at the first, still incomplete lists of survivors and meets other people who have come through the ordeal of persecution, either in Concentration Camps, through living in hiding, or in 'mixed' marriages.

Gine makes the acquaintance of a couple named Katz, who come from Recklinghausen. They had moved to Berlin during the war, where they expected a better chance to hide than in the Rhineland. They managed to survive here illegally, like Mrs Katz's brother, Mr Fernbach and his family. Now Willi and Johanna Katz are without a home and continue to be put up by the people who offered them refuge. Gine promises to speak to her block administration on their behalf. She does so without delay

and succeeds in obtaining a flat for them in the Heidebrinker Straße, which runs parallel to the Zingster Straße. The Katz's are delighted, and one soon gets well acquainted.

Beginning of June 1945

Gine, once again searching for Mor with the help of the photo from his identity card, approaches two young men in KZ garb in the Badstraße. They cast one look at the picture and, without bothering to cover up the hair, promptly assert that they know him. Gine mentions his name, whereupon they declare that they were with Moritz in Sachsenhausen. He had, however, remained behind in the sick-bay, presumably because he was suffering from tuberculosis.

Gine and Ellen immediately notice the different reaction of these two, by comparison with other former KZ inmates. The latter, after carefully examining the photo, had often pointed out that, amongst other things, identification was made more difficult by changes in appearance compared with previous pictures, due to starvation. But Gine and Ellen dismiss all their initial doubts as quickly as they have arisen.

The opinions expressed by these men are too definite, and the news too good, not to believe them – and they want to believe them. Reference to Mor's possible tuberculosis hardly worries them. They will take him home and nurse him back to health.

Next day, Gine gets in touch with a succession of public offices to obtain transport to Sachsenhausen. She returns with the good news that a horse-drawn cart would be available for them tomorrow at 11 a.m.

They punctually arrive at the address in the Brunnenstraße, where they duly find horse and vehicle – normally used for transporting agricultural produce – waiting for them.

The coachman tells them to sit at the back of the cart, on which scraps of hay from the last delivery are still scattered. They gather them into piles on which to sit and make themselves comfortable. The wooden cart wheels rattle over the cobble stones and bump into innumerable potholes, and it isn't long before they can feel every bone in their bodies. After a while, the coachman extends a friendly invitation to Ellen to join him on his bench. She is much more comfortable up there, and almost feels that she is in charge of the vehicle. At the same time she feels embarrassed to occupy this 'luxury seat' while her mother is shaken at the back, and she therefore returns to her before long.

The coachman first of all makes for Oranienburg, with the intention

of trying to locate the former Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen from there. But he doesn't even know the way to that place, takes a number of wrong turnings and makes many detours.

When he finally arrives at Oranienburg after a journey lasting several hours, he tries to find out from the local population where the Concentration Camp is located. No one, without exception, is prepared to admit that they know of the existence of something like a 'KZ' in the district, whether near or far.

The coachman therefore has no option but to follow the direction in which he supposes the camp to lie and criss-crosses a nearby forest. Here, too, no person they encounter is prepared to provide any helpful information. As they reach the point of abandoning the search for their destination, the long, high, grey wall of the Concentration Camp appears at some distance ahead of them. Its top is lined with barbed wire, which used to be charged with electricity. At regular intervals they see the old signs: 'Halt – Fire without Warning!'

While they drive along the outside of this barricade, Gine says bitterly, 'The walls were too low to be seen, and too high for the cries of their tortured inmates to be heard'. This remark touches Ellen through and through.

At the entrance they dismount from the cart. The coachman is going to await their return here.

They pass through the iron gate, now standing open, and continue to walk across a wide square. While Ellen does so, she has the depressing sensation of being aware of her father's feeling, when he found himself here, as the gates closed behind him. After passing through the second gate she becomes dreadfully conscious of the appalling finality.

They now see long rows of barracks, their gable walls facing them. On each of these walls one single word is displayed in white paint. Read collectively, as far as the eye can reach, the following text emerges: *Es gibt einen Weg in die Freiheit. Die Meilensteine dazu sind Arbeit, Ehrlichkeit, Fleiß* ... ('There is a way into freedom. The milestones marking it are Work, Honesty, Diligence ...') The contemptuous scorn which is expressed by this inscription is as repulsive as it is shattering.

A poster, evidently erected very recently, points the way to the Medical Centre. They follow the indicated direction and arrive at two long barracks. The building on the right contains the hospital for which they are looking. The one on the left apparently houses the administration. Its windows are adorned with boxes filled with blooming flowers, and brightly painted benches stand in front of it. A friendly, acceptable appearance has been created and conveys the feeling that one can breathe again. Gine indicates

to Ellen that she should wait on one of the benches. She wants to save her from further terrible experiences.

Ellen doesn't mind staying behind in the deserted passage. She sits on the bench in radiant sunshine in an immediate environment which conveys an impression of normality. But as time passes by, she gradually loses the hope to see her mother and father leave the opposite barrack together.

Eventually, Gine emerges through the door, crying, and accompanied by a man in a white coat – apparently a doctor. He puts his arm around her consolingly and speaks to her in a pacifying manner. Then he says good-bye.

Gine now comes over to Ellen and tells her what was already clear to her: that she did not find Mor at this hospital. After studying his records, the doctor had assured her that he had never been incarcerated in Sachsenhausen. In view of her continuing doubts he had put his lists at her disposal.

The impression which she had received inside the barracks had been dreadful. The patients lying in the beds had been completely apathetic. Not one of them had troubled to turn his head towards her.

She is so affected by what she has seen that she simply has to unburden this image by giving a short account to Ellen. While they are still talking, they see a young girl on two crutches, who hobbles down the end of the passage way with great effort.

'Let's get away from here', says Gine and sets off with Ellen in the opposite direction, towards the exit. As they once again cross the wide, open square, Ellen thinks: 'So he hasn't been here after all. But somewhere, such a dreadful gate will have been shut behind him, and he will have felt exactly what I sensed before'.

The coachman is not surprised to see them return unaccompanied. He had evidently not expected them to bring the missing third person back.

Now he is completely familiar with the way home and it seems extraordinary how quickly he is back at the Brunnenstraße.

When they arrive back at home, everything looks sad and grey. The day, which had started so full of hope, dissolves in disappointment and resignation.

June 1945

Ellen is afraid of the approaching 27th June. It becomes a disastrous day for her.

Middle of June 1945

Teaching has started again. The schools are opening their doors one after the other.

Gine wants to enrol Ellen in an *Oberschule* (an Upper Secondary School), but such a school is not yet available in the district of Wedding. She must therefore be content to send Ellen to a *Mittelschule.* In accordance with the level of her education, Ellen would enter the 3rd Form, while her age would qualify her for admission to the 6th Form, or the 2nd Form in a *Mittelschule.* But since English is taught from the fifth school year, her mother agrees with the school on the compromise solution of enrolment in the first Middle School class (5th year).

Both appear on the opening day in the Auguste-Schmidt-Mädchen-Mittelschule in the Gotenburger Straße where the courtyard is crammed with pupils and their mothers. Ellen is filled with joyful excitement at the prospect of being able to return to school. On the landing of a small staircase leading into the school building a young woman appears, wearing a brown costume with a matching headband in her fair hair.

'That's the one I'd like to be my teacher', says Ellen.

'It could be anybody', replies her mother, worried that Ellen might possibly be disappointed. 'And whoever it turns out to be might be even nicer than this one'.

But for the first time Ellen is immediately granted a wish. The young lady's name is Ingeborg Czunczuleit, and she becomes her Form Mistress.

The classrooms are filled to the last place, and class frequencies are very high because numerous school buildings were destroyed in air raids, and many teachers are still held as prisoners of war, or had even been killed. The First Class in the Middle School is divided into four parallel Forms. Ellen is allocated to Form 1a. It currently contains fifty-eight pupils.

Many teachers are unqualified for the subjects they have to teach. They just have to learn a little more quickly than their pupils. Teaching aids are not available, at least as far as the pupils are concerned. Ellen therefore regards her mother's account of having been taught with the aid of text books as completely out of date. Such things are not used at the Auguste-Schmidt-Schule, and one makes good progress in spite of this.

Writing paper is donated by charitable friends and acquaintances. One uses exercise books of every shape or size, insofar as complete samples come into one's possession at all. Otherwise one uses torn-out pages removed from former business stationery, single sheets taken from writing blocks – in fact, anything on which one can write. Pens, nibs and ink can

be bought. When needed at school, the friendly porter, Mr Pieler, fills the small, white ink pots which are fitted into the school desks.

Ellen's first post-war school satchel consists of successful leather imitation, made of cardboard. Its only mishap occurs when it is exposed to its first downpour: it causes the cover to come adrift. In future, Ellen only carries an open box on her back. That presents no problems, except when there are further rainfalls.

Gine informs Miss Czunculeit of Ellen's past and asks her to pay special regard to her needs. The teacher reacts in the most understanding way and assures her that she will do so. She treats this information with discretion and does not mention it to Ellen, but extends the most sensitive understanding to a girl who is still very shy. She accepts her as she is, conveys to her a most important sense of belonging, and lets her understand, as an evident matter of fact, that she is a natural member of the Form's community. Ellen quickly develops a deep affection to her and, imperceptively, a sense of belonging to the Class.

Miss Czunculeit teaches German and Sport. Ellen follows the German lessons as if they had never been interrupted, thanks to her mother's efforts after the closing of the Jewish School. But her handwriting, once rewarded with the mark 'Very Good', is shocking. Her teacher simply confines herself, without any further comment, to indicating with red marks the various directions in which the individual letters are pointing. That has the desired effect. Ellen tries to fulfil the silent expectations which are thus conveyed to her.

As far as Sport is concerned, she is a hopeless case. Miss Czunzculeit, however, gives mercy precedence over justice and awards a Grade 3 (Satisfactory) mark which is clearly not deserved.

The other instructors teaching this Form are also nice – especially Mrs Fürle, the English teacher. She appreciates Ellen's translations of English poems into German verses, does not object to her poor handwriting and actually declares that it demonstrates thoughtfulness when you cross out some words and scribble others over the top. Since Ellen exercises this 'thoughtfulness' quite frequently, this reasoning offers her a good basis for a counter-argument to her mother's comments.

However nice other teachers turn out to be, nobody remotely approaches Miss Czunczuleit's popularity, either in Ellen's or her fellow-pupils' opinion. Her position in the Class is unchallengeable.

1 July 1945

Lisa celebrates her first birthday in peacetime with carrot cake and

malt coffee. What she misses most of all is 'real' coffee. It represents 'life's elixir' for her.

Beginning of July 1945

The 'English' and Americans now join the occupation force in Berlin. The districts of Wedding, as well as Wilmersdorf in which the Fenskes are living, become part of the British Sector. Gine and Ellen's all other friends and acquaintances continue to live in the 'Russian' – properly named the 'Soviet' – Sector.

Summer of 1945

Waiting and hoping for the return of missing relatives forms the essential 'occupation' since liberation. The torment of this activity lies in an intensive mental concern which offers virtually no scope for action. Nevertheless one expects to receive confirmation of their survival, and prepares as far as possible for the anticipated homecoming of one's family.

Reasonably durable items of food are saved despite their shortage, to make sure that the hoped-for reunion can be celebrated properly, and that those who suffered infinitely worse deprivations than oneself can be offered something 'special'.

Whenever she goes out, Gine informs Mrs Krüger when she expects to be back. She usually also tells her precisely where she is going, so that the relatives, whose return is expected every day, can reach her promptly. When she gets back she contacts her neighbour; but the result is invariably negative.

New lists of survivors are constantly published. Whenever the Jewish Community receives additional information, which usually comes from international organisations, it issues further lists – but this succession of publications merely continues to repeat the old names, with only a very few additions. Gine and Ellen regularly examine them.

On one of these occasions they discover the name of Helene Hirsch, née Zobel (not 'Zwiebel'), with Lene's birthday, but a small deviation from the year of her birth. Was this due to a misprint? That can surely be assumed. But if Lene has become a sub-tenant somewhere in Berlin, as the entry indicates, then why has she not contacted Gine, whose name is entered in all lists? Perhaps she has only just arrived and is still unaware of the existence of these lists.

Gine and Ellen still have not learnt their lesson from the experience at Sachsenhausen, and travel to the given address. When they ring the

bell and a fair haired woman appears at the door, Gine asks for Mrs Hirsch.

'I am Mrs Hirsch', is the reply.

Gine breaks into tears. Mrs Hirsch doesn't know what to think of this. When Gine has explained everything, she is full of sympathy and invites them both inside. One talks for a little while and then parts company again.

Gine now cries constantly after inspecting the lists, when every enquiry is answered with a regretful headshaking by Mrs Krüger, and as a general consequence of the whole discouraging mood in which she finds herself. She develops conjunctivitis which obstinately resists treatment.

She also suffers from heart attacks. Palpitations are combined with conditions of anxiety, and this also requires medical attention.

Apart from this, she is worried, without justification, about her daughter. Ellen is unable to spend any time after school talking with her classmates, because her mother is concerned whenever her return is delayed. If a lesson is unexpectedly extended, or for any other reason she does not turn up precisely when expected, Ellen, on her way back, meets her mother in search for her.

On the other hand, Gine warmly welcomes Ellen's contacts with other pupils, especially with Gertraude Hartmann, who sits next to her at school. The girls have become friends and visit each other's homes.

Middle of August 1945

France now joins the occupation forces of Berlin as the fourth power. The district of Wedding is allocated to the French and remains a part of their Sector.

As far as the population is concerned, this makes no noticeable difference. The distribution of food has already been organised in every detail.

There are five groups of ration cards:

Card 1 for heavy manual and 'intellectual' workers;

Card 2 for ordinary workers;

Card 3 for office workers;

Card 4 for children; and

Card 5 for 'normal' consumers.

Gine is at first issued with Card 5. Her and Ellen's rations are subsequently upgraded for three months to Card 1. This applies to 'Victims of Fascism', as those persecuted by the Nazis are now called.

Subsequently, all former victims are upgraded by one Group above that to which they would normally be entitled. Gine now receives Card 3, Ellen stays on Card 4, which meets a child's needs more adequately than the Group 3 ration.

Although the supply of food is sufficient, many items are scarce or are completely unobtainable. Everybody therefore gets hold of the things they want 'round the back'. Gine buys brown sugar in the 'black' market. This additional purchase can be consumed in a multitude of ways, such as spreading it on bread. When Ellen eats such 'sugar sandwiches' – naturally without butter, because this would be grossly wasteful – she is very content.

Gine feels that she owes Ellen the fulfilment of a promise which she had actually never given. But in one of her forecasts of post-war conditions she had predicted: 'When there is peace, you will be given some chocolate'. Ellen is meanwhile fully aware that this is one of many deceptive ideas, but her mother believes that this, at any rate, was a vision which she might be able to realise.

She has heard that a regular Black Market has developed in the Tiergarten where, unlike brown sugar, you can get hold of items which are unobtainable from acquaintances who, in turn, can obtain them from *their* acquaintances. She therefore sets off in that direction, in company with Lisa and Ellen, in order to buy chocolate.

The park, once renowned for its attraction and character, has been totally deprived of its beauty. The trees have suffered under the impact of the air raids, while the remainder have fallen victim to the population's axe in search of firewood for the coming winter.

The vast open expanse, which provides an unimpeded view all the way to the Brandenburger Tor, is now crowded with German and Allied black marketeers who seem able to offer anything that one can't obtain in the official market.

Gine buys two bars of Hershey's chocolate from an American soldier for 50 RM each. That is a crazy price under any circumstances, but for one who relies on arduously rescued savings and a tiny pension it represents a fortune. This acquisition of a luxury article nevertheless fills Gine with enormous satisfaction and the conviction that this expenditure was well worth while.

Suddenly one hears the sound of whistles, as the police launch a raid to stop the illegal business in the Tiergarten. Black marketeers as well as customers rush off in a panic. Lisa, who has not bought anything, watches the scene with interest. Ellen feels scared, but Gine keeps her nerves.

She evidently has the soothing confidence that the worst that can happen to her is punishment for the offence of illegally buying two bars of chocolate. And that can't be too bad in a society in which law and order have been reestablished.

As they walk on, Gine wonders whether it might not be best simply to eat the chocolate, and so dispose of the 'corpus delicti'; but she promptly rejects this thought. These goods are too precious, and the money invested in them was earned with too much effort.

On approaching the Brandenburg Gate, they see a man who walks at a leisurely pace into the Tiergarten through a side opening . Gine points at him and says: 'Where he comes in, we can go out'. And so they manage to leave the Tiergarten unchallenged. On the Pariser Platz they notice a considerable number of American soldiers who enthusiastically photograph people jumping out of windows of the adjoining, burnt-out building in the process of escaping from the police.

Gine, Lisa and Ellen continue on their way down the 'Linden' (Unter den Linden). At a corner they see a Russian soldier who offers a variety of goods for barter. Lisa shows a keen interest in the selection. She finally decides, despite her friend's emphatic protest, to exchange her wristwatch against one pound (500 grammes) of coffee beans and one pound of butter.

Gine can't get over this transaction, but Lisa has no regrets at all. The words 'coffee beans' melt like butter on her tongue.

But it is not only the Black Market which now flourishes: it is also small businesses and workshops which shoot out of the ground like mushrooms. Everything that can prove its use in some way, and can be obtained in an acceptable manner, is now open to trade.

Red ribbons used for military decorations are combined with multi-coloured borders and made into aprons. Remainder stocks of textile bags and collars which have been found goodness-knows-where are sold as repair material for articles of clothing. Obsolete maps are converted into paper bags for which there is an enormous demand, because one needs them to buy rationed food. While this is done, the customers jealously attend to the accurate weighing of the empty bags before they are filled with sugar or the grey mass described as flour.

A young tenant, Ilse Zietz, who has moved into Zingster Straße 9, forms a friendship with Gine and Ellen. She stitches together whatever cloth remnants she can collect and produces delightful small animals which she stuffs with soft waste material and then sells her product to shops. They market them as gift articles or arts and crafts products and

add them to articles which have been salvaged from bomb damaged or destroyed premises.

Many women offer their services as expert knitters for the manufacture of pullovers, jackets or bathing costumes, using wool supplied by the customer. Others, with sewing experience, produce dresses, skirts and blouses or carry out alterations.

Late summer 1945

At last good news arrives, combined with a sad one. Reinhard Frank makes contact from Deggendorf, Bavaria, where he has now finished up. He has survived Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, but has to report that he has learnt of Anita's death, apparently as a result of typhoid, in Bergen-Belsen a few days before liberation of the camp.

He sends Gine a packet of sugar cubes, through an acquaintance visiting Berlin with a special travel permit. They now keep in contact.

A little later, Gine and Ellen meet the whole Piefke family, who have fled from Hirschberg in Silesia and have found their home at the Kottbusser Damm in ruins. They share the memory of the flat which they had once used and lost. Moreover, Gine and Ellen are very grateful to the Piefkes for their selfless help when they put their home at the Weiß family's disposal, regardless of the great risk they took by doing so. They like each other and continue their acquaintance. Piefkes are allocated a flat in Britz, situated in the American Sector.

Beginning of September 1945

The drinking water is no longer above suspicion. The war-time damage suffered by many water mains has not yet been repaired and it may be contaminated. It is therefore officially recommended that only boiled water should be consumed. Gine always has a pot-full of it standing in the kitchen; but it has a boring taste, and from time to time Ellen secretly drinks water from the tap without suffering any harm.

Typhoid has now broken out in Berlin. The population is therefore instructed to be vaccinated against it. The order is enforced by restricting the issue of ration cards to those who produce their vaccination certificate. Children have to be vaccinated in their schools and are given three jabs at intervals of one week.

In the Auguste-Schmidt-Schule the pupils have to line up in alphabetical order to be subjected to this procedure. Ellen is the penultimate member of the queue – the rear is brought up by her class-mate Ingrid Wieland –

and so, on three successive occasions, she has to watch how virtually everybody else is subjected to being pricked in the arm.

The hard-earned vaccination certificate is finally issued on the back of a cut-up Russian military map.

September 1945

On the occasion of the first post-war Jewish High Holydays, Berlin's Jews attend service in the only remaining undamaged Synagogue, situated in the Rykestraße in the Soviet Sector. According to traditional Jewish custom, men and women sit in separate sections, the men usually on the ground floor, the women in the gallery.

On this day of Rosh Hashanah (the festival of New Year) the men are joined by soldiers of all four Allied Forces, wearing their Tallith (prayer shawl) over their uniforms, and united in prayer with each other and the survivors of Nazi persecution. This experience conveys a deep sense of community with Berlin's Jews.

That same afternoon, Lisa and 'Tante Hedwig' – so called also by Gine during their illegal existence – are invited. It is as natural for Gine and Ellen as it is for them that they should spend the beginning of the Jewish New Year together. During the difficult times which they have experienced together they have developed a powerful sense of belonging together above and beyond their previous friendship.

Early autumn 1945

Gine is contacted by an acquaintance of her sister Lene. Her name is Margot Cohn. She was imprisoned with Lene and her children in Theresienstadt.

Miss Cohn recounts details about the experiences of Gine's relatives. First, Hardi was selected for deportation to Auschwitz in September 1944. Thereupon Lene volunteered to join him with Inge. They were not even taken on the same transport.

Autumn 1945

One of the Jewish Hospital rooms in the Iranische Straße is now used for Religion Classes. Mr Fernbach, the brother of Mrs Katz, is the first teacher. He is succeeded by The Rev Riesenburger, who has survived the Nazis on account of his 'mixed marriage'.

It is said that ten Jewish children up to the age of fourteen years have

survived in Berlin. Most of them attend the Class. The lessons are also attended by some young people who used to be described as 'Mischlinge', and whose parents now want them to be brought up in the Jewish faith.

Berlin's Jews are now supported by an American Jewish aid organisation, called 'American Joint Distribution Committee', commonly known as 'Der Joint'.

Regularly every month, members of the Jewish Community receive a so-called 'Joint Parcel', which in fact it isn't: it is the allocation of items which one collects at a distribution centre. At first, the Joint confines itself to the issue of food which is evidently acquired locally, such as potatoes. These represent a welcome change of the menu, as normally only dried potatoes are available.

23 October 1945

On her fortieth birthday Gine is indescribably sad. She had so hoped with all her heart to celebrate it with Mor and together with his and her brothers and sisters and their families, as they had always done in the past. Now she totally abandons any celebration.

Ellen's small, home-made presents give her some pleasure, or at any rate Gine pretends that they do. Beyond this she spends the entire day in tears, even when Lisa appears during the afternoon to congratulate her.

November 1945

A distant relative, who emigrated from Cottbus to England at the age of twelve years, and now a member of the British Army, visits Gine. He has obtained her address from her mother, Gusta Zwiebel, through his parents, living in Palestine. The joy of reunion is great, almost as great as Gine's happiness at having regained contact with her mother and brother. So far there is no postal communication with foreign countries, but the 'cousin' immediately takes charge of a letter for dispatch with his own military mail. He also mentions to Gine that he is due to go on an extended leave in a few days' time.

Before his departure he introduces her to a Corporal who is prepared to assume responsibility for the dispatch of letters. This is a little irregular, but under the prevailing conditions exceedingly helpful.

30 November 1945

The first peacetime Chanukah is sadder than the last one celebrated during the war. Although the pressure of persecution has been lifted, food is available and liberty has come, one is all alone.

Ellen's feelings are reflected in her poem, reproduced on p. 431, and written shortly before the festival. In addition to the poem, she has knitted a pair of socks for her mother (under Aunt Hedwig's guidance) and a short scarf (made at school). Gine, for her part, has scoured many of the new shops and has carefully assembled a collection of presents which, she is convinced, will give Ellen great pleasure. The pick of the bunch is a sledge.

Both of them try to enjoy their mutual gifts. But they are overwhelmed by their memories. They sit together and cry.

Ellen's Chanukah Poem,
dedicated to her Mother, 1945.

At Chanukah,
The first in peace,
I wish you joy and happiness,
But, sadly, there will be distress
As we are both now all alone
Without a single loved one.

Not one of the lovely circle
Who used to celebrate with us,
Not one comes in joyful manner
To us for Chanukah.

Only we are here,
Only we alone,
We are still here -
No Aunt, no Uncle, no Papa!
Therefore, let us forever
Treat each other with affection.

I certainly don't want, dear Mum,
To burden still your heart,
I want to give you happiness,
But fear it can't be done.

Now do I wish with all my heart
That the two gifts I have made

May not fail to meet your taste:
That's what I dearly hope today.

As the poem nears its end,
Ten kisses will forthwith be sent

from your

Ellen

Beginning of December 1945

The Jewish Community organises a Chanukah celebration. Each child receives a small bag filled with sweets, and a present. Ellen is given a cedarwood box of which she is particularly fond.

December 1945

During a visit to the Jewish Community Gine meets a childhood friend of Mor's, named Leo Kronheim. She learns from him that both were imprisoned at Auschwitz, and that in November 1944 Mor was sent to the West on one of the terrible transports, now called 'the death marches'. He was not aware of the exact destination.

There is no doubt about the reliability of this information. It also corresponds with that contained in Willi Selbiger's message dating back to the autumn of 1944, in which he reported that he had met Mor at Auschwitz.

Willi Selbiger has likewise failed to come back.

Gine is slowly losing her hope of Mor's return, but Ellen is not prepared to abandon hers.

One now hears frequently of persons who had survived Concentration Camps or illegal existence, and who were then erroneously taken Prisoners of War by the Russians. Now they, too, are beginning to filter back. Perhaps, thinks Ellen, this is what happened to her father; and in that case it is impossible to predict when he will be released. She clings to this thought, feels confirmed in her belief by each case which comes to her knowledge and is relieved by the fact that Gine likewise gains hope from this information.

18 December 1945

The *Magistrat* of Berlin has formed a *Hauptausschuß 'Opfer des*

Faschismus' (Central Committee for Victims of Fascism) which decides on appropriate levels of recognition for those who were persecuted by the Nazis. Gine is issued today with her red identity card, the *OdF-Ausweis,* complete with her photograph and printed in four languages – German, Russian, English and French. (*See p. 418*)

24 December 1945

Gine and Ellen see the Fenskes today for their Christmas visit. Lisa has now changed the custom of inviting them from Christmas Eve to Christmas Day.

Her brother Rudi has returned from a British Prisoner of War Camp a short time ago and looks much better nourished than all the others present. No news had been received from Fritz.

The Christmas tree glistens in the splendour of the carefully preserved old glass orbs and the equally well kept and straightened strips of *Lametta,* and is shining in the glow of candles whose cost seems unimaginable. Their flames warm not only the hearts but happily, if one stands close enough, also the hands – just a little.

The central heating is no longer in operation. It is 'replaced' by a small cast iron oven which has been erected in a remote corner of the dining-room and whose exhaust pipe runs along the wall to the window and, through it, into the open. In districts where houses were equipped with central heating, the sight of exhaust pipe endings sticking out of the windows, is now quite common.

Fenskes no longer have a telephone either. That is reserved for specially favoured persons who need it for officially recognised, important purposes. One fellow-tenant at Helmstedter Straße 14, who is the lucky owner of a telephone, has given Lisa permission to be contacted via her connection.

25 December 1945

The first Christmas Day is, from now on, reserved for the Naujocks, who have returned to Malchow. The local administration has put a solid house at their disposal, which is situated near a tiny lake, not far from the entrance to the village.

Gine loads up a sledge intended for Helga and Irmhild with the entire family's presents. She acquired it at the same time as she got the one for Ellen at Chanukah, and thereby bought up the shop's entire available supply.

Her careful planning now proves its merit, because she and Ellen must cover the three kilometers from Weißensee on foot, since the bus connection to Malchow has not yet been restored. It is therefore helpful, as well as enormously enjoyable, to pull the fully laden sledge across the newly fallen snow. A Russian soldier who is mounting guard in front of a house, laughs when he catches sight and waves to them.

31 December 1945

Gine has decided to organise a really merry New Year's Eve celebration. She does not want herself or Ellen to be dominated by the despondent atmosphere which gripped both of them at Chanukah.

The Fenskes with Tante Hedwig, Arnold, Ilse Zietz and several acquaintances who have survived illegal existence or the Concentration Camps have accepted her invitation. Gine has decorated the living-room with paper streamers in much the same way as she had arranged the coloured ribbons in company with Mor for their Chanukah celebrations. By way of a great surprise she prepares a huge bowl of potato salad.

Nearly all guests contribute sandwiches, which are offered on communal plates. Ilse Zietz paints artistic name plates and Arnold, a skilled distiller, brews an alcoholic drink with the aid of genuine and very expensive ingredients.

The New Year's Eve party turns out to be a complete success. The atmosphere among all participants is outstanding. Evidently supported by Arnold's liqueur, they celebrate their survival of war and persecution. But on New Year's Day, when Gine and Ellen sweep up the confetti which somebody had brought and which has settled between the floor boards, they pensively reflect on how they could have celebrated the previous night in such a merry fashion.

January 1946

The kitchen is currently the only heated and therefore inhabited room in the flat during the day. The coal ration is limited to 25 kg for the entire winter and was used up after a short time. Gine therefore found it necessary to obtain fuel on the 'black' market.

She buys just one cwt of brown coal, which is usable in the tiled oven. That makes it possible to heat the living-room on twelve occasions. The bedroom inevitably remains cold. She also manages to obtain some anthracite coal, which can only be burnt in the kitchen stove, and with which she is able simultaneously to produce warmth and cooking energy.

Beginning of 1946

Ellen has obtained a clothing coupon for a new overcoat. It is dark blue, drawn through with red and yellow threads, as hard as a board and incapable of warming its wearer. But she who wants to look beautiful must freeze, thinks Ellen, and therefore wants to wear it regardless. Her mother, however, manages to persuade her to keep this precious piece in store until spring and meanwhile to return to the old, warm and artistically lengthened winter coat.

A little while later she is issued with a coupon for a pair of shoes. These are greeted even more joyfully than the coat, because Gine could always conjure up miracles with articles of clothing, however limited.

These shoes, made, as it appears to Ellen, of particularly fine brown leather, are her first new ones for seven years, or more than half her lifetime: they are precious to her. She only puts them on for special occasions – and on those it invariably rains.

April 1946

Mr and Mrs Katz invite Gine and Ellen for the two 'Seder Evenings' (Order of Service) of Pessach, the Passover Festival. The name derives from the ceremony which is carried out in accordance with a strict sequence. One reads the Hagadah, the story of the exit of the Children of Israel from Egypt, consumes a variety of small helpings of food which, according to their recipe, are intended to symbolise the sufferings of the Israelites and, towards the middle of the celebration, enjoys a generous meal which is typical of a contemporary festival.

Willi and Johanna Katz have invited about a dozen guests, among them the American Army Rabbi, Dr Michael Munk, a former Berliner with whom Gine and Ellen become well acquainted, and a lady who is a member of the British Jewish Relief Unit.

Mrs Katz offers an impressive table and excellently prepared dishes. Her husband conducts a traditional evening service and, with humour and profound knowledge, guides the party through the Hagadah with its commentaries and explanations.

The rules of Pessach stipulate that instead of leavened bread Matza is eaten and that during the ceremony four cups of wine are drunk. In effect this amounts to only one or two cups, since they have to be refilled at certain points in the text, regardless of whether they are empty or not.

Full or empty, as far as Ellen is concerned, this is the first taste of wine in her life. As one approaches the end of the ceremony with its lovely songs, tiredness overwhelms her, the objects around her become

blurred, and the sounds escape into the distance. While she tries to keep her eyes open, she hears Mrs Katz's laughing voice exclaim from the other end of the table: 'Ellen is falling asleep'. And that is what happens.

Second half of April 1946

Margot Cohn, with whom Gine still maintains contacts, invites her and Ellen to the Argentinische Allee in Dahlem. There they meet Margot's cousin, a young, good-looking British officer.

His name is Peter Perry. He is very charming and on their way home gives them a lift to the nearest Underground Station in his car. As he takes leave of them, he promises to visit them occasionally.

He keeps his word, soon pays his first visit and thereafter calls quite regularly. He always brings something along, like doughnuts, white crisp rolls and other unobtainable delicacies.

On one occasion he presents Ellen with an electric toy cooker. He treats her with what seems to her like the distant benevolence of a young man who doesn't quite know how to deal with an adolescent girl.

For Gine his visits represent a source of optimism and spiritual uplift. She holds him in great esteem and admires him.

May 1946

During an exceptionally hot day for this time of the year Ellen suffers a particularly acute attack of breathlessness. A woman doctor summoned from the neighbourhood explains to her in a calm and easily comprehensible manner how she can control these conditions by means of certain breathing exercises. Ellen is very accessible to her considerate manner and gratefully accepts her advice.

Despite this procedure it always takes a little while before the breathing technique becomes effective. The first visible symptom during an attack is that Ellen's face turns chalk-white, so that when it occurs in a crowded public vehicle one of the passengers invariably gets up to offer her a seat. Sometimes members of the Allied Forces are involved. On one occasion, two Britons lay her down on a bench in an *S-Bahn* (a city train), another time a Frenchman offers her a seat in a tram.

The important thing is that she now knows how to handle this business.

Early summer 1946

The Manager of the Jewish Old Age Home, Leo Fiedler, mentions to

Gine that they are experiencing a considerable shortage of vegetables. She offers to ask a woman peasant in Malchow whether she was able to supply the necessary fresh products. This is, in fact, the case, and Gine is appointed the Jewish Community's honorary 'vegetable buyer'.

She accompanies the loads from Malchow to the Iranische Straße and occasionally experiences difficulties with Russian border sentries. She therefore obtains an 'official' certificate from the administration of the Home, which is translated into Russian in a language bureau. The text, in their own language, complete with a stamp from the bureau, helps to change the guards' minds. They allow Gine with her load of vegetables to pass unhindered.

Summer 1946

In the district of Wedding an *Oberschule* (Senior School) is opened. Ellen could now be transferred to it, but doesn't want to leave Miss Czunczuleit under any circumstances. Her mother would quite like Ellen to change schools, but on the other hand she is afraid that a separation from her teacher could have a detrimental effect on her.

In addition, she herself is very impressed by Miss Czunczuleit, who dedicates her whole personality to her profession and conducts her lessons in a manner which is both interesting and humane. She starts each period with a song which is chosen by one of her pupils in the order in which they are seated. Birthdays, however, interrupt this sequence. The birthday child is accorded priority. She also receives a small present which is bought with the help of the Savings Box kept by the Class, and into which each pupil pays 10 Pfennigs each week. The teacher herself contributes a delightful set of silhouettes cut out of paper.

At least twice a year Miss Czunzculeit also organises parents' evenings, during which a performance takes place in which all pupils take part in some form or other. In addition to parents, other relatives may also be invited.

There are dance and gymnastics demonstrations or song recitals, instrumental performances and recitations of poetry.

Like everyone else, Ellen is included, although her awkwardness may obscure the impression of carefully practised, graceful figures of folk dances even when she is placed right at the back of the stage. Her mother and Aunt Lilala – her regular public – assure her of the contrary but she is nevertheless fully aware of her 'side steps'.

But on musical-literary evenings she is the 'regular recitalist'. The repertoire, determined by Miss Czunczuleit, includes Möricke,

Eichendorff and Uhland. Neither Ellen nor her teacher, however, have the slightest inclination to let her take part in choral performances and to have a singer who is liable to get out of the rhythm once again.

Gine, who recognises the value of Ellen's relationship with Miss Czunczuleit, decides to leave her in the Auguste-Schmidt-Schule pending further developments. Gertraude Hartmann is transferred to the *Oberschule,* but the girls continue to visit each other.

Late summer 1946

Gine's relative from London returns to his Berlin posting after several months' absence due to sickness. His job as engineer is to control the rail connection between Berlin and Hannover, and so he is stationed in a military train. Sometimes he invites Gine and Ellen with his superior officer's permssion, or visits them at Zingster Straße. He also brings along some nourishing food when he calls.

Meanwhile, the quality of the Joint-parcels has been improved and refined. They contain, among other things, egg- and milk powder, tinned fruit, like peaches and pineapples, a bar of chocolate for children and a box of cigarettes for adults. The latter item is of incalculable value, because it represents an almost universally accepted unit of exchange.

It goes without saying that all these additional food items which reach Gine and Ellen are shared with the people who have helped them during the Nazi period. This means that there is not very much left for each individual, but at any rate every person receives a little something that is otherwise unobtainable, or can only be acquired at prohibitive cost.

September 1946

Peter Perry is demobilised. As a parting gift he presents Gine with six particularly beautiful cake plates and promises to keep in touch from London.

Once again he keeps his word, as he did in the past when he promised to visit her. This occurred only five months ago, but she has the feeling that she has known him very much longer. The exchange of views with him represents a great enrichment to her.

October 1946

The election for the 'Stadtverordnetenversammlung' (City Parliament) takes place. The 'Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands' (SPD), the

'Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands' (SED), the 'Christlich Demokratische Union' (CDU) and the 'Liberal-demokratische Partei' (LDP) seek the support of the electors.

So far, only three political views have existed in Ellen's mind: either for the Nazis, against them, or indifferent to this question.

Of the first she was afraid; the second she welcomed; and the third she accepted with a degree of thankfulness.

Now it is all different. The parties try to make their views acceptable and to convince the electors of their relevance and worthiness. The value of the views here represented in a democratic state is brought home to her by radio, press and the additional explanations provided by her mother.

But once again she experiences a conflict between intellect and sentiment. While she is aware of the importance of political parties in public life, and therefore in the life of the individual, membership of a party carries a blemish. It seems linked with the concept of 'PG' (the popular abbreviation for 'Parteigenosse' of the NSDAP). She understands the illogicality of her idea, especially since she values the democratic parties and many of their representatives; but she knows that on reaching the appropriate age she will always vote, but never become a member of a political party.

Autumn 1946

The supply of energy for the population is extremely scarce. Each household is limited to only 15 cubic metres of gas and 15 kilowatt of electricity for each period of two months, when the meters are checked. That is exceedingly little and excesses of the permitted amounts are subject to considerable penalties. Beyond this, compliance with limitations affecting electricity is regulated by power cuts. That means the general switching-off of current and its allocation confined to two hours during the day and two hours at night, progressing at monthly intervals. One is particularly pleased when the daytime supply period happens to fall into the evening hours, when there is a demand for light.

The longer the periods of darkness are during the progress of the year, the more disagreeable the conditions become. Ellen often has to do her homework by the light of a petroleum lamp. It frequently causes her headaches. Candles are very expensive, and so they are only rarely used.

Not affected by the power cuts are public transport and railway stations. Hospitals and cinemas have their own generators. The last-named facility is of special importance for Ellen: she has developed into a cinema enthusiast. Her currency is based on the 'Cinema' unit. Whenever the

purchase of an article is discussed, she works out how many 'Cinema' visits this would be worth. If the decision lies in her hands, it is usually made in favour of a visit to the 'pictures'.

In her district there is, first of all, the 'Neue Alhambra' in the Badstraße and, lower down in the same street, the narrow 'Marienbad' while, practically round the corner, the previously burnt-out 'Lichtburg' is rebuilt as the new and attractive 'Korso-Theater'.

She and her mother generally go to the 'Korso' or the 'Neue Alhambra' at least once a week. One has to queue for tickets for up to an hour, depending on the actors' popularity, but Ellen doesn't mind that at all. She buys the tickets as soon as the sale starts two days before the opening of the programme. That gives one a good opportunity to buy seats in the favourite rows at the appropriate price and, indeed, to get hold of any tickets at all for the most popular films.

Ellen's favourite actor is the Englishman, Stewart Granger. He is tall, strong, masculine and yet infinitely tender and affectionate to his respective sweethearts.

She first sees him in the film, 'Fanny by Gaslight'. In it he sensibly risks his politcal career for his beloved who stands socially below him, and inadvisedly risks his life during a duel with the rascal James Mason, who has provoked him. Fortunately he survives a shot in the lung; and, as one can presume from the arduous smile which flits across his face, he will recover with help of the moving care of the one who is below him in social rank but promises, despite considerable scruples, to marry him.

Ellen now never misses a film in which he appears. She can hardly wait for each of the latest films to be released into her district from the expensive Kurfürstendamm cinemas, where they have their first performances. She sees them all, like 'The Man in Grey', 'Cornwall Rhapsody', 'Madonna of the Seven Moons', 'Captain Boycott', 'Beau Brummel' or 'Caesar and Cleopatra'.

Unfortunately there are far too few films with Stewart Granger. No other actor equals him even remotely as a lover. Gregory Peck, the American, may rate as role model number two. He looks quite good, is also very tender and moreover extremely reliable. When he is in love with a woman at the beginning of a film then one can rely on the fact that he will get and keep her at the end, and that is most reassuring. With Stewart Granger that is never quite as certain. On one occasion he loses his lady friend ('Madonna of the Seven Moons'), another time – and that is much worse – he abandons someone else ('Cornwall Rhapsody'). But however much one may have to tremble for his welfare, or worry about his

behaviour, his absolute lead is unchallengeable as far as Ellen is concerned.

Despite this feeling she doesn't imagine a personal relationship with him: she is deeply moved by the personality which he represents. She doesn't want him as a husband, but a husband like him. Stewart Granger embodies the man of her dreams.

As far as she is concerned, she sees herself as a mixture of the English actress Greer Garson – attractive and distinguished – and *Kommerzienrat's* Olly – understanding and reliable; in brief, as the ideal, loving woman. She is convinced that whoever marries her can find no better wife.

Year-end 1946-47

This winter is exceptionally cold. The temperature falls below -20 degrees C. Heating fuel is as scarce as it was last year.

The school remains unheated, not because there is no coal, but because the central heating is defective and can't be mended. During a particularly vicious period of frost the girls are asked to attend for one hour only per day to collect their homework and then to present it on completion. One sits in the classroom, muffled in overcoat and scarf, and wearing gloves. At intervals, Miss Czunczuleit lets all the girls rise from their benches and makes them stamp their feet in order to encourage their blood circulation.

But these exercises are not sufficient to get the circulation to function properly. Ellen's former chilblains, which had turned into painless blue-red spots, become inflamed again and once more form itchy and painful bumps on her toes.

Beginning of 1947

An influenza epidemic seizes Berlin. Gine falls ill, and Ellen catches it shortly afterwards. Lisa arrives in bitter frost, travelling in unheated public transport, to nurse them.

Spring 1947

Several teachers have meanwhile returned from Prisoner of War camps; but there is still an insufficient number of instructors to fill vacancies in all subjects.

Mr Lipke, who now teaches mathematics in Ellen's class, has a literary bent. But he uses it to enrich his teaching with extensive descriptions of the Ancient Greeks, and the school girls respond by enthusiastically following his lessons on percentage calculation.

The geography teacher, Mr V., is another new appointmeent. He propounds rather backward views, which Ellen begins to dispute with him. On one occasion, when he complains bitterly that towards the end of the war the Russians had robbed him of his torch, she counters it by saying that the Russians, above all, had suffered grievously by losing items of greater value. He replies that she had no idea what a torch meant at that time. She not only guessed it – she knew all about it!

The class slowly becomes impatient at the way in which the geography lesson develops into a political discussion. At that point, Ellen receives an unexpected reinforcement from a fellow pupil who sits at the other end of the room. Ingrid Wieland joins in the argument with Mr V.

They get together during the school break, to let off steam . Like all the other pupils, Ingrid knows that Ellen is a Jewess, but Ellen now discovers for the first time that Ingrid's father is a socialist and therefore suffered considerable disadvantages during the Nazi period. These common experiences forge a strong link between them.

They also discover that Ingrid's parents, like Ellen's, had lived on the Karl-Legin Housing Estate, where Ellen had spent the first two years of her life. As political opponents of the system they were, however, expelled even before the Jews, when it had been taken over by the *NS-Arbeitsfront* – the Nazi Trade Union movement.

Since that time, the four members of the family have lived in a one-roomed flat in the Malplaquetstraße in Wedding.

Told about her new friend by Ellen, Gine suggests that she should be invited. On getting to know Ingrid, Gine becomes greatly attached to this lively, open-hearted girl and sometimes also invites her to accompany them on their visits to the cinema and theatre.

Wielands now effect a 'head exchange' which enables them to move into a roomy flat situated in the Stolpische Straße in the Soviet Sector. The move makes it possible for Ingrid to pass close to Zingster Straße on her return from school, since it is situated about half-way to her home. As a result she frequently accompanies Ellen after school, and Gine gladly invites her to stay for lunch, following the motto she used during the 'Jewish rationing', which says: 'If it won't do, it'll be *made* to do' and the meal is extended to three eaters. Subsquently Ellen often accompanies her friend home and is then made as welcome there as Ingrid was made by Gine. Mrs Wieland is the personification of imperturbability and apparently never gets excited about anything. When her daughter reappears at home with several hours' delay, which had already made Gine quite nervous, she just says very amiably: 'Oh, Ingrid dear, so you've only just turned up. Shall I warm up the lunch for you?' At first, Ellen

is rendered speechless when she witnesses this attitude. She henceforth quotes Mrs Wieland as an example to her mother, who is, however, entirely unimpressed.

The two girls become inseparable. At the first opportunity they also manage to sit next to each other in class. This occurs at the beginning of a term, when the pupils are free to choose their seats, and therefore also the partners with whom they may share their desks. Ingrid occupies the empty seat next to Ellen in the second row of the window section, and that becomes their traditional place.

Both of them now also spend a great deal of their free time in each other's company. Occasionally they do their homework together, prepare birthday and Christmas or Chanukah presents in their respective homes and indulge in never-ending conversations.

Summer 1947

Vegetables are now grown on the former lawns in the big inner courtyard which is bordered at one side by the Zingster Straße. Mrs Krüger has one plot down there, where she plants and tends her products. But others gain the benefit of the harvest. She is most diappointed about the thefts which she is unable to prevent and now confines herself to growing tomatoes on her balcony. They darken the adjoining room, but she doesn't mind.

August 1947

Gine suffers from an acute heart problem. She calls Dr Wartmüller, the only available physician practising in the Heidebrinker Straße, who has not previously attended her. He immediately admits her to the Jewish Hospital.

Her daughter, and Mr Katz, who has also been summoned, accompany her. On arrival at the hospital, Ellen discovers that the bed linen is decorated with clover leaves and regards this as a lucky omen. Mr Katz takes her back to his home, where, despite his wife's caring attention, she spends a sleepless night. Next morning, they drive together to the Iranische Straße, where Mr Katz is now the Manager of the Jewish Old Age Home which is situated opposite the hospital.

Subsequently, Ellen is joined by Ilse Zietz, her acquaintance and fellow tenant in the house, who spends the night in her flat. During the day Ellen is with her mother and, to the relief of the nursing staff, looks after the numerous flower bouquets which continually arrive.

Gine's hospital admission coincides with the beginning of school holidays, but the lessons soon start again. She nevertheless wants Ellen to be with her constantly. Miss Czunczuleit agrees to her absence from school and every day even takes with her the homework set for other subjects and discusses it with her. On her way back from the hospital, Ellen calls on her home and collects school work.

In September, a polio epidemic breaks out. As a result, Gine prohibits Ellen's use of the tram. This means that a walk of at least half an hour in each direction becomes necessary.

After a treatment lasting seven weeks Gine is discharged from the hospital.

Autumn 1947

Arnold has opened a small pub in the Boelkestraße, in the American Sector. He lives in the adjoining flat with his companion Else, who had provided him with shelter during his illegal existence. Their relationship is excellent, and they are on very good terms with Gine and Ellen.

December 1947

At long last, the heating in the school works. The classroom is decorated by Miss Czunczuleit in preparation for Christmas. A large advent wreath is suspended from the lamp and the tables are adorned with small fir twigs bearing tiny candles. These candles are regularly lit during her lessons, which are mostly held at the beginning of the school day, when it is still dark outside at 8 o'clock in the morning. Occasionally it is permitted to scorch ('kokeln') the pine needles, which spreads a spicy odour throughout the room.

It is understood that this conduct is not without blemish, and that it is therefore strictly prohibited during other lessons. This goes so far as to convey the feeling of a shared conspiracy with the teacher.

Miss Czunczuleit also introduces a form of presentation which is called 'Julklapp' and is said to come from the Scandinavian countries. Folded pieces of paper bearing the name of one pupil are dropped into a container, from which each participant then draws one lot. The fellow pupil whose name emerges then receives – or at any rate should receive – a present from the person who drew this lot.

No sooner has the teacher left the room, than a lively barter traffic develops with the bits of paper to reach one's own friend, if necessary by way of several transactions; but neither Ellen nor Ingrid manage to pull

this off. Whoever draws Miss Czunczuleit's name has in any case got hold of the winning lot which would presumably not be surrendered, even in exchange for one's best friend.

During the subsequent festive parents' evening, Gine can enjoy not only Ellen's poetic recital, but also Ingrid's performance on her recorder. Although very musical, and exceedingly fond of Ingrid, she evidently doesn't fancy the sound of a recorder. Whenever she sees such an instrument she exclaims: 'Oh, Ingrid!'

Beginning of 1948

Having been separated from her mother for thirteen years, Gine longs to see her and her brother again. At the present time, however, it is impossible to obtain an exit permit from Berlin for a visit, or a corresponding entry permit to Palestine. All she is now able to do is to exchange regular, longing letters with her relatives.

Spring 1948

The neighbour, Mr Krüger, dies of lung tuberculosis. His wife has nursed him right to the end.

May 1948

The State of Israel is created. With feelings of hope and anxiety the preceding developments – the shocking news of the transport of immigrants to Cyprus, and their internment there, coupled with news of attacks and executions – have been steadily followed on the radio.

The time has now come. One assumes that all horrors have been overcome and with all one's heart wishes the young State a successful start and a peaceful future within secure borders.

One witnesses with alarm that peace ceases to exist even before it has begun. Fear and trembling start all over again. But the letters received from the relatives sound confident and reassuring.

The foundation of the State brings some new developments in its train. Although the country is not yet issuing visiting permits, it is now possible to enter Israel as an immigrant.

For Gine, the interminably long period of separation from her next of kin has become intolerable. In common with the families Katz and Fernbach, whose children emigrated with the Youth Aliyah to Palestine shortly before the outbreak of war, Gine decides to go to Israel.

Ellen would also like to get to know her grandmother, and to meet her uncle again, whom she had only briefly seen when she was a small child; but her wish to meet them is not nearly as significant for her as her mother's is for a reunion with her family. The prospect of having to leave her familiar environment and to part from those who have become dear to her, fills her with apprehension.

Gine registers both of them with the Jewish Agency for immigration to Israel. Ellen doesn't consider the realisation of this enterprise as something that needs her active consideration at present and puts it off for as long as possible.

June 1948

A currency reform is introduced in Germany. The 'Deutsche Mark der Bank deutscher Länder' appears in the Western Zones, the Mark of the 'Deutsche Notenbank' in the Soviet Zone. In Berlin, with its own status, the currency question turns into a dispute. The Russians want to include the city, situated in the centre of their zone of influence, in the area covered by their own currency. The Western Allies will not allow it. The three Western Sectors receive the Deutsche Mark der Bank deutscher Länder.

The Russians, disregarding all existing guarantees, reply with a blockade of all access routes. Only the air space remains unaffected.

The new rate of exchange is fixed at 1 to 10 Marks in both the Western and Eastern Zones, with the exception of a small personal allowance and a few special arrangements which have no perceptible influence on the general public. Coins at first keep their old value and are subsequently exchanged at the rate of 1:1.

The two currencies receive the popular name of 'West' and 'Ost' Marks. The notes put into circulation in the Western Sectors receive the imprint 'B'.

The West-Mark soon reaches a multiple value of its Eastern counterpart. Profit is, however, not only made out of the exchange rate, but also results from the population's feeling of insecurity about the political and economic situation. Some rogues claim to know that the 'B-Mark' is in danger and sell notes without the 'B' at a surcharge, in exchange for overprinted ones. Others even go so far as to invent a tale to the effect that the introduction of a special 'Bear-Mark' is contemplated. They get hold of obsolete *Reichsmark* notes, add a bear similar to Berlin's coat of arms and even manage to palm this 'currency' off on some members of an unsuspecting public.

The genuine currency reform causes money to become even scarcer than before; but while the West Germans achieve an unimpeded flow of new goods, conditions for the Berliners continue to deteriorate.

The Western Allies now begin to supply the city with the aid of an 'air bridge'. It is said that so-called *Rosinenbomber* – 'raisin bombers' – land at three-minute intervals.

The population's supplies are thereby assured. All rations which appear on the cards can be duly provided. It goes without saying that queuing for them continues as before.

It soon becomes evident that the 'air bridge' also serves as Berlin's supply route for foreign films. That is widely appreciated , because hardly anyone is interested in perpetually having to watch German 'topical' products. People much prefer to be abducted into the dream world of America, where most people appear to reside in huge villas adorned with majestic flights of stairs.

Summer 1948

Something dreadful has happened: Ellen has been given a '2' for 'Conduct', and now, remembering her mother's admonition (on 22 April 1940), doesn't dare to show her face.

This misfortune results from the following events: although, or perhaps because, Ellen and Ingrid spent a great deal of their time in each other's company, the range of the subjects they had to discuss increased to such an extent that it invaded their school lessons. Miss Czunczuleit sometimes interrupted her teaching in the middle of a sentence and looked expectantly in their direction. They then stopped talking, and felt thoroughly guilty. Their biology teacher, Mrs Lemmel, who is normally quite nice, didn't prove quite so considerate. She got fed up with a state of affairs in which not only Ingrid and Ellen, but also a considerable number of other pupils began to discuss subjects which had nothing whatsoever to do with those which she was trying to teach. She therefore demanded that all pupils should change their places for the remainder of the current term in accordance with a seating plan which she had drawn up. Miss Czunczuleit consented, in order to prevent even more rigorous measures.

But it didn't quite work out that way. Mrs Lemmel in addition persuaded the teaching staff that the main culprits should have their grades for 'Conduct' reduced by one note.

The day on which the distribution of school reports takes place is usually treated as a minor festival. On this occasion, however, Ellen doesn't

dare to face her mother. She and Ingrid jointly discuss what to do, and while doing so walk up and down the Zingster Straße. Ingrid suggests that she should accompany Ellen upstairs to absorb some of the expected row; but Ellen knows that she can only overcome difficult situations on her own, and therefore declines her friend's offer.

Gine opens the door to receive a daughter who is in a most unaccustomed mood. Instead of holding out her report, accompanied by a torrent of words, she continues to stand quietly in the corridor, looking rather worried.

'Well now, let's have a look at your report', asks her mother, who already suspected that something had gone wrong when she had noticed Ellen's peculiar behaviour in the street, and on entering the flat.

Ellen gathers all her strength and says, with an heroic effort: 'I was given a "2" for "Conduct!"'

'What was that for?' is the remarkably calm enquiry.

'For talking so much with Ingrid', comes the dejected reply.

Thereupon her mother breaks into a resounding burst of laughter. 'Don't you ever do that again', she says, and that settles it.

Autumn 1948

The blockade results in an even stricter control of electric current rationing than before. Mr Landvoigt puts a propane cylinder at Gine's disposal. It is connected with a matching lamp which is then placed on top of the cupboard in the living room to obtain maximum illumination. One actually gets a bright, bleak light of street lamp quality, and that is the best result one has so far achieved without electricity. Its drawback lies in its pervasive smell, which causes even worse headaches than paraffin. Gine therefore decides to give up propane lamps and wonders whether she should return to paraffin lamps or be prepared to spend more money on candles.

At that very time they suddenly enjoy an uninterrupted supply of electricity: they are told that the entire residential block has been connected with the S-Railway Station Gesundbrunnen by mistake. They welcome the fact that they can now utilise their extremely limited allocation of electricity entirely in accordance with their own judgment. They fear that this unexpected flow of current could cease again. But happily that doesn't happen. Their block remains the envied bright spot in an entirely dark environment.

December 1948

Ellen's performing career at parents' evenings reaches its climax in a play with the title 'The Girl with the Matches'. It concerns a story which has been dramatised by the geography teacher, Mr Meyer, and is directed by Miss Czunczuleit.

It tells the tale of a poor girl whose evil stepmother leads her into a forest in the middle of the winter to sell boxes of matches there, of all places. Passers-by, evidently aware of the fire regulations, do not buy a single match from the little one. Nor do they give her a single penny. Words of consolation are their only contribution. But however warm their encouragement, they do not save her from slowly freezing to death during their stimulating conversation. Finally an angel comes to collect her.

The distribution of roles proceeds in a very democratic way. Each pupil can apply for every part. They all receive identical extracts for their respective choice which they have to learn by heart, and which they must subsequently recite. The Form then decides by vote who should be given the part.

The most popular role is that of the angel, for which one has to learn only a very limited text and at the same time is provided with a beautiful dress. To her relief, Ellen only encounters one competitor in her application for the leading role. After listening to both applicants, the class decides in her favour.

Gine designs her costume. She fixes huge patches to her clothing, using enormous safety pins to demonstrate her poverty in a convincing manner. In addition she ties a long, thick, ugly scarf around her neck which would have preserved her, if not from freezing to death, then at least from catching a sore throat.

At last the moment has come.

The scenery consists of Christmas trees, intended for future use, which have been loosely affixed to some boxes. Behind the assembly hall's stage a pupil busily rings a little bell.

Ellen has bright red cheeks, caused by a combination of stage fright and heat, as she appears with her 'stepmother', Eleonore Jeserke, and opens the play with the words: 'Mother, do you hear the bell, mother?' The evil one gives a rude answer and abandons the child. Now the other characters appear one after the other. They talk and talk, and nothing happens.

Among the youngest members of the audience, consisting of the small siblings of some pupils, a slight commotion breaks out. A little girl chatters loudly, and without being stopped by her mother. That causes a

disturbance among the actors and also distracts the attention of the audience.

The son of the gamekeeper, Erika Lenz, according to the script Ellen's last visitor, finds all this very funny, starts to giggle, and then tries to hide his (her) laughter behind a simulated coughing fit. In the process he (she) bumps against a fir tree, which begins to sway and in turn knocks against its loosely fastened neighbour. Both girls try to steady the trees and restore them to an upright position. The audience bursts out laughing.

Miss Czunczuleit rushes onto the stage and draws the curtain. For the first time ever, Ellen sees her in a real temper. She and Erika try to explain that the misfortune has been caused solely by the naughty child in the auditorium. 'Actors must be above such a situation', she replies angrily. That may well be true, but then they are not actresses!

Whatever the answer, she cancels the remainder of the scene. Erika is sent off the stage and Ellen is instructed to declaim her great, tragic monologue which precedes the wintry death according to the script. But she is totally mixed up and not in the proper mood at all. Yet there is no mercy: Erika has disappeared, Miss Czunczuleit leaves the stage and the curtain is opened again.

Ellen is confronted by rows of amused faces. Exactly in front of her she sees her small, rotund and good-natured English teacher, Miss Vater, grinning from one side of her face to the other. She regards it as impossible to confront this comedy-attuned audience with the sad feelings of the poor girl. Then she happens to catch a glimpse of Miss Czunczuleit, who looks at her with a grim expression. That puts her into the right frame of mind for reciting the tragic monologue.

She succeeds without getting stuck; but she also feels that she simply can't act as convincingly as she had managed throughout all the rehearsals. When the angel, Gitta Berg, finally arrives to collect her, dressed in a long white robe and proclaiming friendly words, she feels almost as relieved as the person portrayed by her on the stage.

Curtain – and roaring applause from a generous audience.

Ellen's own supporters try to persuade her of the success of her performance. The monologue was great, says her mother, even better than during her rehearsals. And Aunt Lilala adds that the audience had clearly been most impressed. The little incident had not diminished the overall effect of the performance at all.

Gine's only criticism, mentioned almost as an aside, expresses the view that in the beginning Ellen had looked overheated rather than undercooled. That, however, Ellen attributes merely to a lack of imagination. After all, one can get red cheeks from frost as well as from heat.

Beginning of 1949

Gine now prepares for their departure to Israel without delay. Fernbachs have already left during the preceding year. The Jewish Agency informs her, as well as the Katz family, that they can expect to depart towards the middle of the year. They therefore agree to share a removal container for the transport of their possessions to Israel. She and Ellen meanwhile pay visits to a number of furniture shops, which have emerged once again, to make a preliminary selection of a suitable inventory for their new home. Gine picks fittings for a living room with a corner couch consisting of two long divan couches separated by a chest for bedding.

But neither the acquisition of the new furnishings nor the impending meeting of her family relieve Ellen's concern about her approaching departure from Berlin. She tries to suppress such thoughts by immersing herself in the normal continuation of her everyday routine.

May 1949

The blockade comes to an end, but rationing must continue, because the regular supply of consumer goods still has to be established. Some ration-free items are, however, entering the Berlin market.

The vegetable shop in the Eulerstraße now offers lemons for sale. The supply is much smaller than the demand. This leads to the well-known equation: many customers competing for limited supplies result in long queues.

After queuing for one hour, Ellen is rewarded with the allocation of three lemons. On this occasion, however, the distribution is not governed by the authorities, but by the shopkeeper. He wants to be just, he says, but presumably he is not entirely immune to the reflection that, in anticipation of a return to normal trading conditions, he should satisfy the demands of all his customers.

June 1949

The Jewish Agency has announced a provisional date of departure for Gine and Ellen. The removal container has already been collected, Ellen has left her class before the end of the school year and the trunks have been packed. Gine has registered their departure with the police and described it as going 'on a journey', because she does not want to break off her links beyond repair. But this is of little practical value to her, since she has to give up her flat, because living accommodation is subject to strict allocation.

The predicted departure is cancelled, and a new date is announced. Its final confirmation arrives a day before the start of the journey.

Ellen goes to see Miss Czunczuleit to say good-bye and, in turn, is accompanied by her on the way back home. They walk up and down the streets, and finally part company at the corner of Behmstraße and Zingster Straße. Miss Czunczuleit remains standing at the corner. Ellen continues on her way, looks round time and again and, from an increasing distance, sees her bright dress and her fair hair fluttering in the summer breeze. They both wave at each other until Ellen finally enters the house.

Ingrid intended to call during the afternoon, but didn't turn up for some reason. All that Ellen can do is to leave a farewell message for her with Mrs Krüger.

A strange emotion fills Ellen on the day of her departure. It seems as if an internal mechanism has switched off any reaction in her mind. She had imagined that she would be very sad today, but in fact she is totally devoid of any feeling. When Aunt Lilala and Uncle Arnold accompany them to the airport, she experiences no more than she does when performing a normal, everyday task. She suddenly has the peculiar sensation that she is made up of two persons, one of whom observes the other, but cannot comprehend her feelings.

Lisa and Arnold bid them farewell in the large hall of the airport. Then they are received by a representative of the Jewish Agency and conducted into a small room which serves as a meeting place for all those going to Israel on this voyage.

Assembled here are persons of all ages, whose reasons for their departure are as diverse as the feelings which accompany them on their journey. In the course of spending several hours together while waiting, one gets to know one another and discovers many similarities in past experiences as well as in the present mixed and anxious feelings with which they all look forward to an uncertain future.

An American Army plane finally flies them to Munich. Most passengers, including Ellen, feel air sick. Others, wanting to be helpful, open the cabin windows; but this merely makes matters worse. Paper bags are used extensively.

After the landing, passengers are lowered to the ground by means of a baggage lift in view of their fragile condition. Buses then take them to the Munich Central Station, where they spend the night in a waiting room.

Next day, they are driven to a settlement on the outskirts of the city. It consists of rows of identical houses and bears the name 'Neu-Freimann'.

The rooms are furnished with several beds, a wardrobe, a table and several chairs. Gine and Ellen share a room with two sisters, aged about eighteen and twenty years.

In 'Neu-Freimann' the group is enlarged with the addition of further persons, who join them from various other cities. Some even come from as far afield as Italy.

In order to escape the daily boredom of a camp existence, Gine takes Ellen to Munich. The traffic at Stachus (a major road junction) compared with conditions in Berlin, seems chaotic, and the selection of goods displayed in shop windows is overwhelming.

They enter a department store called 'Oberpollinger'. Ellen can choose a pair of shoes and a head scarf. She selects a pair of black chamois shoes with high heels. Her mother expresses considerable doubts about their suitability for Israel, but doesn't want to spoil the pleasure of her enjoyment at the first uninhibited selection of a pair of shoes. Ellen also chooses an exceptionally large, bright green head scarf made of artificial silk, adorned with a pattern. After the war she had to make do with only two small woollen ones which she had been given as a present, and which had been so tiny that she could barely tie a knot under her chin. For years, therefore, she had dreamed of a head scarf of gigantic dimensions which would give her the benefit of long end bits. Now she has it – and Gine likes it so much that she buys a similar one in light blue, and finally adds an urgently needed umbrella. Satisfied with their achievements, and equipped with these enjoyable acquisitions they set out on their way back.

After a stay of about two weeks, their journey continues to Marseilles. They cross the frontier at Kehl. Once again, Ellen feels quite sad. She looks out of the window, sees a tree and, to her surprise, she thinks : 'This is the last tree in Germany.' Then they cross the border. Two French railway workers now look in astonishment at a young girl who leans out of a carriage window and looks, with tears streaming down her face, into sunny France.

From Marseilles they are taken to a small place called St. Chamas. Compared with what they find here, the living conditions at 'Neu-Freimann' could be described as luxurious. The camp consists of huge tents, which are 'furnished' exclusively with collapsible camp beds. There are no tables, chairs or wardrobes. Suitcases are pushed under the beds, on which one sits at meal times, with a plate balanced in one's hand. This arrangement does not rule out the possibility of accidentally descending on margarine belonging to a neighbour who has briefly had

to put down his plate. The margarine can be replaced from one's own ration, but its removal from a soiled skirt presents insuperable problems with existing cleaning facilities.

Washrooms and toilets can be found at the opposite end of the camp. The toilets consist of square basins let into the ground. Persons used to their German equivalents experience considerable difficulties when trying to use them.

The camp inmates are allocated in groups to specific ships. Gine is notified of the name of her ship and the date of its departure, and informs her family accordingly by telegram. The date is changed at short notice, and she is assured that her relatives will be told.

A week later the moment has finally arrived. After about three weeks in St. Chamas they return to Marseilles. The ship is crowded with immigrants from Europe and North Africa – the latter coming mainly from Morocco. In the dormitories, the bunks are crammed together, and frequently arranged on top of one another. The air is exceedingly stale, and the smell generated in that room is difficult to bear.

Many people prefer a space on deck to spending the night in a dormitory. Wrapped in blankets, they lie tighly packed, but at least they can breathe fresh air. If, however, anyone is as careless as Ellen and gets up in between to stretch their legs, they stand a good chance to lose their place and find themselves condemned to spending the rest of the night propping up the railing.

Israel

After a voyage of one week, they arrive in Haifa. The immigration formalities last several hours. When they finally disembark during the late afternoon, they have to pass a medical control.

Ellen, wearing one of her favourite dresses, appears in front of an energetic lady wielding a huge DDT spray gun. She inserts it below her jacket and presses the button. She then lifts it above her dress and presses the button again. Finally, she lifts the spray gun to Ellen's hair and presses yet again. Thus Ellen, a figure enshrouded in white powder, meets her uncle, who will never forget this encounter.

Gine is shocked and disappointed not to see her mother, but Bob explains that he had deliberately not informed her of the expected date of arrival. She had been greatly upset when neither her daughter nor her grand-

child had shown up as expected last week. Contrary to assurances given, the family had not been informed of the changed schedule.

Bob collects his sister and niece in his business car. It is the only one at his disposal and he shares it with his partners in their free time. They run a furniture business called *Arba Nagarim* – 'The Four Carpenters' – which, though small, nevertheless has the reputation of being the leading shop of its kind in Tel Aviv. In the city's northern industrial district they also run the small furniture factory which they had founded earlier, and which supplies the shop with its products.

Bob has asked one of their employees to drive, so that he can devote himself exclusively to the new arrivals. He takes them to his flat in a modern building overlooking the sea front in the Yarkon Street, into which he had moved only a few months earlier, and where he lives with his 25-year-old wife Eva and his children – seven-year-old Dan, from his first marriage, and three-year-old Michaela. It goes without saying for Bob and Eva that they offer to share their flat with Gine and Ellen for the time being, since it saves them from the need to accept accommodation in a *Maabarah* – a Transit Camp.

It is late in the evening when they arrive in Tel-Aviv. Eva is expecting them, 'Michal' is asleep and 'Dani' is just visiting his grandparents.

Next morning, Bob fetches his mother from the near-by Retirement Home in which she now lives. She and her daughter are in tears as they fall into each other's arms.

Apart from these close relatives, Gine also has uncles and aunts, as well as numerous cousins who live with their families in Israel. They are mainly domiciled in the northern part of the country, most of them in the vicinity of Haifa. Ellen gets to know all of them in the course of time.

It is good to have relatives once again; but they cannot replace the family into which she was born, the persons who have surrounded her from birth, who helped to protect and form her. She had been a part of this unit; now she is a member of a community.

After about a month, Bob succeeds in finding a spacious furnished room for his sister in the flat belonging to the parents of one of his partners. Acquiring her own flat is currently out of the question. The price of buying one is beyond her reach; and renting one would require the payment of a deposit which she also can't afford at present. The container with her furniture is therefore deposited on the factory premises of *Arba Nagarim* for the time being.

Gine accepts a job as a seamstress. She wants Ellen to continue her

schooling, but Ellen lacks the confidence to follow teaching in the Hebrew language. The relatives advise her to go to school regardless: familiarity with the language would come automatically. Gine registers her at the Shalva-Gymnasium in the Ranak Street. On the basis of her report from the Auguste-Schmidt-Schule – now renamed '1. Mädchen-Mittelschule' – she is immediately admitted to the 9th Form.

The fellow-pupils make her most welcome. Some of them, whose parents came from Germany, speak German fluently, most of the others have a knowledge of Yiddish. Those who command either language can, with a little effort, communicate with each other without difficulty.

The lessons, however, present a very different picture. The only subjects which she can follow are English and French.

She attends an evening course in Hebrew, because private lessons would be too expensive. Most of the participants, representing all age groups, are mainly interested in obtaining just sufficient command of the language to be able to cope with everyday life. But that is not enough to follow the teaching in the 9th Form of an Upper Secondary School, and even less suitable to take part as an equally qualified pupil.

Ellen finds this condition very depressing. At first she confines herself to asserting defiantly that she is now at the bottom of her Form; and to writing figures from 1 to 45 on a sheet of paper in order to delete them at one-minute intervals during the lesson.

After school she goes to her grandmother, who lives in the Retirement Home *Beth-Shalom* – 'House of Peace' – opposite the school, and who prepares lunch for both of them in the kitchen niche of her room under very difficult conditions. Ellen is very grateful to her and has an amicable, but not a close, relationship with her.

She finds it difficult to get used to the new environment. She longs for the people who are dear and familiar to her and who have been left behind in Berlin. She takes umbrage at every obstacle which she encounters:

Learning Hebrew presents her with great problems. The script, as well as the grammar, differ from all the other languages with which she has so far been concerned.

The climate provides an environment to which she is unaccustomed. The great summer heat turns into grey skies and downpours of late autumn and winter.

In the evenings, instead of the gentle transition from day to night, to which she is used, darkness falls quickly.

And finally there is the sea, against which she develops an increasing dislike. It represents an invincible border for her.

Ellen is homesick. In December, she writes a poem for Miss Czunczuleit on the occasion of her birthday. The last verse says:

When the snowflakes fall again,
  Then, homeland, think of me,
In my dreams I am with you all,
  For, homeland, I love you.

Wenn die Flocken wieder fallen,
  Dann, Heimat, denk an mich,
Oft weil' ich träumend bei Euch allen,
  Denn Heimat, ja, ich liebe Dich.

1950

At the beginning of the year, Bob has good news for Gine: one of the employees at his factory wants to sell the lease of his one-roomed flat in return for a small sum. He intends to emigrate to the United States. His wife, already there, still has to complete some formalities on his behalf, but that should not take long. He therefore expects to be able to depart in a few weeks' time and offers accommodation to Gine and Ellen in his flat without delay.

He has already disposed of the greater part of his belongings, and the remainder is being cleared out. All he keeps for his own use is a wardrobe, which stands in the landing.

Gine can now remove the contents from her container, use it to furnish the flat and move with Ellen into the Shlomo-Hamelech Street, near Dizengoff Place. The owner, Ludwig Schmidt, is in his end-thirties, also comes from Berlin and once upon a time was one of Martin Zitrin's pupils.

They get on well with one another and spend the evenings sitting together in conversation. Only the sleeping arrangements present a problem. Mr Schmidt is content to put up a collapsible bed in the kitchen and removes it again in the morning. This presents few problems, as he is the first to get up. On Shabbat (Saturdays) Ellen is the first to rise and prepares breakfast while he is in the bathroom and Gine cleans up the livingroom. These arrangements work quite well, especially as they are expected to last only for a short time.

Gine now gives up her job in the clothing shop. With Mr Schmidt's agreement she starts a dressmaker's business in the flat, employing a needlewoman.

After coming home from school, Ellen has to do her homework (as far as it is possible for her to do it) clean the flat, go shopping (which often involves queuing here, too, as many food items are rationed) and, on weekdays, usually does the cooking. That is even worse, because it is a completely unaccustomed job for her. In addition, she continues to attend her evening classes three times a week, and this also involves occasional homework. Her daily tasks put her under so much pressure that the learning of the language becomes even more complicated. Moreover, except at school and when shopping, she only speaks German.

Next year's final examinations include English grammar. Ellen's American teacher of English, Miss Miriam, who is aware of her problems in lessons conducted in Hebrew, suggests that her English exam should be advanced by one year and thereby reduce the burden imposed by the remainder. Ellen gratefully accepts the suggestion, sits the exam with the Tenth Form and is rewarded with the top mark, '10'.

Leisure time has become a scarce commodity. A little relaxation is found during occasional weekend stays with Gine's cousin, Erna Goldberg and her husband Salo, who is a doctor in Kiriath-Bialik, near Haifa. Gine and Ellen are received most warmly and sometimes join them on excursions. Their son, Menachem, is one year older than Ellen, and becomes a good friend to her. She looks on him as her 'genuine' cousin.

Gine and Ellen regard it as particularly important to keep in touch with those people who formed an essential part of their former lives. An intensive exchange of letters is the result.

Miss Czunzuleit writes regularly, also reports her marriage to the teacher, Erich Lipke, and continues the correspondence as before. Ellen, for her part, opens her heart to her just as regularly.

Ingrid writes less often, but when she does, her letters almost resemble a book. Their correspondence is so detailed and intensive that both of them have the feeling that they are again sitting next to each other and share their experiences.

Lisa writes only on birthdays, not only because she is a slow correspondent, but also because she has taken up a job with an ambulance firm, which keeps her very busy until late into the night. But Aunt Hedwig keeps them fully informed about everything concerning the whole family.

Herta also writes quite frequently. She always has something new to report.

Mrs Krüger sends congratulations on birthdays and for the New Year.

Arnold, who has meanwhile married Else and has joined his brother

Alfred in Canada, writes to Gine quite frequently, and unburdens his heart about the difficulties he is experiencing in adjusting himself to new living conditions. She is now closer to him than his brother, from whom he has become estranged during the years of separation.

In addition to these contacts, Gine is still in touch with some friends and relatives in America. They, however, tend to react to the description of her problems with superficial remarks.

Climax of her correspondence is the exchange of her thoughts with Peter Perry. Despite the shortness of their previous acquaintance he responds with great understanding and an astonishing degree of sensitivity to the afflictions which she describes to him. He writes regularly like a very old friend, and his letters become a source of strength and encouragement for her.

The middle of the year marks an addition to Bob's and Eva's family. On 1 July, the birth of their son, Amos, is greeted with joy.

At the beginning of the new school year, Ellen's English teacher, Miss Miriam, suggests that, in return for a small reward, she should mark English tests, which the pupils have to sit throughout the year in accordance with a given standardised sample. Ellen accepts the offer enthusiastically.

With the proceeds of her first self-earned money, Ellen entertains her mother in a 'big' way. She takes her to the 'Migdalor' cinema and buys the most expensive tickets in the front row of the circle for an American melodrama called 'Our Very Own', which deals with the problems of an adopted girl. After the show they go to a near-by restaurant for an evening meal in which Gine adjusts the size of her appetite to the financial resources of her daughter.

1951

Ludwig Schmidt has still not received the entry permit for the United States. The extremely confined living conditions begin to give rise to increasing tensions between him and Gine. Apart from these special pressures, the general lack of understanding, which one has encountered right from the outset, begins to become depressing. On one occasion, a distant acquaintance expresses the view that new immigrants expect 'roasted ducks to fly straight into their mouths'. When she arrived, she was forced to share her kitchen with another party for several years. Ellen replies: 'When you had to share your kitchen, we would have been delighted to have had something to cook.'

That, of course, is unfair. One can't ignore the fact that it must be disagreeable to have only limited access to one's kitchen. Moreover, in the course of battling with their own difficulties, people do not usually adjust themselves to the even greater hardships suffered by others.

The essential obstacle to good relationships between old settlers and new arrivals in Israel seems to be due to the fact that the two groups who meet here have passed through difficult developments which exposed them to problems of very different kinds. Since both of them are still face to face with difficulties, they tend to lack sufficient sympathy for the problems of the other group.

Even more problematical for Gine than the living and working conditions, and the lack of communication, is the difficult climate. Due to her heart condition already treated in Berlin, it is anyway hard for her to work as a dressmaker. During the summer months, however, it poses an even bigger problem as the number of attacks increases.

In the course of the year Gine finally begins to consider the possibility of returning to Berlin. Ellen gladly supports the idea.

Beginning of 1952

The thought of a return to Berlin has now become a firm intention. Gusta Zwiebel is appalled. She has lost two daughters and is now on the point of experiencing the departure of her third one. Gine promises to visit her frequently – at least once a year, which is meanwhile possible, and also expresses the hope that her mother will visit her in Berlin for extended periods. That idea is categorically turned down. Her mother will never ever set foot in Berlin again. In her words, she feels that the stones there are sullied with the blood of her children.

Spring 1952

Ludwig Schmidt finally receives his entry permit to the United States. He now emigrates without delay.

Mid-1952

Gine has completed all preparations for her return journey. Her mother has meanwhile become reconciled with the fact, especially as she knows that she can rely on her daughter's assurances to visit her.

Ellen continues to remain in Tel-Aviv for the time being, since they have no accommodation in Berlin, and Gine will stay with Lisa for a

start. She will try to find her own flat as quickly as possible.

On her departure, all she can leave with Ellen is a very small amount of money. She asks Bob to lend her some when the need arises – which she expects to occur soon – and naturally promises to refund any loans later. He immediately agrees.

Second half of 1952

The school year has come to an end, and the summer holidays begin. Ellen is largely relieved of her domestic duties and finds herself with an unaccustomed amount of free time at her disposal.

The limited amount of money which Gine left with her is speedily disappearing, despite Ellen's rigorous thrift; but since she doesn't want to burden her mother with debts incurred with Bob, she calls on an employment agency for cleaning women and asks for a job.

She is far from being an exceptional candidate there. In Israel, immigrants accept any jobs on offer regardless of their former profession.

She is sent to a Mrs Steinbock, aged about forty years, who is married, has two children – Manuel ('Mani'), 11 years, and Tamar ('Tami'), eight years – and lives in Ben Yehuda Street. Margot Steinbock also comes from Germany and conducts her household in accordance with an exact strategy.

On Monday, the laundry is done, but very little housework. Wednesday sees ironing, together with some additional housework, and on Friday the whole flat is thoroughly cleaned. The cleaning process itself follows a firm plan, and this accurate allocation of work lends itself to an effortless process.

Ellen immediately hits it off with Mrs Steinbock, and contrary to the agency's advice tells her that her employment is only temporary. That doesn't matter, says Mrs Steinbock, she would be welcome for as long as she was able to stay.

Daughter Tami immediately takes a great liking to Ellen. Contrary to her mother's admonition, she settles down near Ellen for a lengthy natter on her return from school. Monday is her favourite day. She then finds Ellen busy with laundry work. The satchel is thrown into a corner allocated for this purpose by her mother, while Tami parks herself on the edge of the bath tub and launches into an unstoppable flood of tales about life at school.

Ellen usually stays with the Steinbocks beyond the agreed time without accepting any additional pay. On the other hand, all members, including the husband, who is occasionally present, treat her like a member of the

family. On one occasion, when Mrs Steinbock returns from a visit to her brother in a *Kibbutz*, she brings presents for the whole family and includes a gift for Ellen. It is a small, handmade vase, which Ellen will take with her to Berlin. She wants to pass it on to her own children with the exhortation to treat all employees decently at all times, and never to forget that their own mother had once been employed as a charwoman.

Ellen takes it for granted that she will one day have a family with children. A life without children seems unimaginable to her.

Bob is not supposed to know about her job, because he would undoubtedly inform his sister about it, and thereby lead to the end of Ellen's employment. He frequently asks her whether she needs any money. Gine expresses surprise and concern in her letters that she doesn't seem to need any and Mrs Steinbock, whose flat is in the immediate neighbourhood of *Arba Nagarim*, carries her rubbish bin to the disposal container herself, because she fully understands Ellen's little secret.

At the beginning of the new school year, Ellen cancels her registration at the Shalva-Gymnasium in the expectation of her impending departure; but she continues her employment with Mrs Steinbock.

The release from her former duties altogether enables her to make more rapid strides towards a much freer personal development. She is now able to foster a friendship, first begun at school, with her fellow-pupil, Dan Barag.

A considerable part of her time is also devoted to her grandmother. During the many hours which she spends in her company she gets to know and understand the old lady increasingly well.

Gusta Zwiebel had remarried at the age of sixty, but had lost her second husband after only two years. She speaks of him with sympathy, but without undue emotion. The only marriage which really matters to her is that with Sigmund, whose name she still carries. To all her acquaintances in the Home she is 'Mrs Zwiebel'. A corresponding name plate is affixed to her door, with the current legal name 'Ben-Dov' added in tiny letters underneath, for the benefit of the postman.

When Ellen enquires why she doesn't use this name, instead of her grandfather's, she seems surprised. Then she smiles and replies simply and with a feeling that this was surely obvious and self-evident: 'But *he* was my husband!'.

Oma also has a weakness for love stories. Marlitt, Courths-Mahler and similar literature circulate among the old ladies in the Home. At night, when her grandmother has retired to bed, Ellen now often stays on for a while and reads to her.

In November, Gine finally sends shipping and railway tickets to her daughter. She also informs her that at the Frankfurt office of Pan American Airways, opposite the Main Railway Station, she has deposited a flight ticket and 50 DM for her. The transfer of money seems particularly appropriate, because foreign currency regulations for travellers from Israel limit the export to $20 per person.

Gine has still not succeeded in finding a flat, although she had registered herself with the Communal Housing Department immediately on her return. But due to the great shortage and strict sharing out of accommodation she can't expect the allocation of a flat at present. In order not to increase the interruption of Ellen's education any longer, she has therefore rented a furnished room in the Helmstedter Straße 12 for the time being.

Ellen takes leave of all relatives, acquaintances, Dan and the Steinbocks and packs her belongings. Her own things fit into two large suitcases; but she also takes with her a huge trunk, filled with items which her mother would like to have. The household is left in its furnished state. Gine will dissolve it in the course of her next visit.

Everything is ready at the beginning of December. Bob takes Ellen to the harbour, together with all her luggage, and there they say good-bye to each other.

Later Sequence

December 1952

As the ship casts off in the evening and the twinkling lights of Haifa are gradually left behind on the slopes of Mount Carmel, she cannot escape a certain melancholy; but this feeling is soon overcome. She finds nice company on board and enjoys the voyage like a holiday.

In Naples, she absorbs the impression of festively decorated shop windows for Christmas on her way to the railway station and gets on the train to Frankfurt. A porter stows her luggage. As she can't understand a word on her Italian ticket and can only recognise a boldly printed '2' on it, she enters a second-class carriage.

During the journey, her fellow passengers change frequently. Occasionally she shares her compartment with padres, a family with crowds of children and other persons who travel only short distances.

In Milan everybody gets out. A big, corpulent man enters here, greets with a jovial smile and says something in Italian. Ellen makes a helpless gesture.

'Ah', he says, 'Do you speak German?'

When she answers in the affirmative, he tells her that he is from Frankfurt and has just been in Milan on business. Where does she come from, he wants to know.

From Israel? He finds that very interesting. He really has nothing against the Jews, but they sometimes don't like the idea that he served as a Captain during the war. He finds that incomprehensible.

Another thing he can't understand is the payment made to Israel by way of compensation. How do you explain compensation to a State which didn't even exist at the time when certain things happened? And why should it pocket payments for injustices which may possibly have been inflicted on citizens of other States? He can find no legal grounds for these things, but perhaps she could enlighten him on these matters?

She is confused, since she has never so far seen these events from the point of view of legal statutes, but rather as issues of superior justice. The legal basis for it seems to have been laid by the agreement between Adenauer and Ben Gurion. She tries to sort out her thoughts and explain them to him, but finds it rather difficult in the absence of any legal knowledge.

Her opposite number is not in the least convinced by her arguments, but his ability to push her into a corner obviously fills him with satisfaction. He now adds obligingly that, even though he still can't see any justification for payments to Israel, he recognises that the State tries to get hold of financial resources from whatever sources it can. As he has learnt from various newsreel reports, everything in Israel is pretty poverty-stricken and people look rather dowdy. Is that her opinion, too?

Ellen is irritated and looks down at her grey costume, which is not exactly new, having already been altered for her in Berlin, and which may look as if she has somewhat outgrown it by now. Nevertheless she is of the opinion that, by-and-large, people are dressed very properly in Israel, and she emphatically says so.

Her travel companion doesn't change his mind on this point either, but nevertheless seems to enjoy talking to her. He keeps on chatting away while they cross the border at Chiasso, subsequently traverse Switzerland and leave it again behind Basel.

The first German controller now arrives to examine the tickets. Ellen is sitting in the wrong place, he says, because her ticket only entitles her to travel in a third class compartment. Ellen protests. She points to the bold '2', and the fact that neither the Italian nor the Swiss ticket collectors had objected to her occupying this compartment. That, he says, is all the same to him. Either she pays the outstanding fare, or she must immediately remove herself and her luggage from the compartment. The size of her

trunk makes the latter suggestion impossible, because it is not even allowed to stay in the passage of a second-class carriage. Ellen therefore offers what is left of her $20. The collector does the necessary calculations and finds that a balance of 8 DM is still missing,

Her new travel companion dismisses this problem with a wave of the hand. He will pay the missing amount on her behalf. Ellen is beside herself and negotiates with the conductor, but it is no use. Either she pays the 8 DM or she must promptly remove herself and her luggage from this privileged environment. She therefore has no alternative but to accept her patron's money, who also offers an additional sum to cover expenditure for a porter and the stay in Frankfurt, where they are due to arrive that evening. She declines this offer and insists, despite her benefactor's protest, to be given the number of his bank account, so that she can refund his loan.

On arrival in Frankfurt, she succeeds in finding a porter who is prepared to transport her baggage to the left-luggage office without prompt payment of his fee. In his presence, she asks the office for a receipt which is endorsed to the effect that her luggage will not be released without payment of the amount owing to him.

When all this is done, she goes to a 3rd Class Waiting Room to spend the night there. She finds it packed, and just manages to get hold of an empty table. Close by a few drunk women are bawling their heads off. One of them climbs on a chair, yelling at the top of her voice. Ellen suddenly becomes aware of the fact that she had seen no drunks in Israel.

A nice-looking young man asks her politely whether he might join her at the table. Since everything else is occupied, she gladly gives her consent.

He shares her disgust at the screaming women. They begin to exchange a few words. He, too, asks where she comes from.

When he hears that she has just arrived from Israel, he reacts with great friendliness. He is delighted to hear this, he says. It has long been his wish to meet Jews on a personal basis, but has not so far had an opportunity to do so. He had been an SS-man out of conviction, and with great enthusiasm. One had been exposed to such a hate campaign at the time, but that had only become clear to him later.

Everything he says sounds sincere. But Ellen is suddenly overcome by a choking feeling. While listening to him politely, she wonders whether he might perhaps have been a concentration camp guard who had tortured her father or one of her relatives. He doesn't look like that, and she doesn't ask him about his former occupation. But she has the feeling that she can't bear his company any longer. With a threadbare excuse she parts company and leaves the room.

She walks up and down on the wintry platform, feeling bitterly cold. After quite a while she returns, peeps carefully into the waiting room and discovers to her relief that her former neighbour is no longer there.

Meanwhile, the room has become much emptier. She can now pick her own place and chooses one in the most remote corner. While she sits there, she is overcome by the impressions of the past day: first the former Captain, then the screaming women, and finally the former SS-man. So this is the longed-for return to the homeland! She sits at her table in a dark corner of the waiting room at the Frankfurt Central Railway Station and cries.

Next morning she collects her Pan Am plane ticket and the money. Before departure, she quickly settles her debt of 8 DM with her generous creditor.

In Berlin, Aunt Lilala keeps her and Gine at her flat for another two days. There is so much to tell, and they find each other entirely unchanged.

The same also applies to the other friends and acquaintances, and to Mrs Lipke, formerly Miss Czunczuleit, all of whom she gradually sees again. As far as Ingrid is concerned, Ellen feels as if she had only just left her. Only the topics, of which they had never been short, have meanwhile become even more numerous. New to her is only Ingrid's fiancé, the architectural student Helmut Nadebor. After their first encounter, however, they also feel like old friends. In Berlin, Ellen is at home again.

And yet, something has changed. She has gained distance from events and found a dual loyalty. She looks at the difficulties of both spheres of life, having directly experienced them from within, both as a person affected and as an observer. She believes that her sympathy and affection on the one hand, and the perspective gained from the outside on the other, enable her to reach both a critical view and a profound understanding of the problems facing both sides.

1953

Ellen visits the Friedrich-Ebert-Schule in Berlin-Wilmersdorf. In the thirteenth school year, she now has to catch up on a lot of material which she missed in Israel.

Gine makes the dream of her youth come true to become a lawyer in two modified ways: in the first place, she persuades Ellen to study law; and secondly, she prepares to pass an examination as legal adviser on compensation and restitution law, in which she has to qualify before the *Landgericht* in Berlin.

4 February 1954

Ellen passes the *Reifeprüfung (Abitur).*

May 1954

Start of law studies at the *Freie Universität Berlin.* After concluding her education, Ellen wants to become a lawyer, specialising in criminal law.

Summer 1954

Bob and Eva pay their first visit to Berlin since their emigration. They are staying with Gine, who has meanwhile obtained a small flat in the Wetzlarer Straße.

August 1954

Ellen makes her first trip to London. Ever since her school days after the war she has been interested in England and the English way of life.

Soon after her arrival she visits Peter Perry. He has lost much of his lovely hair and gained considerably in attraction for her. But he still seems to look on her as the twelve-year-old girl with the tresses whom he had first met in Berlin.

His mother receives Ellen with great hospitality and warmth, surprises her by calling her by her first name and uses the word 'Du'. Both of them immediately establish an affectionate contact.

London fills Ellen with enthusiasm. She explores the city from morning to night and is impressed by the courtesy, helpfulness and tolerance of its inhabitants. From now on she will return nearly every year.

26 April 1955

A further daughter, Orli, is born to Bob and Eva. Gine and Ellen share their joy, even though it is from afar.

Summer 1955

Ellen's anxieties, which had begun with the arrest of her father, increase considerably, and so does the torment which she has to suffer.

November 1958

Gine meets her subsequent partner, the physician Dr Rudolf Meyer, who has returned to Berlin from his emigration to Brazil.

At first this leads to a change in Ellen's living routine, but soon she and 'Rudi' establish a friendly relationship with each other.

1959 – 1960

Ellen studies during the summer and winter terms at the Georg-August-Universität in Göttingen.

28 September 1960

First law examination *(Referendarexamen)* at the *Justizprüfungsamt Berlin.*

January 1961

Ellen begins her training as a *Referendar,* which lasts forty-two months, and which is divided into exactly determined stages of training. It is a requirement which must be satisfied prior to admission to the Second State Examination in Jurisprudene.

During her training period as a *Referendar,* Ellen also helps her mother in the practice she has meanwhile established as a Legal Adviser for Compensation and Restitution Cases. She spends a great deal of her free time on this work.

28 May 1965

Ellen passes the second State Examination in Jurisprudence *(Assessorexamen)* before the *Justizprüfungsamt Berlin.* According to German Law, its possession is required for a judicial office; it confers qualification for an appointment as a judge, a state attorney, lawyer (solicitor/barrister) or a civil servant in the 'higher' grades.

1965 – 1966

After the examination Ellen helps in her mother's office on a full-time basis.

April 1966

Ellen takes up employment with a 'Consultant on International Law' in London, Dr Hans Blum. She is disappointed to find that she is not concerned, as expected, with International Law, but is once again dealing with compensation and restitution matters.

During her stay in London she becomes a frequent and most welcome guest at the home of Herta and Peter Perry.

Gine visits her repeatedly during this time, and Ellen flies to Berlin at regular intervals.

1967

Once a year, Gine asks the International Tracing Agency (ITS) in Arolsen about the whereabouts of her missing relatives. She invariably receives a negative reply, together with the request not to repeat her enquiry. Any information which they received regarding the fate of her relatives would be sent to her without further request. This year's enquiry, however, produces the answer that Mor had died on 28 December 1944 at KZ Natzweiler, near Stuttgart. *(See p. 420)*

When Ellen reads this message, she remembers Christmas Day in 1944. The 25th or 28th of December. There could have been an erroneous transmission of a handwritten notice (his arrival at Auschwitz, given as 12 July 1944, had actually been the date of his deportation from Berlin). But then, perhaps, her father had really died on 28 December, and his last conscious thought on the 25th had been dedicated to her, his daughter. Probably everything has only been a coincidence.

Beginning of 1968

Gine asks her daughter to return to Berlin. Her heart complaints again give her much trouble, and she can only deal with her work load with great difficulty on her own.

April 1968

Ellen returns to Berlin. She is now working full-time in her mother's practice.

The 1970s

Peter's collaboration with the European Community, as Director of

BACIE, now brings him to Berlin on frequent occasions. After the foundation of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, whose location in Berlin is greeted with jubilation by Gine, he comes even more often – his record is five times in one year. The visits are always regarded as festive occasions by her.

Peter and Ellen have meanwhile become good friends. Their lives, however, still follow different paths.

January 1979

Dr Rudolf Meyer dies of a heart attack.

1980

Gine falls seriously ill. During her sickness Peter suddenly becomes Ellen's total support. By day and night he is always accessible to her and finds sensitive words, which give her encouragement. He proves the most reliable, deeply understanding and best of friends.

June 1981

Gine dies.

1982

Ellen and Peter now largely share their lives. They visit each other whenever their time allows and go on holidays together.

March 1987

Peter and Ellen marry. The ceremony takes place in London.

List of Names

Bär *(Policeman)*
Barag, Prof. Dan, born 13.9.35. Lives in Jerusalem.
Baumann, Herta, born ca. 1900, died beginning 1980s.
Baumann, Mr
Baur, Adele *(Name has been changed)*
Ben-Dov, Gusta, widowed Zwiebel, *née* Schindler, born 7.11.80, died 24.7.64.
Brehme, Mrs, born ca. 1890

Czerninsky, Werner, born 3.2.24, died 22.11.42.
Czunczuleit, Ingeborg, *see* Lipke.

Fenske, Elisabeth, *née* Wolter, born 1.7.04, died Oct 86.
Fenske, Karl-Martin, born Aug (?) 08 died 24.12.56.
Frank, Anita, born 1920. Deported to Theresienstadt 1943, then to Auschwitz in autumn 1944, presumably died in Bergen-Belsen, April 1945.
Frank, Reinhard, born 16 Sep 28. Lives in Boston, USA.

Goldberg, Erna, *née* Schindler, born 1909, died 1988. (?)
Goldberg, Dr Salo, born ca. 1900, died 1956 (?).
Greiser, Elli, born ca. 1900, died in 1960s.

Heinrich, Dr *(Physician)*
Hintz, Lothar
Hirsch, Gerhard ('Hardi'), born 16.12.27. Deported to Theresienstadt in August 1943, then to Auschwitz. Perished.
Hirsch, Inge, born 7.7.30. Deported to Theresienstadt in August 1943, then to Auschwitz. Perished.
Hirsch, Wolfgang, born 2.1.1897. Died in Auschwitz 1942.

Joram, Minna *(Name has been changed)*, died in the 1950s.
Joram, Waldemar *(Name has been changed)*, died.
Juval (formerly Goldberg), born 1933. Lives in Israel.

Katz, Johanna, *née Fernbach,* born 1898 (?), died 1957.
Katz, Willi, born ca. 1890, died in the 1970s.
Kirstein, Mr, born 1906.
Krüger, Gertrud, born 15.1.09, died 1991
Krüger, Wilhelm, died 1948.
Küpper Mr *(Fellow-tenant)*

Landvoigt, Frieda, *née* Kaiser, born 29.2.04, died May 94.
Landvoigt, Georg, died June 53.
Lipke, Ingeborg, *née* Czunczuleit, born 13.12.21. Lives in Berlin.
Löwenthal, Eugen, born ca. 1885. Deported to Auschwitz in March 1943. Perished.
Löwenthal, Johanna, *née* Weiß, born 21.3.1894. Deported to Auschwitz in March 1943. Perished.
Löwenthal, Kurt, born 1924. Deported to Auschwitz in March 1943. Perished.

Messerschmidt, Mr *(Teacher)*
Meyer, Dr Rudolf, born 23.5.09, died 23.1.79.
Minke, Agnes
Miriam, Miss *(Teacher)*
Munk, Dr Michael, born 23.4.05, died 1983.

Nadebor, Helmut, born 26.8.30. Lives in Berlin.
Nadebor, Ingrid, *née* Wieland, born 22.2.33. Lives in Berlin.
Naujocks, Herta, *née* Scharlack, born 18.6.1898, died March 1978.
Naujocks, Max, born 5.1 1894, died May 1963.
Children:
Naujocks, Fritz, born 10.4.21, died 4.1.44;
Ludwig, Gertrud *née* Naujocks, born 6.2.27. Lives in Berlin;
Kleina, Gisela *née* Naujocks, born Aug 30. Lives in Berlin;
Berthold, Helga *née* Naujocks, born 19.7.33. Lives in Düsseldorf;
Schulzki, Irmhild *née* Naujocks, born 11.8.35. Lives in Berlin.

Perry, Herta, *née* Krall, born 1.6.1892, died 31.3.82.
Piefke, Edith, born ca. 1910, died in the 1970s.
Piefke, Gerhard, born ca. 1905, died in the 1970s.
Pieritz, Mrs *(Housekeeper)*

R. Mrs, born ca. 1918, died in the mid-1980s.
Reimann *(Baker)*
Rich, Ellen, *née* Hase, born ca. 1900, died in the 1960s.
Rubinsky, Miss *(Teacher)*

Selbiger, Emma, born ca. 1900. Died.
Selbiger, Willi, born ca. 1895. Deported to Auschwitz 1943. Perished.
Steinbock, Margot

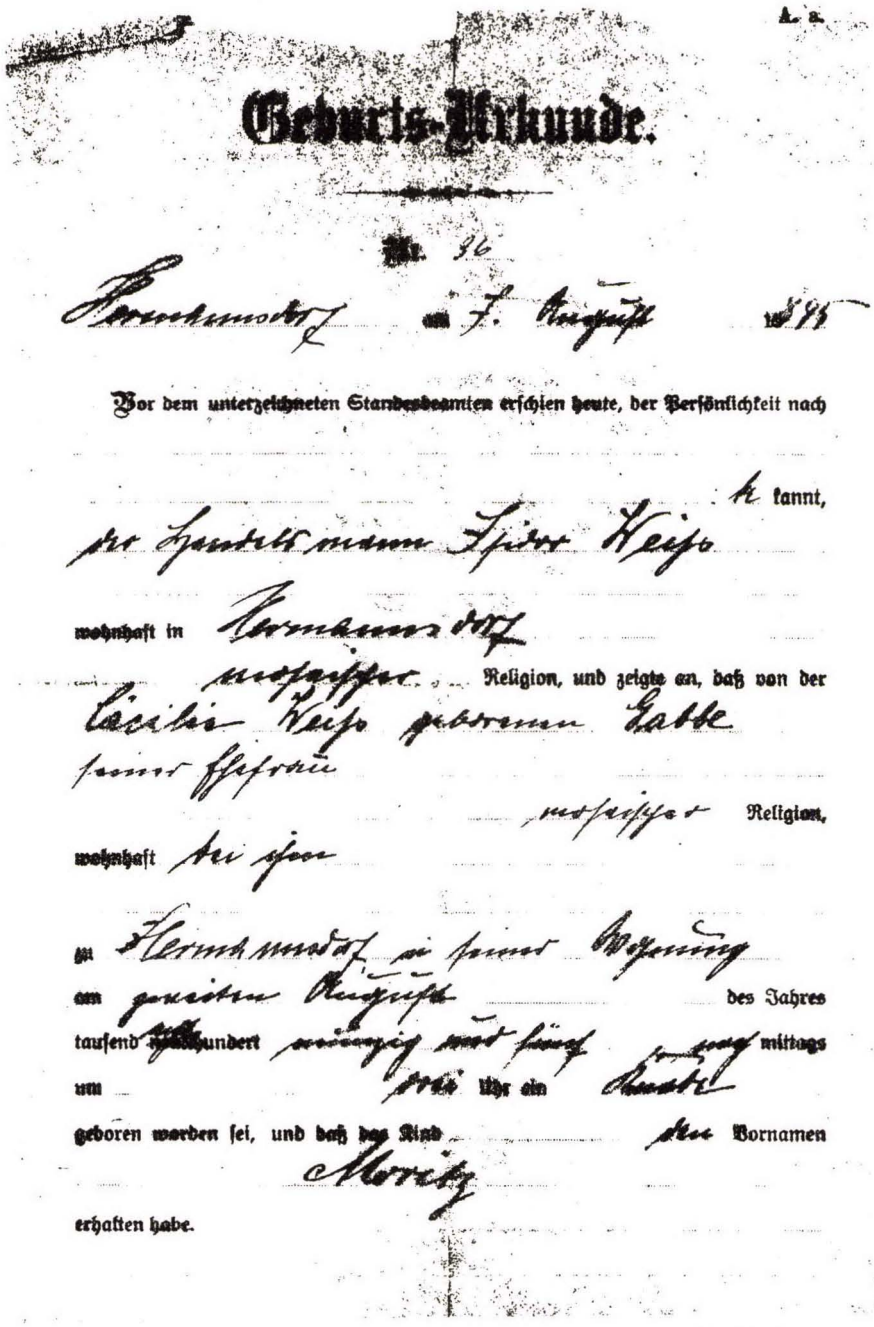
Voigt *(Milkman)*

Weiß, Alfred, born 11.4.1900, died in the early 1970s in Canada.
Weiß, Arnold, born 26.9.03, died in the mid-1970s in Canada.
Weiß, Arthur, born 3.4.1898, fell during First World War in 1917.
Weiß, Cäcilie, *née* Gabbe, born 6.9.1862, died 24.2 41.

Weiß, Isidor, born 12.8.1858, died 22.11.20.
Weiß, Käthe. Deported to Auschwitz in March 1943. Perished.
Weiß, Max, born 15.12.1896. Deported to Auschwitz in March 1943. Perished.
Weiß, Moritz, born 2.8.1895. Deported to Auschwitz on 12.7.44, transferred to Natzweiler in November 1944, and died there on 28.12.44.
Weiß, Regina, *née* Zwiebel, born 23.10.05, died 29.6.81.
Weiß, Sally, born 24.8.1892, fell during First World War in 1914.
Wieland, Ingrid, *see* Nadebor.
Wolter, Fritz, born 1911 (?), missing during action in the Crimea in 1944.
Wolter, Hedwig, *née* Opitz, born 23.4.1892, died Aug 1971.
Wolter, Rudolf, born 14.3.09, died Aug 96.

Zitrin, Berta, *née* Zwiebel, born 19.6.08. Deported to Auschwitz in February 1943. Perished.
Zitrin, Martin, born 14.2.1893. Deported to Auschwitz in February 1943. Perished.
Zitrin, Rahel, born 13.9.39. Deported to Auschwitz in February 1943. Perished.
Zwiebel, Alfred ('Bob'), born 25.6.12. Lives in Herzlia, Israel.
Children:
Tsabar, Dan (formerly Zwiebel), born 24.3.42. Lives with his family in Shoham, Israel.
Ramati, Michaela *née* Zwiebel, born 8.1.46. Lives with her family in Herzlia, Israel.
Zviel, Dr Amos (formerly Zwiebel), born 1.7. 50. Lives with his family in Moshav Bin-Nun, Israel.
Beckermann, Orli, *née* Zwiebel, born 26.4.55. Lives with her family in Hod Hasharon, Israel.
Zwiebel, Eva, *née* Gumpert, born 6.1.24. Lives in Herzlia, Israel.
Zwiebel, Gusta, *see* Ben-Dov
Zwiebel, Sigmund, born 24.1.1875, died 11.2.28.

Documents (2)



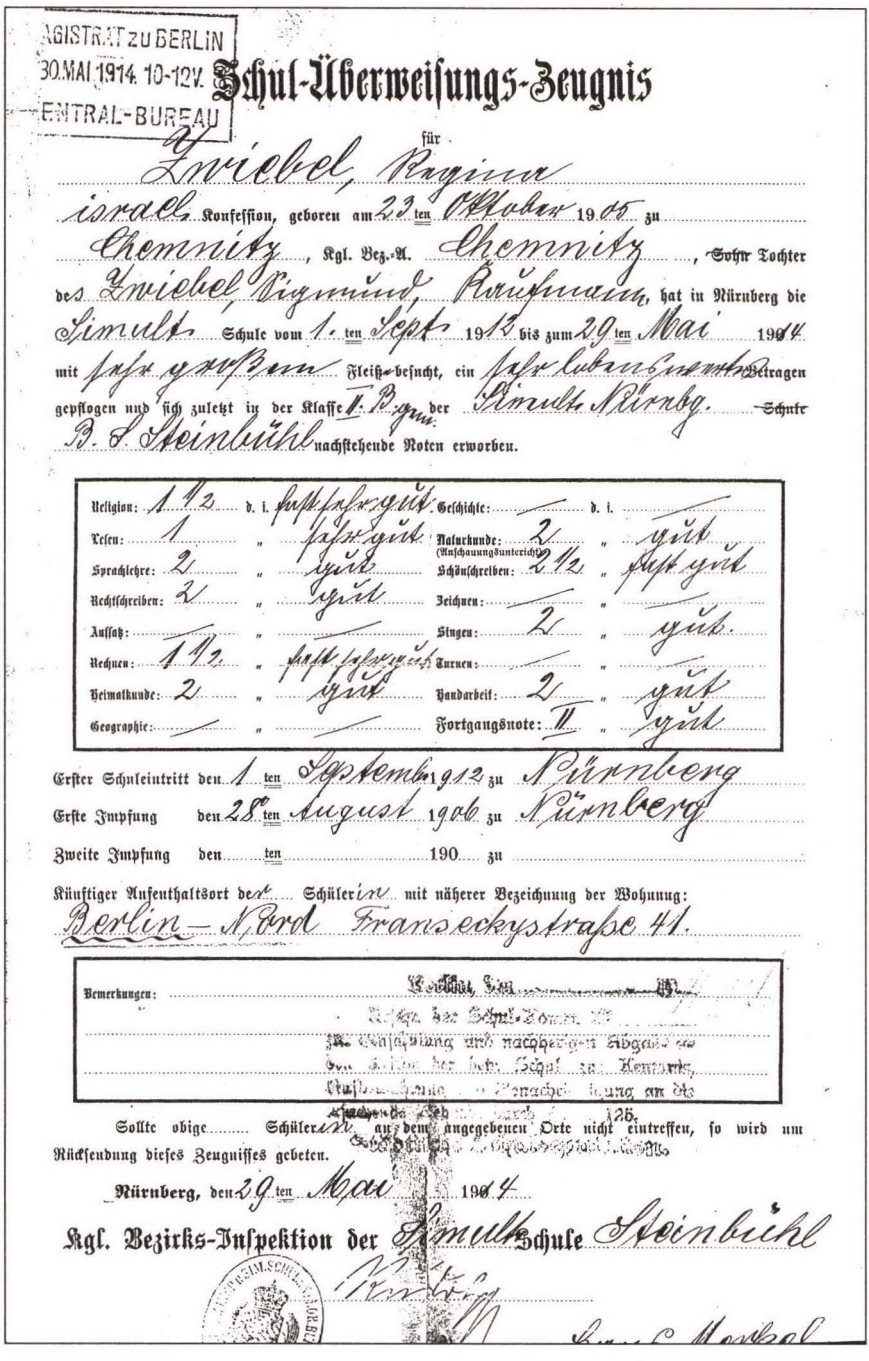
Geburts-Urkunde.

Nr. 96

Hermannsdorf am 7. August 1930

Vor dem unterzeichneten Standesbeamten erschien heute, der Persönlichkeit nach bekannt, der Handelsmann Peter Weiß wohnhaft in Hermannsdorf mosaischer Religion, und zeigte an, daß von der Cäcilie Weiß geborenen Labbe seiner Ehefrau mosaischer Religion, wohnhaft bei ihm zu Hermannsdorf in seiner Wohnung am siebten August des Jahres tausend neunhundert dreißig und sieben mittags um zwölf Uhr ein Knabe geboren worden sei, und daß das Kind die Vornamen Moritz erhalten habe.

Birth Certificate of Moritz Weiß. (*See 'Chronology', entry dated 17.8.30.*)



MAGISTRAT ZU BERLIN
30. MAI 1914. 10-12 V.
ZENTRAL-BUREAU

Schul-Überweisungs-Zeugnis

für

Zwiebel, Regina

israel. Konfession, geboren am 23ten Oktober 1905 zu

Chemnitz, Kgl. Bez.-A. Chemnitz, ~~Sohn~~ Tochter

des Zwiebel, Sigmund, Kaufmann, hat in Nürnberg die

Simult- Schule vom 1. ten Sept. 1913 bis zum 29 ten Mai 1914

mit fast ganz Dem Fleiß besucht, ein fast tadelloses Betragen

gepflogen und sich zuletzt in der Klasse I. B. ganz. der Simult. Nürnbg. ~~Schule~~

B. L. Steinbühl nachstehende Noten erworben.

Religion:	1 1/2	d. i. fast sehr gut	Geschichte:		d. i.
Lesen:	1	„ fast sehr gut	Naturkunde (Anschauungsunterricht):	2	„ gut
Sprachlehre:	2	„ gut	Schönschreiben:	2 1/2	„ fast gut
Rechtschreiben:	2	„ gut	Zeichnen:		„
Aufsatz:		„	Singen:	2	„ gut
Rechnen:	1 1/2	„ fast sehr gut	Turnen:		„
Heimatkunde:	2	„ gut	Handarbeit:	2	„ gut
Geographie:		„	Fortgangsnote:	II	„ gut

Erster Schuleintritt den 1 ten September 1912 zu Nürnberg

Erste Impfung den 28 ten August 1906 zu Nürnberg

Zweite Impfung den ten 190 zu

Künftiger Aufenthaltsort der Schülerin mit näherer Bezeichnung der Wohnung:

Berlin – N. Ord. Franseckystraße 41.

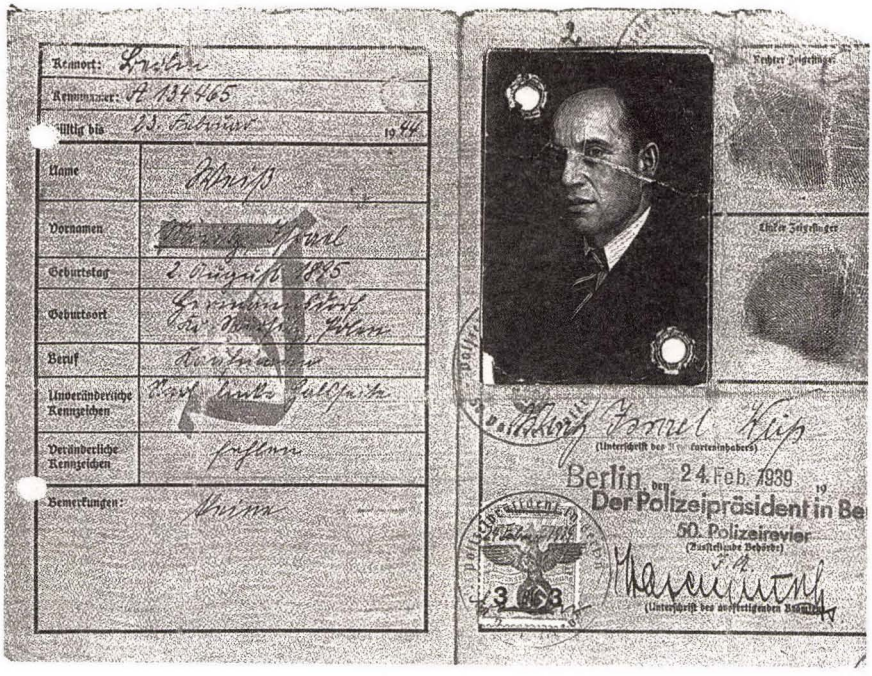
Bemerkungen:

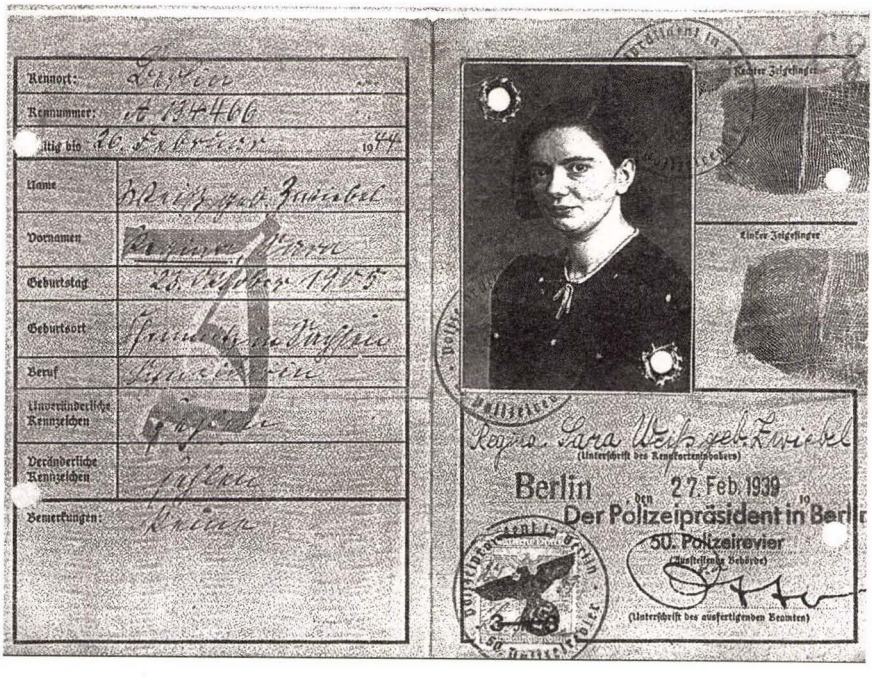
Sollte obige Schülerin an dem angegebenen Orte nicht eintreffen, so wird um Rücksendung dieses Zeugnisses gebeten.

Nürnberg, den 29 ten Mai 1914

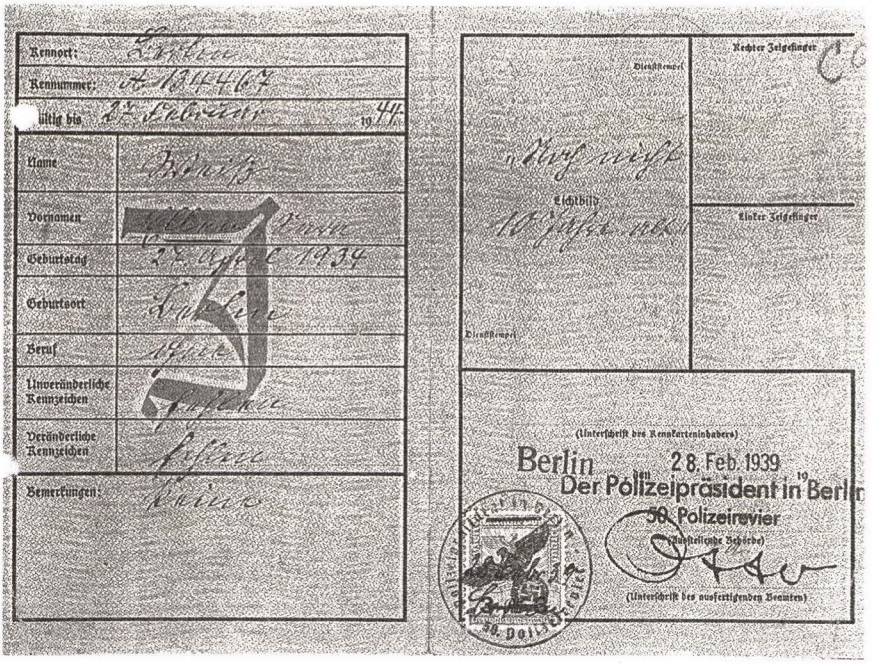
Kgl. Bezirks-Inspektion der Simultschule Steinbühl

School Report of Regina Zwiebel (*See 17.8.30.*)





Identity Cards of Moritz and Regina Weiß. (*See 28.2.39.*)



Identity Card of Ellen Weiß.

Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland
Abtlg. Fürsorge / Kriegsopfer
(vormals Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten e. V.)

Herr / ~~Frau~~ Moritz Israel W e i s s
geb. am 2.8.1895 zu Herrmannsdorf
Jüdische Kennkarte: Ort: Berlin Nr. 134465
Anschrift: Berlin N. 20, Zingsterstr. 9
wird in unserer Kartei unter Nr. 2661
als K r i e g s o p f e r geführt.

Herr W e i s s
hat uns nachgewiesen, daß ~~ihm das~~ er verwundet
~~Verwundetenabzeichen verliehen~~ worden ist.
Militärpass
Durch Bescheid des Versorgungsamts
vom Aktenzeichen:
ist als Dienstbeschädigung anerkannt.

Er bezieht keine % Rente.

Herr und Frau
sind — ist — Eltern — Vater — Mutter des am
gefallenen — an den Fol
einer Dienstbeschädigung gestorbenen Sohnes

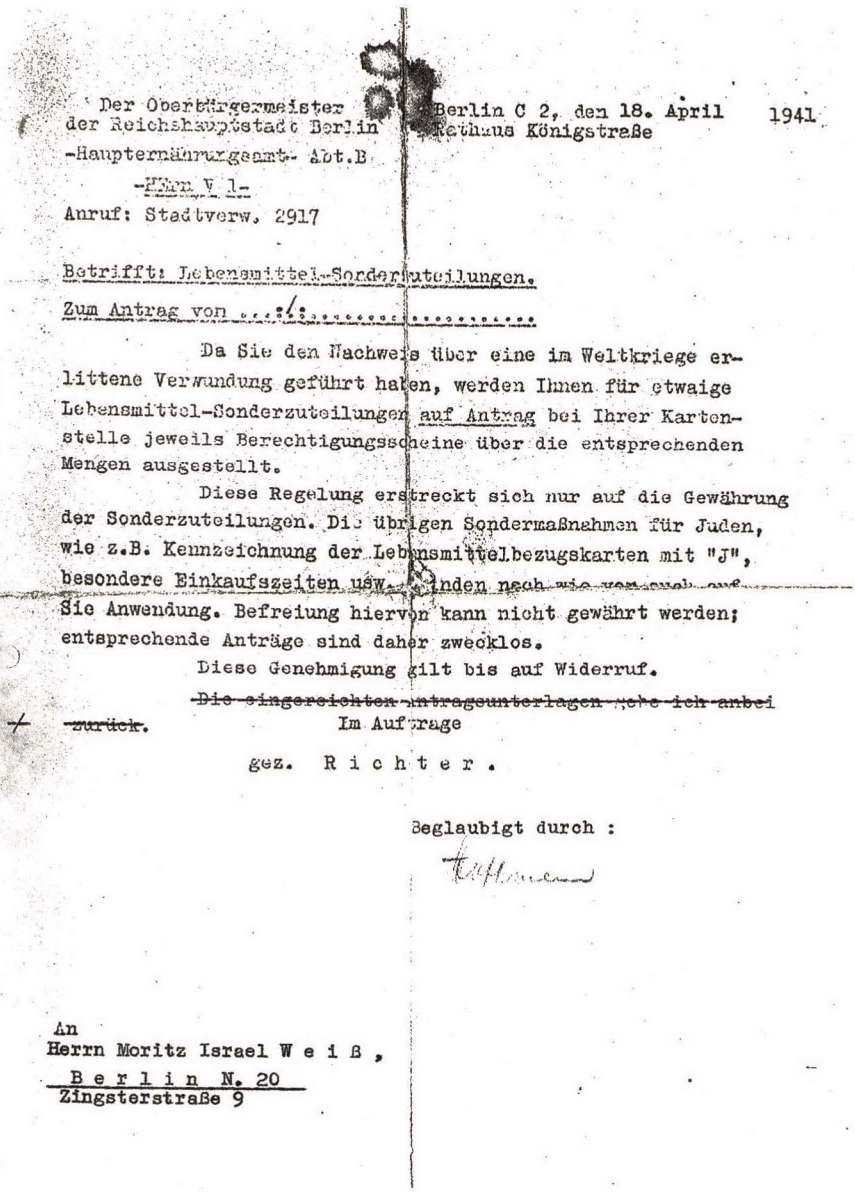
Frau
ist die Witwe des am gefallenen —
an den Folgen einer Dienstbeschädigung gestorbenen
Ehemannes

Berlin, den -3. MRZ. 1941

Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland
Kriegsopfer
vorm. Reichsbund Jüdischer Frontsoldaten E. V.
Abtlg.: Fürsorge

(Unterschrift)

Certificate issued by the Association of Jews in Germany confirms that Moritz Weiß was wounded during war service. (*See 1940 and subsequent years, para. 2.*)



Der Oberbürgermeister
der Reichshauptstadt Berlin
-Haupternährungsamt- Abt.B
-Ehm V 1-
Anruf: Stadtverw. 2917

Berlin C 2, den 18. April 1941
Rathaus Königstraße

Betrifft: Lebensmittel-Sonderzuteilungen.

Zum Antrag von ...1/.....

Da Sie den Nachweis über eine im Weltkriege erlittene Verwundung geführt haben, werden Ihnen für etwaige Lebensmittel-Sonderzuteilungen auf Antrag bei Ihrer Kartenstelle jeweils Berechtigungsscheine über die entsprechenden Mengen ausgestellt.

Diese Regelung erstreckt sich nur auf die Gewährung der Sonderzuteilungen. Die übrigen Sondermaßnahmen für Juden, wie z.B. Kennzeichnung der Lebensmittelbezugskarten mit "J", besondere Einkaufszeiten usw. finden nach wie vor auf Sie Anwendung. Befreiung hiervon kann nicht gewährt werden; entsprechende Anträge sind daher zwecklos.

Diese Genehmigung gilt bis auf Widerruf.

~~Die eingereichten Antragunterlagen gehe ich anbei zurück.~~

Im Auftrage

gez. R i c h t e r .

Beglaubigt durch :

An
Herrn Moritz Israel W e i ß ,
B e r l i n N. 20
Zingsterstraße 9

Letter from Central Food Office, Berlin, to Moritz Weiß, granting a special allocation of pulses, rice and tobacco, in view of his having been wounded during the First World War. It is pointed out that this concession does not exempt his ration cards from being overprinted with 'J', or his shopping time being extended beyond the time allowed to Jews. It is also emphasised that there is no point in applying for a relaxation of existing rules, and that the above concession is only valid until further notice. (*See 1940 and subsequent years, para. 2.*)


Wehrnummer
Berlin I/45/50/43/5

Polizeil. Meldebehörde
Der Polizeipräsident in Berlin

Wehrbezirkskommando
Berlin I

Ausschließungsschein (Jude)

Der Kaufmann
(Beruf, Vor- und Familienname)
Moritz Israel Weiß

geb. am 2. Dez 1895 zu Hermannsdorf
(Tag, Monat, Jahr) (Ort)

Wreschen / Provinz Posen
(Gemeinde, Kreis usw., Regierungsbezirk, Land)

Lichtbild

Dienststempel des Wehrbezirkskommandos Berlin-Wedding

wird hiermit vom Dienst in der Wehrmacht im Frieden

ausgeschlossen.
Er scheidet auf die vorstehend eingetragene Dauer aus dem Wehrpflichtverhältnis aus.

Berlin, den 30. Okt. 1939
(Musterungsort) (Tag, Monat, Jahr)

Die Kreispolizeibehörde

i. V.
(Unterschrift)

Dienststempel

Der Wehrbezirkskommandeur

Dienststempel

(Unterschrift)

Zur Beachtung

1. Alle Eintragungen sind mit Tinte oder mit Hilfe der Schreibmaschine auszuführen.
2. Der Verlust dieses Scheines ist sofort dem zuständigen Wehrmeldeamt zu melden.
3. Fälschung und mißbräuchliche Benutzung dieses Scheines wird als Urkundenfälschung gerichtlich verfolgt.

Moritz Weiß's Exclusion Certificate from the Armed Services. (*See 28.2.39.*)

Jüdische Kultusvereinigung
zu Berlin e.V.

Berlin N 4, den 12. November 1941

Herrn Moritz Isr. Weiss II. 24
Frau.....
Fräulein

Ihre Transport-Nr. 21 J. 72/73 Zingster 9

Betrifft: Evakuierung

Ihre Evakuierung ist auf behördliche Anordnung für den 15.Nov.1941 in Aussicht genommen. Betroffen hiervon sind außer Ihnen auch Ihre Ehefrau und Ihre unverheirateten Familienangehörigen, soweit sie in Berlin wohnhaft sind.

Wir bitten Sie herzlich, sich durch die Schwere dieser Maßnahme nicht zu unüberlegten Schritten verleiten zu lassen. Wenn Sie Ruhe und Besonnenheit bewahren, werden Sie sich selbst und Ihren Gefährten den Weg erleichtern.

Für die Durchführung der Maßnahme ist folgendes zu beachten:

I. G E P Ä C K

1. Es können ca. 50 kg Gepäck je Person mitgenommen werden.

   Darin sollen die Gegenstände enthalten sein, welche in dem anliegenden Merkblatt aufgeführt sind. Unter Zurücklassung überflüßiger Sachen sind nur die wirklich notwendigen Ausrüstungsgegenstände mitzunehmen; wichtig sind insbesondere warme Sachen, warme Wäsche, festes Schuhwerk, Decken.

2. Zu unterscheiden sind a

   a) die Gepäckstücke, welche in Gepäckwagen verladen werden (großes Gepäck),

   b) Gepäckstücke, welche im Abteil mitgeführt werden (Handgepäck); als Handgepäck können nur diejenigen Stücke behandelt werden, welche jede Person mit sich zu führen in der Lage ist, ohne im Abteil mehr Platz in Anspruch zu nehmen, als ihr zusteht.

   Es ist angeordnet worden, daß in das große Gepäck folgende Gegenstände zu packen sind:

   Essbestecke (mit Ausnahme von Löffeln), kleines Handwerkszeug, Hammer, Zangen, Nägel, Scheren, Taschenmesser, Rasierzeug, Stopfgarn, Nähgarn, Flickzeug, Taschenlampen, Talglichte, Streichhölzer, Medikamente mit Ausnahme von Giften; Gifte sind von der Mitnahme ausgeschlossen.

Notification of 'Evacuation' for the Weiß family of 12.11.41 for 15.11.41, with enclosed detailed instructions. (*See 13.11.41.*)

Im Handgepäck sind weisungsgemäß mitzunehmen:

Sämtliche Zahlungsmittel, Sparkassenbücher, Wert- und Schmucksachen, sämtliche Lebensmittelkarten, Löffel, Thermos- oder Feldflaschen.

c) Damit Sie im neuen Bestimmungsort sich eine ordentliche Lagerstatt einrichten können, hat die Behörde genehmigt, daß Sie für jede Person eine Auflagematratze mitnehmen, jedoch keine Patent- oder Federmatratze.

Ferner sollen Sie, falls Sie eiserne Öfen mit Ofenrohren besitzen, diese mitnehmen, desgleichen Sägen, Äxte, Beile, Spaten, Hacken, auch größeres Hausgerät, Eimer und Waschschüsseln. Insbesondere sind auch Nähmaschinen mitzunehmen.

Die hier unter c) genannten Sachen gehören nicht zu dem auf 50 kg begrenzten Gepäck und werden vorab in unseren unten genannten Sammelstellen abgeliefert (vgl. V 1).

Für die Desinfektion der Matratzen wird von uns gesorgt, ebenso für den Abtransport der unter c) genannten Sachen zum Bahnhof.

Sperrende Gepäckstücke sind von der Mitnahme ausgeschlossen.

II. H A U S T I E R E

dürfen nicht mitgenommen werden. Sie sind unverzüglich dem Tierschutzverein anzubieten. Sollte es nicht mehr möglich sein, sie dem Tierschutzverein zur Verfügung zu stellen, so sind sie am Abholungstage zum Polizeirevier mitzubringen (vgl. V 2).

III. V E R Ä U S S E R U N G E N V O N S A C H E N

Z A H L U N G S M I T T E L

Die entgeltliche oder unentgeltliche Weggabe von Sachen, die nicht mitgenommen werden können ist zur Vermeidung ernster Weiterungen unbedingt zu unterlassen.

Möbel und sonstige Gebrauchsgegenstände dürfen unter keinen Umständen verkauft oder verschenkt werden, da die Werte sonst der Allgemeinheit verloren gehen. Bei Zuwiderhandlungen ist mit behördlichen Maßnahmen zu rechnen.

Sämtliche Zahlungsmittel, Sparkassenbücher u.ä. sind im Handgepäck mitzubringen; das Geld kommt der Gesamtheit der Transportteilnehmer und damit jedem Einzelnen zugute. Es ist verboten, Zahlungsmittel, Sparkassenbücher u.ä. beiseite zu schaffen. Es ist ferner verboten, Zahlungsmittel, Sparkassenbücher usw. anders als im Handgepäck mitzubringen. Ein Verstoss hiergegen würde Bestrafung nach den devisenrechtlichen Vorschriften zur Folge haben.

Ferner sind im Handgepäck mitzubringen sämtliche Urkunden, welche Vermögensrechte zum Inhalt haben oder sich auf das Vermögen beziehen.

IV. L E B E N S M I T T E L

Ungeachtet dessen, daß für Verpflegung in der Sammelunterkunft und beim Transport tunlichst gesorgt wird, soll jeder die im Haushalt befindlichen Lebensmittel mitbringen.

V. T R A N S P O R T V O R B E R E I T U N G

1. Matratzen, das große Handwerkszeug und das große Hausgerät (oben I c) sind am 14. November 1941 zwischen 10 Uhr vormittags und 18 Uhr abends oder am 15. November 1941 von 7 Uhr morgens ab bis spätestens 10½ Uhr vormittags in einer der folgenden Sammelstellen abzuliefern:

   Artilleriestraße 31 - frühere Synagoge
   Joachimstaler Straße 13 - Turnhalle
   Kaiserstraße 29/30 - Turnhalle
   Thielsch-Ufer 10/16 - Synagoge
   Wilsnacker Straße 3 - Turnhalle

   Auf jedem Gegenstand muß in geeigneter Weise der Name des Besitzers und die Transport-Nr. (vgl. oben) fest angebracht sein.

2. Sie müssen sich am Nachmittag des 15. November 1941 zur Abholung mit Ihrem großen Gepäck und Handgepäck bereithalten. An jedem einzelnen Gepäckstück muß der Name und die Transport-Nr. deutlich sichtbar angebracht sein.

   Die Wohnungs- bezw. Zimmerschlüssel sind dem abholenden Beamten auszuhändigen.

   Die Transportteilnehmer begeben sich alsdann mit dem großen Gepäck und dem Handgepäck nach dem Polizeirevier und von dort unter Benutzung der üblichen Verkehrsmittel, jedoch lediglich unter Mitnahme ihres Handgepäcks nach der Synagoge Levetzowstraße - Eingang Jagowstraße.

   Das große Gepäck wird vom Polizeirevier aus mit Lastkraftwagen unter Mitwirkung unserer Ordner nach der Sammelunterkunft Levetzowstraße 7/8 transportiert.

VI. S A N I T Ä T S P E R S O N A L

In der Sammelunterkunft und auf dem Transport werden Krankenbehandler und Pflegepersonal zur Verfügung stehen. Eine Verabreichung etwa erforderlicher Medikamente findet ausschließlich durch diese statt. Eine Mitnahme von Medikamenten im Handgepäck ist unstatthaft.

Wir bitten, unter Berücksichtigung des oben Mitgeteilten,

1. das mitzubringende Gepäck sorgfältig auszuwählen, damit nicht überflüssige, sondern nur wirklich notwendige Ausrüstungsgegenstände mitgenommen werden,
2. die oben angegebenen Zeiten für die Ablieferung der Matratzen, des großen Handwerkszeuges und des großen Hausgerätes pünktlich einzuhalten.

Unsere von der Evakuierung betroffenen Mitglieder müssen sich bewußt sein, daß sie durch ihr persönliches Verhalten und die ordnungsmäßige Erfüllung der erteilten Anweisungen entscheident zur reibungslosen Abwicklung des Transportes beitragen können und daß es daher dringend notwendig ist, alle Vorbereitungen für den Transport ruhig und besonnen zu treffen. Es ist selbstverständlich, daß wir im Rahmen des Zugelassenen alles tun werden, um den von der Evakuierung betroffenen Gemeindemitgliedern beizustehen und ihnen jede mögliche Hilfe zu leisten.

JÜDISCHE KULTUSVEREINIGUNG ZU BERLIN E V

D e r V o r s t a n d

M E R K B L A T T I — **Anweisung zum Packen für Kleidung und Wäschestücke**

Die Kleidungsstücke sind durch Kreuze (+) auf die einzelnen Gepäckstücke (ihrer Wichtigkeit nach)verteilt; Zahlen sind für die einzelnen Gegenstände nicht genannt, jedoch soll im Handgepäck nur einmal Wäsche zum Wechseln und je 1 Hand- und Geschirrtuch enthalten sein.

1. Für Männer

Gegenstand	Reiseanzug	Handgepäck (Rucksack, Netz, Handtasche Plaidrolle, Bettsack)	Großes Gepäck (Normale Coupé-Koffer)
UNTERKLEIDUNG:			
Strümpfe, Stutzen	+	+	+
Fusslappen	+	+	+
Unterhosen	+	+	+
Unterhemden	-	-	+
Polohemden	+	+	+
Oberhemden	+	+	+
Weiche Kragen	+	-	+
Leibbinden	-	+	+
Schlafanzug oder Nachthemden	+	+	+
Taschentücher	+	-	-
Pulswärmer, Kniewärmer	-	+	-
Ohrenschützer			
OBERKLEIDUNG:			
Anzüge	+	-	+
Pullover oder Strickweste	+	-	+
Trainingsanzug, Skianzug	-	-	+
Krawatten	+	-	+
Stiefel	+	-	+
Hausschuhe	-	+	-
Ledergürtel	+	-	-
Hosenträger	+	-	+
Sockenhalter	+	-	+
Hausjacke	-	-	+
ÜBERKLEIDUNG:			
Wintermantel	+	-	-
Sommermantel	-	-	+
Regenmantel	+	-	-
Windjacke	-	-	+
Wollschal	+	-	+
Handschuhe (möglichst auch Fausthandschuhe)	+	-	+
Hut, Mütze	+		
Arbeitskleidung	-	-	+
Wickelgmaschen	+	-	-

Für Frauen

Gegenstand	Reiseanzug		Handgepäck (Rucksack, Netz, Handtasche, Plaidrolle, Bett-sack)		Großes Gepäck (Normale Coupé-Koffer
UNTERKLEIDUNG:					
Strümpfe, Socken	+		+		+
Hemdhosen oder Hemden	+		+		+
Schlüpfer	+		+		+
Strumpfgürtel, Mieder	+		–		+
Büstenhalter	+		+		+
Unterkleider	+		–		+
Schlafanzug oder Nachthemd	–		+		+
Taschentücher	+		+		+
Leibbinde	+		–		+
Frauenbinden	–		+		+
Kniewärmer, Pulswärmer	+		–		–
Ohrenschützer	–		–		+
OBERKLEIDUNG:					
Kleider, Kostüme	+		–		+
Pullover oder Strickjacke	+		–		+
Leichte Kleider	–		–		+
Kittelschürzen	–		–		+
Trainingsanzug oder Skianzug	+	oder	+		
Schuhe	+		–		+
Hausschuhe	–		+		–
Überschuhe	+		+	oder	+
Kopftuch	–		+		+
Handtaschen	+		–		+
ÜBERKLEIDUNG:					
Wintermantel	+		–		–
Sommermantel	–		–		+
Regenmantel	+		–		–
Windjacke	–		–		+
Warmer Schal	+		–		+
Handschuhe	+		–		+
Hut, warme Mütze					
Regenkappe	+		–		+
Muffe	+		–		–
Arbeitskleidung	–		–		+

3. Betten, Bettwäsche

Matratzen: (siehe allgemeine Anweisungen I Ac)

Betten: Daunendecke, Wolldecke, Schlafsack, Reisekissen (nach Möglichkeit so packen, daß man sie als Handgepäck bei sich haben kann, sonst als großes Gepäck).

	Handgepäck	Großes Gepäck
Hauswäsche	–	+
Bettwäsche	–	+
Handtücher	–	+
Küchentücher, Wischtücher, Lappen		+

4. Verschiedenes:

Wasch- und Kammzeug	+		
Kleiderbürste	–		+
Kerzen und Streichhölzer	–		+
Nähzeug	–		+
Medikamente, Watte	–		+
Toilett-Papier, Papiertaschentücher	+		+
Ersatzbrille	–		+
Schirm	+	oder	+
Spielkarten	+		+
Bücher	+		+
Essbestecke	–		+
Löffel	+		+
Kleines Handwerkszeug (s.allgem.Anwsg.I b)			+
Schuhpflegemittel	+		+
Taschenlampe	–		+
Rasierzeug	–		+
Thermosflaschen, Feldflaschen	+		

M E R K B L A T T II betr. Gepäck!

Um Mißverständnisse zu vermeiden, geben wir Ihnen nochmals die Richtlinien für das mitzunehmende Reisegepäck bekannt. Im Interesse einer reibungslosen Abwicklung bitten wir, die nachfolgenden Ausführungen auf das Genaueste zu befolgen:

I.

Jeder von der Evakuierungsmaßnahme Betroffene darf mitnehmen:

1. Handgepäck,
2. großes Gepäck,
3. Sondergepäck.

II.

Unter Handgepäck versteht man: Rucksack, Netz, Handtasche, Plaidrolle

Mit dem Handgepäck sollen mitgenommen werden:

a) sämtliche Zahlungsmittel, Sparkassenbücher, Wert- und Schmucksachen, sämtliche Lebensmittelkarten, Löffel, Thermos- oder Feldflaschen;

b) Leibwäsche (nur einmal zu Wechseln), Wasch- und Kammzeug, Spielkarten, Bücher, Schuhpflegemittel, ein Handtuch und ein Geschirrtuch;

c) im übrigen vgl.: "Merkblatt I - Anweisungen zu Packen für Kleidung und Wäsche [illegible]icke".

III.

Als "Grosses Gepäck" werden Coupékoffer sowie Bettsäcke angegeben. In dem Coupékoffer sind die im vorerwähnten Merkblatt aufgeführten Bekleidungsstücke usw. einzupacken.

Zu beachten ist:

1.) Handgepäck und großes Gepäck einer Person sollen zusammen nicht mehr als 50 kg wiegen.

2.) Jedes Gepäckstück - also Handgepäck, Koffer und Bettsack - ist mit der Transport-Nr., dem Vor- und Zunamen des Eigentümers zu versehen und zwar nach folgendem Muster:

Transport-Nr. 2155
Karl Israel Müller
Berlin W 15
Joachimstaler Straße 9a

Diese Aufschrift ist mit schwarzer oder weißer Farbe in Druckbuchstaben auf dem Gepäckstück anzubringen.

Außerdem ist an jeder Seite eines jeden Gepäckstückes ein möglichst mit Draht zu befestigender Gepäckanhänger anzubringen, der gleichfalls nach dem obigen Muster zu beschriften ist.

3.) Es empfiehlt sich, den Coupékoffer mit starker Schnur oder Riemen zu verschnüren, da nur zu leicht Gefahr besteht, daß der Koffergriff abreisst.

IV.

"Sondergepäck"

Wie bereits mitgeteilt, hat die Behörde die Mtnahme folgender Gegenstände gestattet:

1 Auflegematratze pro Person,
1 eiserner Ofen mit Ofenrohr,
Sägen, Äxte, Beile, Spaten und Hacken,
Hausgerät und eine Nähmaschine

Unter Hausgerät versteht amn: Kochtöpfe, Bratpfanne, Kocher, Teller, Trinkbecher, Putzeimer, Waschschüssel, Handbesen, Klappstühle.

Diese Gegenstände müssen unzerbrechlich sein.

Gegenstände aus Glas oder Porzellan werden zurückgewiesen!!!

Das Hausgerät muß so zusammengepackt sein, daß kein Zwischenraum unausgenutzt bleibt und eine Nachprüfung ohne Schwierigkeit möglich ist.

Jedes Stück des Sondergepäcks muß mit der Transport-Nr. versehen sein, und zwar ist diese auf dem Gegenstand (Ofen, Säge, Kochtopf usw.) mit schwarzer oder weißer Farbe anzubringen.

Gemäß dem Ihnen übersandten Merkblatt ist das Sondergepäck zu den darin angegebenen Zeiten bei einer der folgenden Sammelstellen:

Artilleriestr. 31 - frühere Synagoge
Joachimstaler Str. 13 - Turnhalle
Kaiserstr. 29/30 - Turnhalle
Thielsch-Ufer 10/16 - Synagoge
Wilsnacker Str. 3 - Turnhalle

abzuliefern.

Bei der Ablieferung muß der anliegende Vordruck in doppelter Ausfertigung abgegeben werden. Auf dem Vordruck ist der Inhalt des Sondergepäcks (siehe IV) anzugeben.

Epeco
Fabrik für Kartonnagen
Erwin Erich & Co.
Berlin - Lichtenberg
Herzberg-Straße 127
Anruf: 55 13 58 — 55 13 59
Drahtwort: Epecokarton Berlin

Berlin-Lichtenberg, den 23. Februar 1942

Betrifft: Fa.

Unsere Zeichen:

Vertreter

Hiermit bescheinigen wir, dass der Jude Moritz Israel Weiss wohnhaft Berlin, Zingster Str. 9 bei uns beschäftigt ist und zwar in der Nachtschicht von 19 bis 6 Uhr,

Fabrik für Kartonnagen
Erwin Erich & Co.
M. Kolm

Letter from Epeco, dated 23.2.42., confirming Moritz Weiß's employment, and a note certifying his entitlement to break the curfew applicable to Jews, due to his employment during the night shift.. (*See end March 1942.*)

Epeco
Fabrik für Kartonnagen
Erwin Erich & Co.
Berlin - Lichtenberg
Herzberg-Straße 127
Anruf: 55 13 58 — 55 13 59
Drahtwort: Epecokarton Berlin

Berlin-Lichtenberg, den 4. September 1942

Betrifft: Unseren W-Betrieb 03/II/4669

Unsere Zeichen:
Ko.

B e s c h e i n i g u n g.

Der Moritz Israel W e i s s wohnhaft B e r l i n C 2, Dirksen Str. 25 ist in unserem Betrieb als Special-und Maschinenarbeiter beschäftigt, und wird zur Ausführung der vorliegenden Wehrmachtsaufträge dringend benötigt.

Epeco Fabrik für Kartonnagen
Erwin Erich & Co.

Certificate from Epeco, dated 4.9.42, regarding the employment of Moritz Weiß in a reserved occupation.

Berlin, den 29. Juni 1942

An die Eltern unserer Schüler!

Am heutigen Tage hat zum letzten Male Unterricht in unseren jüdischen Schulen stattgefunden, die anordnungsgemäß nunmehr zu schliessen sind. Die Beschulung jüdischer Kinder durch besoldete oder unbesoldete Lehrer ist nach Schliessung der jüdischen Schulen unzulässig. Dies gilt auch für den Unterricht in privaten Schulzirkeln. Die Unterweisung der Kinder durch Familienangehörige bleibt hiervon unberührt.

Soweit Schulkinder bisher zum Zwecke des Schulbesuchs außerhalb des Wohnorts ihrer Eltern oder Angehörigen untergebracht waren, ist die sofortige Rückkehr der Kinder zu den Eltern oder Angehörigen zu veranlassen.

Soweit sich Schüler noch im Besitze von Erlaubnisscheinen zur Benutzung öffentlicher Verkehrsmittel befinden, sind diese gemäß der Anweisung der Schule zurückzugeben, da wir unsererseits verpflichtet sind, die Erlaubnisscheine der ausstellenden Behörde zurückzugeben.

Eine Meldung der Schüler beim Arbeitsamt zur Vermittelung in den Arbeitseinsatz ist, wie bereits mitgeteilt, unzulässig. Die Schüler werden nach Maßgabe des Bedürfnisses zu Hilfsarbeiten in jüdischen Einrichtungen herangezogen werden. Hierüber werden noch Nachrichten ergehen.

Den Eltern und sonstigen Angehörigen oder Erziehungsberechtigten obliegt die Pflicht, für eine ordnungsmäßige erzieherische Betreuung der Kinder zu sorgen. Wir werden unsererseits diejenigen Vorkehrungen treffen, die nötig sind, um die Kinder, insbesondere die jüngeren, in Heimen, Horten oder sonstigen Einrichtungen im Rahmen der gegebenen Möglichkeiten zu beschäftigen oder zu betreuen. Nachrichten hierüber gehen Ihnen von der Wohlfahrts- und Jugendpflegestelle der Kultusvereinigung (Abt. Jugendfürsorge, Leiterin Fräulein Silbermann) zu.

Das Schulgeld ist für die Zeit bis einschließlich 30. Juni zu entrichten. Etwa geleistete Vorauszahlungen an Schulgeld oder Schulpatenschaften können weisungsgemäß nicht erstattet werden.

Gleichzeitig mit dieser Benachrichtigung für die Eltern erhalten die Schüler ein Schulabgangs-Zeugnis. Wir hoffen, daß die Schulausbildung, die unseren Kindern bisher zuteil werden konnte, ihnen als Grundlage der Erziehung in ihrem künftigen Leben erhalten bleiben wird.

Jüdische Kultusvereinigung zu Berlin e.V.

Der Vorstand

(Moritz Israel Henschel)

Die Schulverwaltung

(Richard Joseph Israel Schaefer)

Circular from the Association of Jews in Germany, dated 29.6.42., announcing the closure of Jewish schools that day, in compliance with official instructions. (*See 30.6.42.*)



Fabrik für Kartonnagen

Erwin Erich & Co.

Anruf: 55 13 58 u. 55 13 59 / Postscheck: Bln. 165682 / Drahtwort: Epecokarton Berlin
Bankverbindung: Hamel & Co., Bln. C 2, Oberwallstraße 18 + Erfüllungsort: Berlin

Abt. I.: **Kartonnagen aller Art • Spez. Zuschnitte**
Abt. II.: **Wellpappe in Rollen und Tafeln**
Wellpappe-Kisten für Post- u. Bahnversand
Abt. III.: **Pappen-Großhandel**

Berlin-Lichtenberg • Herzberg-Straße 127

Abs.: „Epeco" Fabrik f. Kartonnagen Erwin Erich & Co., Bln.-Lichtenberg

Unsere Zeichen:	Ihre Zeichen:	Ihre Nachricht vom:	Tag:

(Bei Rückfragen bitte angeben)

B e s c h e i n i g u n g !

Betrifft: Moritz Israel W e . s s, geb. 2.8.1895.
Berlin N. 2o, Zingststr. 9

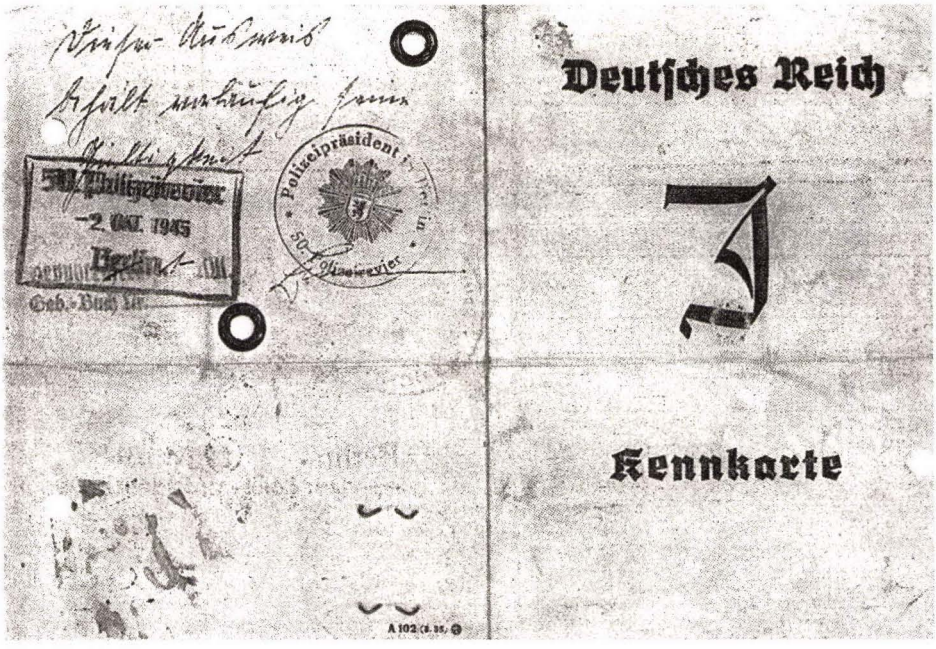
Obengenannte Person ist bei uns mit Spezialarbeiten beschäftigt. Wir sind infolge unserer Fertigungen ein vom OKH. geschützter Betrieb, wodurch sichergestellt werden soll, keine weitere Entziehung von Arbeitskräften vorzunehmen.

Im Falle der evtl. Evakuierung des Obengenannten, bitten wir diese Umstände zu berücksichtigen und uns diese Arbeitskraft zu belassen.

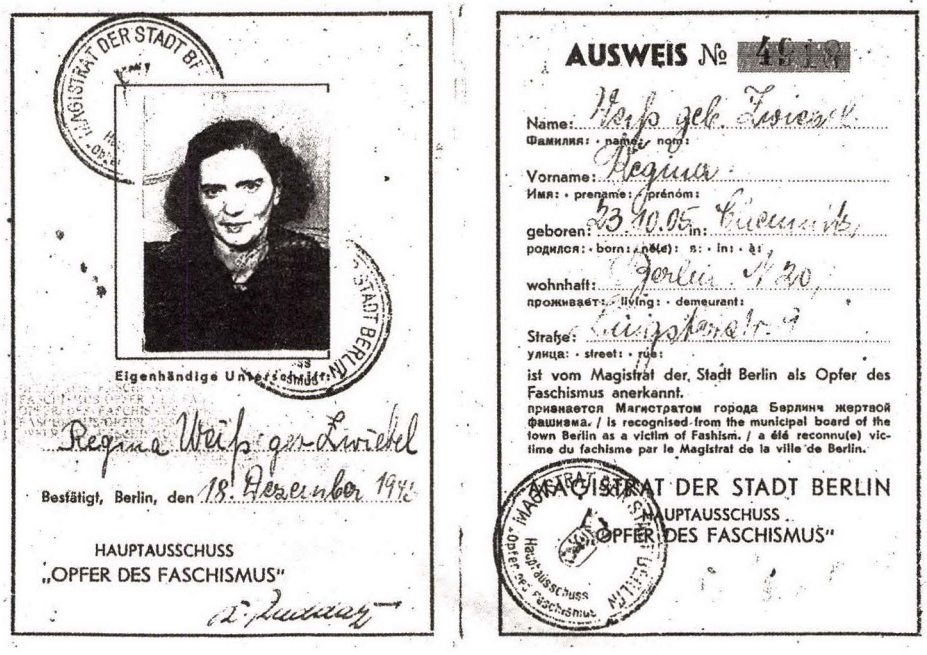
Epeco Fabrik für Kartonnagen
Erwin Erich & Co.

Berlin, den 2o. Januar 1943.
E/E.

Certificate from Epeco, dated 20.1.43, confirming the employment of Moritz Weiß in a reserved occupation and requesting his exemption from any deportation for which he may be earmarked. (*See End March 1942.*)



Cover of Jewish Identity Card issued in February 1939, and bearing the endorsement of the Police Authority, dated 2 October 1945, extending the document's validity 'for the time being'.



Regina Weiß's Certificate, dated 18.12.45, confirming her recognition as an 'OdF' (Victim of Fascism)

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SERVICE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES
3548 Arolsen - République fédérale d'Allemagne

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE
3548 Arolsen - Federal Republic of Germany

INTERNATIONALER SUCHDIENST
3548 Arolsen - Bundesrepublik Deutschland

No.

Certificate of Incarceration — Inhaftierungsbescheinigung — Certificat d'Incarcération

Ihr Akt.-Z.: / Votre Réf.: / Your Ref.:

Unser Akt.-Z.: / Notre Réf.: / Our Ref.: T/D 955 521

Name / Nom / Name	ZITRIN geb. ZWIEBEL	Vornamen / Prénoms / First names	Berta	Staatsangehörigkeit / Nationalité / Nationality	nicht angegeben
Geburtsdatum / Date de naissance / Date of birth	19.6.1908	Geburtsort / Lieu de naissance / Place of birth	Würzburg	Häftlingsnummer / No. de prisonnier / Prisoner's No.	nicht angegeben
Namen der Eltern / Noms des parents / Parents' names	nicht angegeben				

It is hereby certified that the following information is available in documentary evidence held by the International Tracing Service.

Es wird hiermit bestätigt, daß folgende Angaben in den Unterlagen des Internationalen Suchdienstes aufgeführt sind.

Il est certifié par la présente que les informations suivantes se trouvent dans la documentation détenue par le Service International de Recherches.

Name / Nom / Name	ZITRIN geb. ZWIEBEL	Vornamen / Prénoms / First names	Berta	Staatsangehörigkeit / Nationalité / Nationality	nicht angeführt
Geburtsdatum / Date de naissance / Date of birth	19.6.1908	Geburtsort / Lieu de naissance / Place of birth	Würzburg	Beruf / Profession / Profession	ohne
Namen der Eltern / Noms des parents / Parents' names	nicht angeführt				

Zuletzt bekannter ständiger Wohnsitz / Dernière adresse connue / Last permanent residence: Berlin N, Brunnenstr. 126

wurde eingeliefert in das Konz.-Lager / est entré au camp de concentration / has entered concentration camp: Auschwitz — Häftlingsnummer / No. de prisonnier / Prisoner's No.: nicht angeführt

am / le / on: 12. Februar 1943 — von / venant de / coming from: Gestapo Berlin (29. Osttransport)

Kategorie, oder Grund für die Inhaftierung / Catégorie, ou raison donnée pour l'incarcération / Category, or reason given for incarceration: "Jüdin"

Überstellt / Transféré / Transferred: nicht angeführt

Befreit / Entlassen am / Libéré / Relâché le / Liberated / Released on: nicht angeführt — in / à / in: nicht angeführt

Bemerkungen / Remarques / Remarks: Ein Todesnachweis liegt nicht vor. Wir sind daher nicht in der Lage, die Ausstellung einer Sterbeurkunde zu veranlassen.

Geprüfte Unterlagen / Documents consultés / Records consulted: Transportliste der Gestapo Berlin.

NUR ZU INFORMATIONEN
À TITRE D'INFORMATION
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Arolsen,

Der ITS übernimmt für die Richtigkeit und Vollständigkeit des Inhalts der Dokumente, die zur Ausstellung dieser Bescheinigung verwendet wurden, keine Gewähr.

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bitte wenden

Certificate of Incarceration confirming the deportation of Berta Zitrin to Auschwitz. (*See 1967.*)



COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SERVICE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES
3548 Arolsen - République fédérale d'Allemagne

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE
3548 Arolsen - Federal Republic of Germany

INTERNATIONALER SUCHDIENST
3548 Arolsen - Bundesrepublik Deutschland

No.

Certificate of Incarceration — Inhaftierungsbescheinigung — Certificat d'Incarcération

Ihr Akt.-Z.: / Votre Réf.: / Your Ref.:

Unser Akt.-Z.: / Notre Réf.: / Our Ref.: T/D 955 520

Name / Nom / Name	WEISS	Vornamen / Prénoms / First names	Moritz	Staatsangehörigkeit / Nationalité / Nationality	nicht angegeben
Geburtsdatum / Date de naissance / Date of birth	2.8.1895	Geburtsort / Lieu de naissance / Place of birth	Herrmannsdorf	Häftlingsnummer / No. de prisonnier / Prisoner's No.	nicht angegeben
Namen der Eltern / Noms des parents / Parents' names	nicht angegeben				

It is hereby certified that the following information is available in documentary evidence held by the International Tracing Service.

Es wird hiermit bestätigt, daß folgende Angaben in den Unterlagen des Internationalen Suchdienstes aufgeführt sind.

Il est certifié par la présente que les informations suivantes se trouvent dans la documentation détenue par le Service International de Recherches.

Name / Nom / Name	WEISS	Vornamen / Prénoms / First names	Moritz	Staatsangehörigkeit / Nationalité / Nationality	deutsch
Geburtsdatum / Date de naissance / Date of birth	2.8.1895	Geburtsort / Lieu de naissance / Place of birth	Hermannsdorf	Beruf / Profession / Profession	Kaufmann
Namen der Eltern / Noms des parents / Parents' names	nicht angeführt				

Zuletzt bekannter ständiger Wohnsitz / Dernière adresse connue / Last permanent residence: Berlin C 2, Dircksenstr. 45

wurde eingeliefert in das Konz.-Lager / est entré au camp de concentration / has entered concentration camp: Auschwitz — Häftlingsnummer / No. de prisonnier / Prisoner's No.: nicht angeführt

am / le / on: 12. Juli 1944 — von / venant de / coming from: Gestapo Berlin (55. Osttransport)

Kategorie, oder Grund für die Inhaftierung / Catégorie, ou raison donnée pour l'incarcération / Category, or reason given for incarceration: "Jude"

Überstellt / Transféré / Transferred: nicht angeführt. Zu einem unbestimmten Zeitpunkt im KL. Natzweiler/ Kdo. Echterdingen, Häftlings-Nr. 43466. Dort ist er am 28. Dezember 1944 verstorben.

Befreit/Entlassen am / Libéré/Relâché le / Liberated/Released on: ---------- in / à / in ----------

Bemerkungen / Remarques / Remarks: Nach den Feststellungen, die wir treffen konnten, wurde die Natzweiler-Häftl.Nr. 43466 im Monat November 1944 ausgegeben. Sterbeurkunde ist beigefügt.

Geprüfte Unterlagen / Documents consultés / Records consulted: Transportliste der Gestapo Berlin; Nummernbuch des KL. Natzweiler.

NUR ZU INFORMATIONEN
À TITRE D'INFORMATION
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Arolsen,

Der ITS übernimmt für die Richtigkeit und Vollständigkeit des Inhalts der Dokumente, die zur Ausstellung dieser Bescheinigung verwendet wurden, keine Gewähr.

Kopie an — Az.:

Das Original wurde mit gleicher Post an

Tic M.

Certificate of Incarceration confirming the deportation of Moritz Weiß to Auschwitz. (*See 1967.*) The date given for incarceration in Auschwitz was infact the date of deportation from Berlin.

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SERVICE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES
3548 Arolsen - République fédérale d'Allemagne

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE
3548 Arolsen - Federal Republic of Germany

INTERNATIONALER SUCHDIENST
3548 Arolsen - Bundesrepublik Deutschland

No. 468 637

Certificate of Incarceration — Inhaftierungsbescheinigung — Certificat d'Incarcération

Entschädigungsamt Berlin

Ihr Akt.-Z.: Gesch.Z.: III E 12 Unser Akt.-Z.: T/D 180 315

Datum naissance birth: 16.12.1927 -- Geburtsort Lieu de naissance Place of birth: Berlin ------- Häftlingsnummer No. de prisonnier Prisoner's No.: nicht angegeben -

der Eltern s parents names: Wolfgang und Helene, geboren ZWIEBEL ----------

eby certified that the following ation is available in documen- — Es wird hiermit bestätigt, daß folgende Angaben in den Unterlagen des Internationalen Suchdienstes aufgeführt sind. — Il est certifié par la présente que les informations suivantes se trouvent dans la

Namen der Eltern Noms des parents Parents' names: Wolfgang und Helene, geboren ZWIEBEL ----------

It is hereby certified that the following information is available in documentary evidence held by the International Tracing Service. — Es wird hiermit bestätigt, daß folgende Angaben in den Unterlagen des Internationalen Suchdienstes aufgeführt sind. — Il est certifié par la présente que les informations suivantes se trouvent dans la documentation détenue par le Service International de Recherches.

Name Nom Name	HIRSCH ----------	Vornamen Prénoms First names	Gerhard ---------	Staatsangehörigkeit Nationalité Nationality	deutsch -------
Geburtsdatum Date de naissance Date of birth	16.12.1927 ---	Geburtsort Lieu de naissance Place of birth	Berlin -------	Beruf Profession Profession	nicht angeführt ----

Namen der Eltern Noms des parents Parents' names: Vater: Wolff ----------

Zuletzt bekannter ständiger Wohnsitz Dernière adresse connue Last permanent residence: Berlin-N., Lottumstr. 6 ----------

wurde [redacted] evakuiert zum Ghetto Theresienstadt ---------- Häftlingsnummer No. de prisonnier Prisoner's No.: nicht angeführt -

am le an: 4. August 1943 ------ von venant de coming from: Gestapo Berlin (95. Alterstransport) ------

Kategorie, oder Grund für die Inhaftierung Catégorie, ou raison donnée pour l'incarcération Category, or reason given for incarceration: " Jude " ----------

Überstellt Transféré Transferred: nicht angeführt ----------

Befreit/Entlassen am Libéré/Relâché le Liberated/Released on: nicht angeführt -- in à in: nicht angeführt ----------

Bemerkungen Remarques Remarks: Ein Todesnachweis liegt nicht vor. Wir sind daher nicht in der Lage, die Ausstellung einer Sterbeurkunde zu veranlassen. ----------

Geprüfte Unterlagen Documents consultés Records consulted: Transportliste der Gestapo Berlin; Schulkarte der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland. ----------

NUR ZUR INFORMATION
À TITRE D'INFORMATION
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Arolsen, den 14. März 1967

Der ITS übernimmt für die Richtigkeit und Vollständigkeit des Inhalts der Dokumente, die zur Ausstellung dieser Bescheinigung verwendet wurden, keine Gewähr.

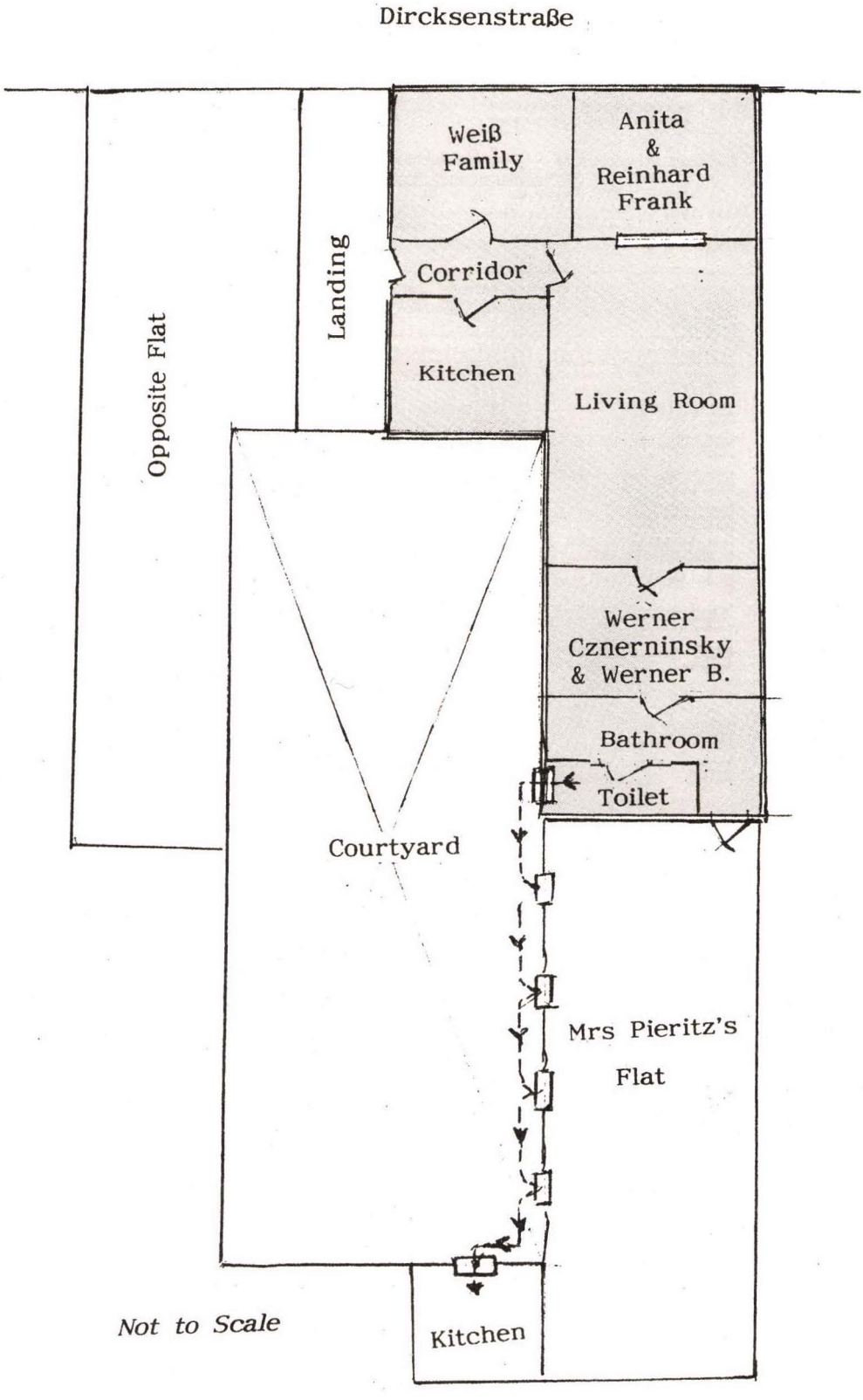
Kopie an — Az.:

Ba. [redacted]

Das Original wurde [redacted] am 14. März 1967 an das Entschädigungsamt Berlin gesandt.

Certificate of Incarceration confirming the deportation of Gerhard Hirsch to Theresienstadt. (*See 1967.*)

1st Floor of Dircksenstraße 45



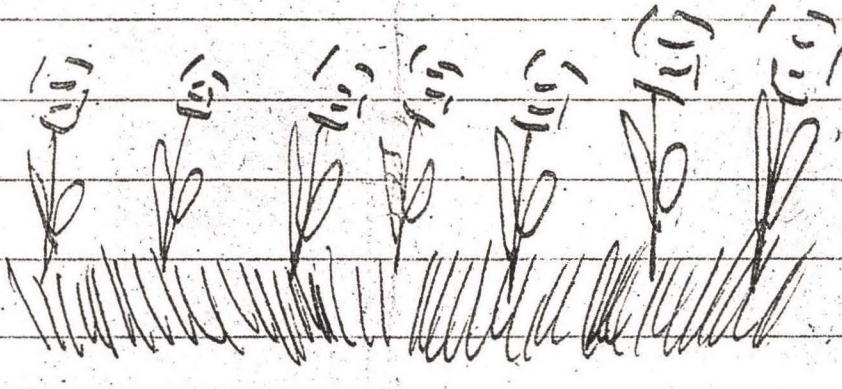
.7.44.

So wie der Sommer sollst
Du sein!
O mein liebes Mutterlein,
mußt nicht immer traurig
sein.
2 Der Sommer schafft an jedem
Ende,
als habe er 1000 Hände.
3 Die Sonne hilft gar tüchtig mit,
nun sei auch Du nicht immer
traurig denn am besten gehts
zu dritt.
4 Denn wenn Du jetzt so
traurig bist,
auch gleich eine Wolke am
blauen Himmel ist.
5 Und ist erst mal eine dran,
dann kommen auch die
andern an.

Ellen's poem to cheer up her mother on 30 July 1944

Dann verdrängen die Wolken
den Sonnenschein,
und der Sonnen kann auch
nicht schaffen so ganz allein.
Drum mußt Du immer
fröhlich sein.
Denn wenn Du es nachher
vergißt,
wenn dann alles fertig ist.
Dann gießt Dein und Wind
alles naß,
die schönen Blumen und das
frische, grüne Gras.
Du wirst jetzt denken: Regen
brauchen sie alle,
der Baum, das Gras, die
Tulp, und die Welk,
sonst werden alle alle welk.

Doch gibt es Regen dann gibt es
auch Matsch,
dann versinken Blumen,
Felder und Wiesen in dem Matsch.
Vor allem aber denke dran.
das du Dich selbst ernährst,
~~und das du Dich selbst ern~~)
und das du mich selbst vermehrst
das glaube mir mein
Mutterchen



1) Ich wünsch Dir zu Eurem Hochzeits-
tag,
das Euch alles Glück der Erde
beschert werden mag.

2) Dann wünsch ich Dir das Euch
demnächst der Frieden beschert,
und was Dir sonst noch sehr
viel wert.

3) Und das mit dem heutigen
Tage kommt hinein,
für immer zu Euch der
Sonnenschein.

4) Gesundheit mög' Euer Verwalter
sein,
und die Freude mög' immer zu
Euch hinein.

5) Ich weiß Du wirst nicht böse sein
wenn ich Dir sage das von ...

vor dem einen Wunsch ein Drittel
mehr.

5/ Derweil es Euer Hochzeitstag ja ist
6/ das Glück wird Euch und Euch
von Euch jagen,
das sie sich nicht mal 10
Kilometer vor Euer Haus wagen.
7/ Unseren gemeinsamen Wunsch
kennst Du ja,
das wir alle 3 zusammen
sind mit Papa.
8/ 15 Jahre kennt ihr Euch
nun,
und heut vor 10 Jahren
war bei Euch für die Hochzeit
zu tun.
9/ Nun möcht ich noch gratulieren
zum Hochzeitstage,

und dann noch eine Frage:
(Wie es dir gefällt)
wie dir das Gedicht gefällt.
Du wirst jetzt dagegen Gedicht
sagst zu dazu,
die kleine dumme Kuh.
Ich werd jetzt besser fragen
wie dir das Ding gefällt,
ich glaube es war damit
nicht gerade gut bestellt,
doch ist erst Papi da dann
kommt ein besseres dran.
Doch jetzt wirst Du sagen:
Du hast uns Glück, Freude, und
noch mehr versprochen nun will ich's sehen
das wird auch gleich geschehen,
das Du alles wirst.
Denn leere Versprechungen

mach ich nicht ich nicht
das besagt der gleichen
so etwas ähnliches sein soll
wie ein Gedicht.

14) Du wirst schon gewahr werden
(~~erkennen~~)
wann sie kommen,
da Du sie noch nicht
vernommen,
doch sie kommen gleich.

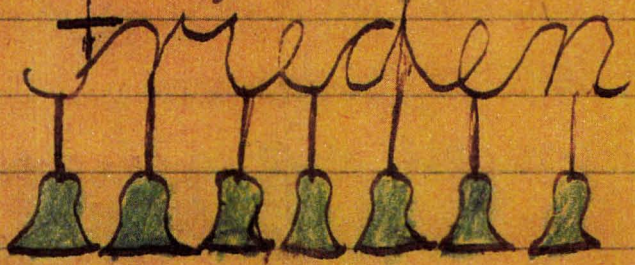
15) Doch Du sollst ihrer nicht
mehr lange harren,
denn sie sind schon auf
dem Wege mit Autos, Bahnen
und auch Karren.

16) So nun wend ich enden,
und die Personen auf die Du
wartest senden.

Jetzt kommen die Gäste auf
die du so lange gewartet hast

1) Frieden :)

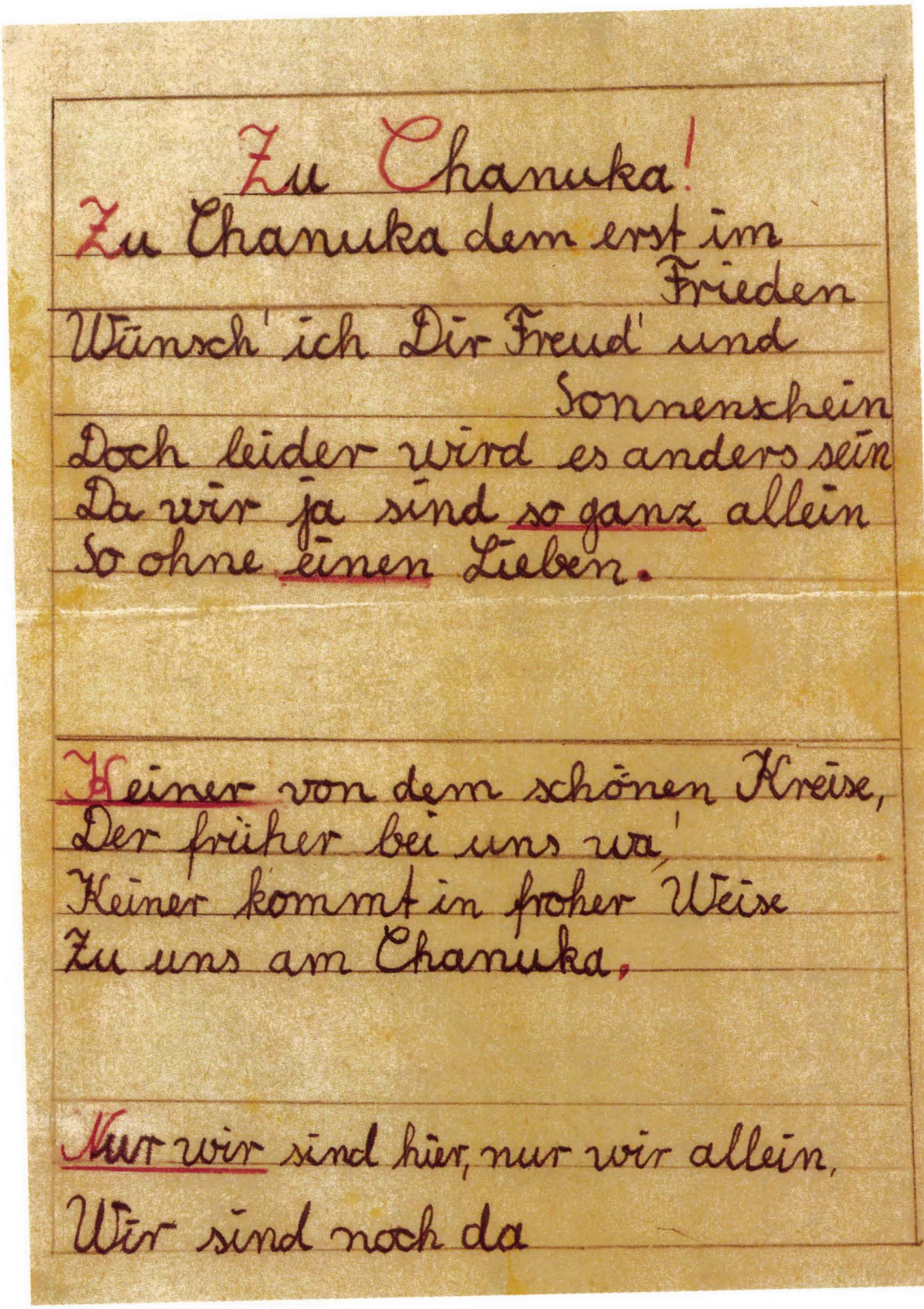
1) Guten Tag meine ♡lichsten
Glückwünsche Frieden ist mein Name



2) Ich bin der Sonnenschein
hahahaha hihihihi der
Sonnenschein.




Jetzt komme ich in den
das Glück und überall wo
ich hinkomme ist Glück
Ich bin auch gekommen
Gesundheit Liebe Tom


Zu Chanuka!
Zu Chanuka dem erst im
Frieden
Wünsch' ich Dir Freud' und
Sonnenschein
Doch leider wird es anders sein
Da wir ja sind so ganz allein
So ohne einen Lieben.

Keiner von dem schönen Kreise,
Der früher bei uns war,
Keiner kommt in froher Weise
Zu uns am Chanuka.

Nur wir sind hier, nur wir allein,
Wir sind noch da

Chanukah poem, 1945

Kein Onkel, Tante, kein Papa.
Drum woll'n wir immer nur ja
Zu 'nander lieb und freundlich sein.

Ich möchte Dir lieb' Mütterlein
Dein Herze nicht beschweren
Ich möchte Glück und Freude mehren
Doch leider wird 's nicht möglich sein.

Nun wünsch ich mir vom Herzen her
Daß die beiden kleinen Gaben
Deinem Geschmack nicht ganz absagen
Ja das, das wünsch ich mir so sehr.

Schluß

Jetzt will 's Gedicht zum Ende schnell'n
10 Küsse noch von Deiner
Ell'n.

DS
135
G33
B47
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Some of the places
where events which are here described
happened in Berlin

Antonplatz 1
Anklamer Straße 2
Alexanderplatz 3

Badstraße 4
Behmstraße 5
Bellermannstraße 6
Berliner Allee (leading to Malchower Chaussee) 7
Bernauer Straße & Brunnenstr. 8
Buschallee 9

Charlottenburger Chaussee & Grosser Stern (now: Straße des 17. Juni) 10
Choriner Straße 11

Dircksenstraße 12

Eisenzahnstraße 13
Eulerstraße 14

Fichtestraße 15
Frankfurter Allee 16
Friedrich Straße & Unter den Linden 17

Gesundbrunnen 18
Gotenburger Straße 20
Große Frankfurter Straße 19

Helmstedter Straße 21
Hermannplatz 22
Humboldthain 23

Iranische Straße 24

Jannowitzbrücke 25

Kottbusser Damm 26
Kurfürstendamm 27

Lietzenseepark 28
Lothringer Straße 29
Lottumstraße 30

Mommsenstraße 31

Reichskanzlerplatz (now Theodor-Heuss-Platz 32
Rosenthaler Platz 33
Rykestraße 34

Savignyplatz 35
Soldiner Straße 36
Swinemünder Straße 37
Sybelstraße 38

Ulmenallee 39

Wittenbergplatz 40

Zionskirchplatz 41
Zingster Straße 42

Thanks are due to Mr D. Paarmann, successor to publisher Richard Schwarz, for permission to reproduce the map of Berlin, issued in 1946 and used by the author while stationed in the city.


SCHWARZ
Stadtplan von Berlin
1:25000
Richard Schwarz, Landkartenhandlung
u. Geogr. Verlag, Berlin W
Gartenfeld
Volkspark
Jungfernheide
Siemens-
stadt
Spandau
Sternfeld
Plötzen-
see
Moabit
Westend
Charlottenburg
Kaiserdamm
Wilmersdorf
Grunewald
Schmargendorf
Schöneberg
Friedenau
Steglitz
Dahlem
Zehlendorf
WALD

Sachen v. Hauptbarten
Nelle

zur Entscheidung

für Herrn Capt. Perry