

And There Is No Going Back

A Story of Patience, Persistence, and Perseverance

by Judith L. Shiffers

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To the descendants of Stephan and Liese Shiffers:
May the courage and the strength of character of your ancestors
always inspire you.

IN MEMORIAM:

Rosa Schifferes Allina

David "Dori" Allina

Fritz Allina

Elsbeth "Ella" Deutsch

Dr. Eduard Deutsch

Heinrich "Heini" Pollak

Carl Pollak

Elisabeth "Else" Ringer

Arthur Schifferes

Karl Schifferes

Katharina "Kitti" Siebenschein

Raphael and Erna Siebenschein

Willibald "Willi" and Anna Siebenschein

Georg and Berta Strauss

Foreword

Far too often, we happen upon old photos when there is no one left to identify the sepia-tinted portraits. If we are lucky, we may have a few treasured family heirlooms, or photographs of our grandparents or great-grandparents, our extended family, or our parents as children or young adults. Inevitably we wonder: What were they like? What did they think? What did they want? To see these relatives as they were, and hear them speak in their own words, is very rare indeed. The photos, documents, and extensive correspondence chronicled in these pages offer a remarkable window into the past and document a moment of historic turmoil through glimpses of the minutiae of daily life: rendez-vous and recipes, the hopes and dreams of young lovers, and the worries and reassurances of concerned parents, all amid the tightening snare of the Nazi regime and increasing hurdles to emigration. The letters are just as eloquent in their lacunae—the silences masking fears or regrets they dared not express, or coded references to imprisoned friends and family members. The contents of the "straw suitcase" were a treasure trove indeed, and these volumes are a legacy for succeeding generations and a valuable source for historians and other researchers.

Diane Levy, July 2012

CHRONOLOGY

March 12, 1938	German *Anschluss* (annexation of Austria)
June 4, 1938	Steffi submits application for emigration
June 13, 1938	Steffi arrives in Stuttgart for sports school
June 16, 1938	Steffi begins studies at *Orthopädisches Gymnastisches Institut Alice Bloch*, Stuttgart, Zeppelinstrasse 32
June 21, 1938	Hugo Strauss has streetcar accident; he is released from hospital on August 12, 1938
July 18, 1938	Liese realizes that because of the eviction from their apartment, they must leave Austria
August 15, 1938	Pepi Deutsch [Dewton] and family arrive in the U.S.
August 19, 1938	Liese has strep throat
August 19, 1938	Bertha sells her belongings
September 1, 1938	Bertha's Austrian passport becomes invalid. General rules become more stringent (letter from Liese August 22, 1938)
September 16, 1938	Steffi writes about blackouts in Stuttgart
November 9, 1938	*Kristallnacht*
November 13, 1938	Steffi is arrested and sent to Dachau
November 19, 1938	Liese leaves Europe on SS Normandie
November 29, 1938	Onkel Alfred [Kurz] leaves Vienna for Switzerland
January 4, 1939	Hugo Strauss becomes *Konsulent* (consultant), no longer a lawyer
January 4, 1939	Steffi is released from Dachau
January 18, 1939	Tante Stephy has no work and wants to leave Hede writes to Liese in America that Dr. Adler absolutely wants to continue the sports course Hede writes to Liese about Karl's divorce
March 14, 1939	Tante Stephy arrives in USA
March 22, 1939	Steffi leaves Vienna for England
March 24, 1939	Steffi arrives in Lichfield, England
March 28, 1939	Hede and Hans leave Vienna
April 6, 1939	Onkel Emil [Kurz] arrives in New York
April 15, 1939	Hede and Hans depart from Cherbourg on SS Europa
April 18, 1939	Bertha leaves Vienna for England
June 19, 1939	Grete Deutsch arrives in USA
August 18, 1939	Steffi leaves England on SS President Harding
August 26, 1939	Steffi arrives in New York
August 27, 1939	Liese and Steffi are married in Washington, D.C.
September 3, 1939	British declaration of war on Germany

October 6, 1939	Onkel Alfred leaves from Genoa on SS Rex
October 14, 1939	Onkel Alfred arrives in USA
November 1939–April 1940	Steffi works as masseur at Mayflower Hotel
January 6, 1940	Hugo Strauss writes to Liese that Tante Else had to move again
February 2, 1940	Hugo and Sophie Strauss leave Vienna for Trieste
February 7, 1940	Hugo and Sophie leave Europe on board the SS Vulcania from Trieste
February 21, 1940	Hugo and Sophie Strauss arrive in USA
February 2, 1940	Bertha hears Eden speech on radio in Burley and is proud that she understands the English
April 1940	Steffi begins working at Health Club, Ambassador Hotel
May 30–June 20, 1940	Bertha is interned on Isle of Man
July 1940	Liese begins working at "Bavaria" restaurant in Washington, D.C.
July 5, 1940	Bertha arrives in USA
December 5, 1940	Hugo Strauss writes from Chicago, "... be careful of what you write"
May 1941	Tante Stephy, who is already in Chicago, writes that by the end of the year all Jews must be out of Vienna
Spring 1941	Eva Julia Shiffers, the "first" American, is born
March 24, 1941	Tante Stephy writes, "We must be thankful that we are here [where] there are possibilities to accomplish something"
December 7, 1941	Japan attacks U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; four days later Hitler declares war on United States
April 4, 1944	Liese becomes a U.S. citizen
July 5, 1944	Steffi becomes a U.S. citizen

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has assisted me in telling the story of our family. All my cousins, both here in the United States and in Europe, provided me with information and photographs. Lisbeth Schifferes Kahane (1916–2007) and Hermine Schifferes Homann were most generous with their time and memories. My darling husband, Frank Bialostozky, was my constant adviser, shared the computer, and showed such patience throughout this very long birthing process.

The original inspiration came from Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who met with my father and me and encouraged my father to tell his story. But my friend Maisie Hodes-Wood was the catalyst. Many years ago, when I told her about the "treasures" in my father's basement, I asked her who would do the transcriptions and translations. She proclaimed that I would do it. And here we are, more than thirteen years later! My friend Felice Li read the mini-version of the family story and encouraged me to proceed. My sons insisted that I tell the story of our family's departure from Nazi Austria through the hundreds of letters that I had transcribed and translated. I never thought that this labor of love would consume the better part of so many years and produce two books.

My mother's two dear friends, Dr. Ines Mandl and Dr. Elizabeth Wechter, were able to fill in some gaps, provided me with family stories and school photos from Vienna, and showed me lots of love and support.

Many thanks also go to my friends, Peter and Barbara Zimmer, who were always ready to help me; Dr. Fritz Gluckstein, volunteer at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, who provided wonderful assistance in deciphering letters written in the old German script; and Gerald Nevitt, who kindly transcribed my father's interview for the Spielberg Shoah Foundation.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to Diane Levy, my dear, dear, friend, without whom the editing of these two tomes would not have been possible.

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And There Is No Going Back[1]

Silver Spring, Maryland
August 11, 2006

The whole story began to unfold when a straw suitcase was discovered in the basement at my father's house, filled with letters and documents that no one even knew existed. The smell of mildew belied the contents. As I slowly began to discover, there was a treasure trove of documents—letters, receipts, and photographs—everything imaginable. Even now I am amazed how all of these items made it out of Nazi Germany and across the ocean, never seeing the light of day during the various moves—from Euclid Street in Northwest Washington, D.C., to nearby Champlain Street, to 846 Ivy Street in Arlington, Virginia, to 1636 Portal Drive in Northwest Washington, D.C. No one ever mentioned a thing about their existence. No one ever had an interest in what they contained. Surely someone would have been aware of something as the suitcase made its way from house to house. But the struggles of everyday life, coupled with the rigors of managing a business and the early death of my mother, Liese,[2] at age forty on December 6, 1956, made delving into family history an unattainable luxury.

Surely anyone who knew my father realized that he never ever discarded anything, but how could anyone have known that by hanging on to this treasure trove, a fascinating story would be revealed? Perhaps it was my destiny to be the steward of these documents. Or was the catalyst my friend Maisie's prodding me to do it? Or was it my friend Felice, who gave me a copy of Martin Goldsmith's book about his parents and their life in Nazi Germany? Or was it my sons, who always encouraged me? Or my cousin Doris, who believed I had a book in me? In any case, what first began perhaps as an exercise in transcription and translation slowly emerged as a study in the emotions and the turbulence in our family's life during the Hitler era.

I had always asked my father how the members of our family knew where anyone else was. How did he know where his cousin Lisbeth went? Perhaps he tried to explain, but I honestly feel that my having lived with the letters for so many years is what gave me such a deep understanding. Perhaps I knew "the facts," but I certainly did not know the emotions.

Luckily my father was alive when I began the process and in that way many of my questions could be answered. And better still, I pestered him to sit at the computer and write his story, the family story; how he met my mother, and so on. My father also transcribed many letters that were written in the old German script [*Kurrent*], which surely was nostalgic for him. Did he remember that he lost a ring from his grandfather on the sports field in Stuttgart? Did he recall his bicycle accident in the hills near Stuttgart? How did he feel reliving facts and emotions from so long ago? I guess we were just too busy doing our specific assignments of writing memories, or transcribing and translating!

---

[1] In a letter to her fiancé, Stephan (called Steffi by everyone in the family), dated August 9, 1938, Liese wrote concerning the difficulties that would possibly arise if Steffi's mother, Bertha, were to take a position abroad. Liese was trying to convince Steffi that no matter if one were young or old, the possibility of becoming ill in a foreign country was equal: "and there is no going back, as you well know." Thus, the title of the book.

[2] Liese Americanized her name to Lisa when she came to the U.S.

But, in any case, the fact that we, he and I, plowed through the letters and faced this daunting task together, formed a bond that will always hold. I feel that what he and I did will be a legacy to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They should be very proud, not of what I brought about by transcribing and translating and researching and studying, but proud of their ancestors who went through so much to bring us to America, where we can live in freedom, without fear of being arrested, in a land of infinite opportunities, a land that was so good to my parents.

So it is with great pride and gratitude that I send my love and heartfelt thanks to the memory of my father. And to the memory of my mother, whom I feel I hardly knew, I convey admiration for the courage and spirit of adventure that she, as a twenty-two-year-old young woman, manifested in a foreign land.



Liese Strauss, circa 1933



Stephan Schifferes, circa 1932

Chapter 1: In the Straw Suitcase

For so many years now I have been steeped in the discovery of our family, going through many, many letters, postcards, and memorabilia, tracing the plight of our relatives. Through the transcription and translation of the letters and postcards, I have emerged with a more complete knowledge of our family—their trials and tribulations, their heartaches and suffering, their doubts and hopes. Certainly I knew the story, but the letters provided a better insight into the thoughts and difficulties of everyday life in Vienna as well as in the "new" homeland.

Of the many remarkable things I read, the most glaring was the sudden switch of topics. Perhaps this reflected the disarray in their lives. Oftentimes I could sense the desperation, the resignation, the hopelessness. My grandmother Bertha (otherwise known as Moma because my sister could not pronounce "Oma") wrote a most passionate letter to Liese on board the SS Normandie, telling her that she tearfully prayed to God like a child that she should not have to die without seeing her beloved Steffi again. Onkel Karl would almost plead with Steffi to help find him work somewhere, anywhere. Cousin Fritz asked Steffi if maybe they could use a hundred and first worker to pick chrysanthemums at the nursery in England (apparently my father had written that there were one hundred nursery workers). Tante Stephy would beg Liese not to write about the affidavit in her letters to the family still in Vienna, but rather put that information on a separate page because Tante Else would surely ask to see the letter from Liese. And Tante Stephy knew all too well that Tante Else had registered too late and that her quota number would not be called. Yet the next sentence would perhaps be a recipe for *Kaiserschmarrn* (a Viennese dessert) or the like. There were various reassurances written to Liese, who was already in America, that her fiancé was fine, but that so-and-so was "very sick" (*marod*, in German); this was the only way they could convey the fact that someone was in concentration camp. Tante Rosa made a heartfelt announcement to Steffi that her best friend and advice-giver (Bertha) had safely left for England on the train from the *Ost Bahnhof* in Vienna, knowing full well that she would never ever see her again. I was indeed moved to tears.

The arrival of the family—those who survived—in the New World (or elsewhere: Lisbeth and her husband and mother were in Australia) did not necessarily mean an end to the worries and difficulties. Everything was all set for Bertha (Moma) to come over from England, where she was working as a domestic for a very wealthy widow in Ringwood, Burley, Hants, when it was realized that her German passport had expired. The only way to renew it would have been to return to Austria, which was now a part of the Third Reich. Somehow this problem was solved, but Bertha was subsequently arrested as an enemy alien and interned on the Isle of Man. Letters took weeks to cross the ocean. Steffi did his utmost to get his mother out, all the time suspecting that America would soon enter into the war and fearful that he would not be successful. Even on his deathbed he expressed how worried he had been at that time that he would not be able to get his mother out of Europe.

And later, in 1940, the unburdening of thoughts and frustrations upon a youthful, pregnant Liese by her very sick father, complete with assurances of not wanting to worry her, are testimony to the difficulty of adjusting to life in the United States. There is frequent mention by Hans and Grandpa Strauss of having lost their status, their existence. Each had his own unique way of coping with this loss, although neither probably ever recovered from this.

Chapter 2: Family and Friends

I do not remember exactly when I became aware of the difficulties my parents had in Austria and the events leading up to their coming to America. As a child, as far as I was concerned, we were different. Our parents and relatives spoke German with us and they spoke English with an accent. I remember the embarrassment I felt as a very young child in Arlington when Moma would call me in from outside with a seemingly interminable "oo" sound in my name.

Whereas our classmates ate potato chips and pizza and drank soda, my first memory of having pizza was when we were at Pepi Dewton's house in Verona, New Jersey, when I was about fourteen years old.

In a way, I prided myself on being "different," as manifested by the choice of the cello as my instrument in the fourth grade. So many of my classmates picked the violin. Perhaps seeing a small photo of Onkel Karl playing his cello was my inspiration, although I have no recollection of what I was told about him when I was a small child. Subconsciously I may have wanted to distinguish myself and, at the same time, honor him. Even today his picture hangs on the wall right next to me where I teach.



Karl Schifferes, circa 1904

Here are the names of various family members and friends who corresponded with one another throughout the Nazi times. I never quite understood how my father knew where his relatives were after his emigration to England, and then after his arrival in America. As witnessed by the inordinate number of letters exchanged, I could finally see for myself. There were letters from Steffi's mother, Bertha Schifferes, and from Liese's parents, Sophie (also called Offi) and Hugo Strauss, as well as from Liese's sister, Hede. Tante Stephy, Stephanie Kurz, who was Sophie's youngest sister, wrote faithfully. And letters from Tante Gisi, Gisela Schifferes [widow of Steffi's Onkel Ernst (Onni)] and her daughter, Lisbeth Schifferes Kahane, and Lisbeth's husband, Aryan Kahane.

When my father first arrived at the sports school in Stuttgart, the letters from my mother, Liese Strauss, began. She numbered them, knowing there would be so many! After his release from Dachau, the letters began anew and started with the number 1, as if a different phase of their life were beginning. And when my father got to England, only then could he vaguely describe what had happened in Dachau. The full description may have only come out after his arrival in the United States in August 1939.

BERTHA SCHIFFERES

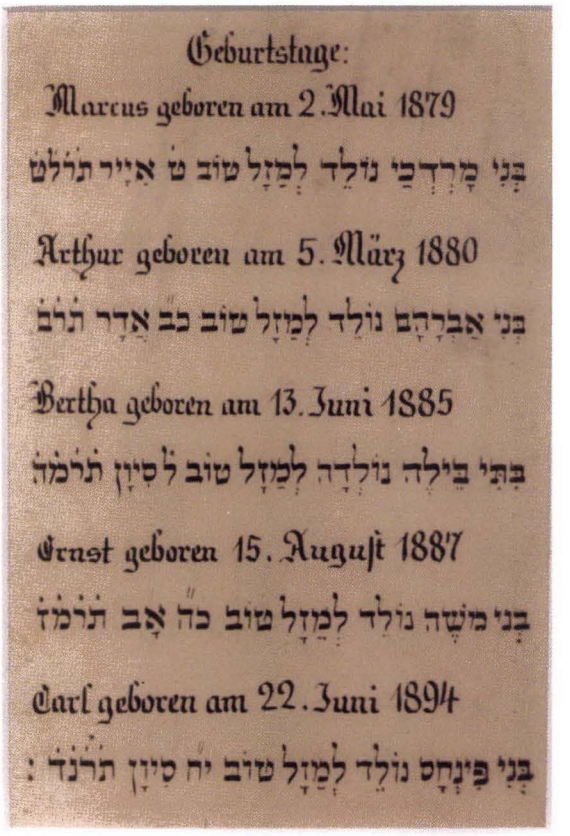
BERTHA SCHIFFERES, the grandmother who lived with us and raised us, was born in Vienna on June 13, 1885. She was the only daughter of Hermine Jeiteles and Leopold Schifferes. Bertha's mother, Hermine, was the daughter of Dr. Marcus Samuel Jeiteles, a lawyer from



Bertha Schifferes, circa 1930

Prague. (Also in the straw trunk was a contract written in the old German script, called *Kurrent*, of a sale of a Jeiteles Family property in Prague from 1864.)

Two of her four brothers were older: MARCUS, born May 2, 1879 (died March 31, 1937), and ARTHUR, born March 5, 1880. Marcus and Arthur were estranged from the family. The only time Steffi heard anything about Arthur was when Steffi was released from Dachau on January 4, 1939. Apparently Arthur had died right next door to him, in the next Block. Bertha's two younger brothers were ERNST, also called Onni (born August 15, 1887, died February 24, 1933), and CARL/KARL[3] (born June 22, 1894).


Geburtstage:

Marcus geboren am 2. Mai 1879

בְּנֵי מָרְדְּכַי נוֹלַד לְמַזָּל טוֹב ט אִיִּיר תְּרֵלֹט

Arthur geboren am 5. März 1880

בְּנֵי אַבְרָהָם נוֹלַד לְמַזָּל טוֹב כּב אֲדָר תְּרֵם

Bertha geboren am 13. Juni 1885

בִּתִּי בַּיְלָה נוֹלְדָה לְמַזָּל טוֹב לְסִיוָן תְּרֵמֹה

Ernst geboren 15. August 1887

בְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה נוֹלַד לְמַזָּל טוֹב כה אָב תְּרֵמֹז

Carl geboren am 22. Juni 1894

בְּנֵי פִּינְחָס נוֹלַד לְמַזָּל טוֹב יח סִיוָן תְּרֵנֹד :

Birthdates of Schifferes children

Among the items in "my grandmother's trunk"[4] was a page of calligraphy listing Bertha and all of her brothers in chronological order, with their actual birthdates and Hebrew names. It was logical for Hermine to name her firstborn son after her father, Marcus Samuel Jeiteles. Marcus Schifferes' Hebrew name was Mordechai ben Lev. The second son, Arthur, was named after his father Leopold's grandfather, Abraham Pinkhas Schifferes. Arthur's Hebrew name was Avraham ben Lev. Ernst's Hebrew name was Mosche, after Moses, the father of Leopold and Leopold's brother, Samuel (a sister, Juliana, died as an infant). Karl's Hebrew name was Pinkhas. The second name was not actually a middle name, but rather a genealogical device. Abraham's father was Pinkhas; therefore he was named Abraham Pinkhas. And Abraham Pinkhas' father was Moses Abraham Pinkhas Schifferes. All of these names were used as Hebrew names for the Schifferes children. My father's Hebrew name was Shmuel ben Chaim. He was actually supposed to be named Samuel, not Stephan, but his parents decided that Samuel was too Jewish for anti-Semitic Vienna.

[3] Carl, with a C, was his given name, but since he seemed to refer to himself using the more Germanic form, Karl (and that is the spelling used in official documents), we will refer to him as Karl in these pages.

[4] A reminder of a children's game, I unpacked my grandmother's trunk and in it I found an item beginning with the letter "A."

LISBETH AND ARYAN KAHANE

LISBETH SCHIFFERES was Steffi's first cousin, the daughter of Bertha's brother ERNST and GISELA née SCHILLER [Tante Gisi, born September 6, 1887]. Lisbeth and her husband, ARYAN KAHANE, managed to emigrate to Australia during the war, where Lisbeth's mother joined them in May 1939 (Lisbeth's father had died in 1933).

They all stayed in Australia until 1955, when they moved to England.



Lisbeth and Aryan ("Nuschu") Kahane, "Tante Gisi" Schifferes, circa 1939

SOPHIE AND HUGO STRAUSS



Sophie and Hugo Strauss, circa 1941

DR. HUGO STRAUSS was born in Vienna on March 30, 1882. There he graduated from the *Gymnasium*, studied law at the Vienna University, and after completing his practicum years, became a lawyer. After marrying SOPHIE KURZ [born October 15, 1891], they lived in an elegant apartment in Währing XVIII., Alseggerstrasse 38. Hugo had a successful practice in the first District, Universitätstrasse 5, until Hitler's Edict forbade Jewish lawyers from retaining the professional title of lawyer. Instead Hugo became a "legal consultant." Since the majority of his clients were naturally not Jewish and the landlord gave notice that he no longer wanted the Jewish practice, Dr. Strauss lost most of his clients, especially since the new address, VIII., Langegasse 63/3/18, was inconvenient. As the arrest of many colleagues became known, he had to be satisfied that he was able to avoid the same fate. Although he was financially harmed and his freedom threatened at any moment, he tried to obtain a visa for the United States. Luckily, in February 1940 he and Sophie were able to emigrate there. [Written by Stephan Shiffers]

Sophie was the middle daughter of Salomon/Samuel Kurz, owner of an underwear business in Vienna called Kurz & Schlesinger, and Eugenie née Müller. Sophie's eldest sister, Elisabeth/Else, was murdered at Maly Trostinec, Belorusse, on August 21, 1942. Their younger sister, Stephanie, was able to emigrate to the United States. Sophie was a wonderful homemaker and a great cook.

STEPHANIE KURZ

STEPHANIE KURZ, the younger sister of Sophie Kurz Strauss, was born in Vienna on December 18, 1892. There she worked as a private instructor, giving French lessons. In addition, she was an excellent baker and seamstress. As conditions in Vienna worsened, she realized the necessity of leaving and was finally able to do so, departing on the SS Liberty on March 14, 1940, all the while realizing that her eldest sister, Else Kurz Ringer, had absolutely no chance to escape.

Tante Stephy, as she was called, was very attached to her family, whom she adored. She always spent her days off at her sister's, baking and sewing for the family. She dedicated her life to her sister, her nieces, and their families.



Tante Stephy (Stephanie Kurz) circa 1930

DR. SCHOEL CHESKEL RINGER, ELISABETH KURZ RINGER



Schoel Cheskel Ringer, circa 1920



Elisabeth (Else) Kurz, circa 1910

SCHOEL CHESKEL RINGER, called Stefan, was born on January 23, 1871, in Wadowice, Poland. His parents were Natan Ringer [born 1840 in Wadowice, died in Vienna, 1927] and Chane/Anna née Goldstein Ringer [born 1852 in Wadowice, died in Vienna, 1924]. Onkel Stefan's first marriage ended in divorce on April 30, 1906. On December 20, 1908, he married ELISABETH [Else] KURZ, born in Vienna on January 14, 1888, older sister of Sophie and Stephanie Kurz, whose parents were Salomon Samuel Kurz and Eugenie Müller. Tante Else was murdered in the Holocaust, August 21, 1942, in Maly Trostinec, Belorusse.

HEDWIG MARIANNE STRAUSS



Hedwig Marianne Strauss, circa 1940

HEDWIG MARIANNE STRAUSS was born in Vienna in 1913. She was the first daughter of Dr. Hugo Strauss and Sophie Strauss (neé Kurz). After elementary school, Hede, as she was usually called, attended the *Mädchen Realgymnasium* in Wien 18. After her *Matura* there (1919) she inscribed [sic] at the *Rechts und Staatswissenschaftlichen Fakultät* of the Vienna University, where she received her diploma of *Dr. iuris* in 1923. She then entered the law office of her father. During the Hitler times, as regulations became more and more complicated, Hugo's practice was very busy. Only eighty Jewish lawyers were allowed to continue working as "consultants" (*Rechtskonsulent*). Hugo was one of the eighty. Hede worked for her father until she was finally able to leave Vienna on March 28, 1939.

On April 7, 1935, Hede married DR. JOHANNES L. DEUTSCH (Hans), who also worked in the law office of Dr. Hugo Strauss. Their beautiful wedding photo belies what fate had in store for them a few years later. Hede helped Bertha Schifferes (Moma) and other people in her family with her knowledge of the emigration laws and forms until she herself could emigrate with her husband to the USA.

Hede and Hans came to Chicago to Dr. Alt, a physician and distant cousin of Dr. Johannes L. Deutsch (who later changed his surname to Dewton). Hans and Hede lived for a while with this relative, but later on moved to 4115 N. Paulina Street in Chicago, where they stayed when Dr. and Mrs. Strauss came to live with them. Eventually all of them moved to Arlington, Virginia, after Hans got a job with the Library of Congress.

When Hede came to Arlington, her sister Liese (née Strauss) had a children's wear store, where her help was more than welcome. When Liese died in 1956, Hede, because of her knowledge of buying the right merchandise, was able to keep the business going. She also helped when her two schoolgirl nieces needed transportation. She died of breast cancer on October 18, 1974. [Written by Stephan Shiffers]



Hans and Hede Deutsch, April 1935

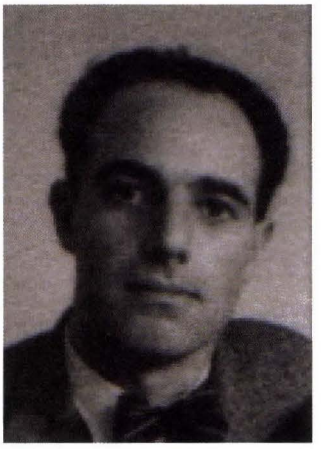
JOHANNES LEOPOLD DEUTSCH



Johannes Leopold Deutsch, circa 1940

JOHANNES LEOPOLD DEUTSCH (later DEWTON), born in 1905 in Vienna, was the son of Dr. Eduard Deutsch, a dermatologist, and his wife Elsbeth née Brauchbar. He was graduated in 1918 from the *Akademischen Gymnasium* and after the completion of his studies at the Vienna University (*Dr. iuris*), worked as an apprentice at the office of a lawyer relative, Dr. Hugo Haas. He passed the lawyer's exam and was then hired by his future father-in-law, DR. HUGO STRAUSS. The boss' daughter, HEDWIG STRAUSS, who later also obtained a doctorate in law, was also working in the same law office. She married him on April 7, 1935. They rented an apartment on Währingerstrasse, where they lived until the *Anschluss*. Thanks to the caretaker of the building, who told the Nazis that they were not home, they were able to remain there until they could leave Vienna. These regular searches of houses conducted by the S. A. and other mobs often led to arrest, beatings, and theft of valuables. On March 28, 1939, they were able to leave Vienna and then emigrated to Chicago (via Cherbourg), where they first lived with a doctor relative who had obtained the necessary affidavit of support for them. Like so many refugees, they had to begin with menial jobs.

So Dr. Hans Deutsch worked for a toy factory and his wife for a laundry. His older sister, GRETE, and his brother, JOSEPH (Pepi) DEUTSCH (changed to DEWTON), who was four years younger, who had earlier had the opportunity to come to the United States with his wife (Lilly née Bing) and child (Ruth), enabled him to study library science in Urbana, Illinois.



Joseph (Pepi) Dewton, circa 1936



Little Ruth and Lilly Dewton, circa 1939

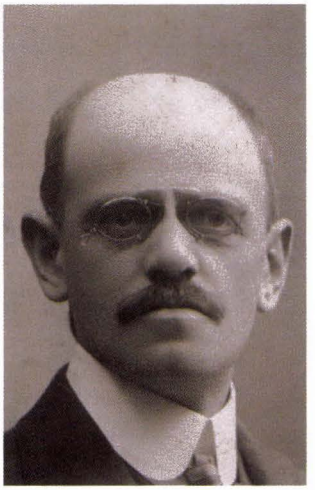
After one year he received a master's degree from Illinois University. After working as a translator for the U.S. Army, he obtained a position in the Catalogue Department of the Library of Congress. He advanced during the many years he worked there and then became editor of the Union Catalogue.

During his stay in Urbana-Champlain, his first child, a girl named Susan, was born. When she was four months old, she was found dead in her crib. Because of his new job in Washington, D.C., they moved with their daughter, Elizabeth, born in Chicago, to 840 Glebe Road in Arlington, Virginia. They were able to purchase this house with the help of Hede's aunt, Tante Stephy (Stephanie Kurz). Another daughter, Doris, was born, and they lived in Arlington until Hans' death in 1985. [Written by Stephan Shiffers]

EMIL AND ALFRED KURZ

EMIL and ALFRED KURZ, brothers, were first cousins of SOPHIE STRAUSS (née Kurz). Their fathers, Sigmund (father of Emil and Alfred) and Salomon Samuel Kurz (Sophie's father), were brothers. Emil and Alfred were both born in Holic, Czechoslovakia, and came to Vienna when they were young. Emil was born on February 24, 1895, and Alfred on February 4, 1897. We always referred to them as "Onkel Emil" and "Onkel Alfred."

Onkel Emil arrived in New York from Vienna on April 6, 1939, although we have no information about how he was able to get out of Vienna. Onkel Emil lived in Chicago where, among other things, he worked for Walgreens. He never married, though he did have an illegitimate daughter, Emmi Leitsch, who was born and lived in Vienna. Onkel Emil died in Chicago of breast cancer on December 27, 1955, and is buried in the same cemetery—Westlawn in Chicago—as my Strauss grandparents. Onkel Alfred had a more difficult time getting out of Austria. He lost his bank job at Creditanstalt in Vienna, which was a bank for commerce and industry, on December 28, 1914. From August 1916 until November 1918 he served in the Austro-Hungarian Army in the First World War. After serving in the army he was again employed at the Creditanstalt until he was dismissed on May 28, 1938. No reason was given, although all Jewish employees of the bank were fired. According to Onkel Alfred's testimony, "The managers of my division explained to me that my being fired immediately would spare me 'unpleasantness!'"



Emil Kurz, circa 1915



Alfred Kurz, circa 1940

Onkel Alfred was trying desperately to get out of Vienna, even seeking emigration to Bolivia, but was finally able to flee on November 29, 1938, to Chur, Switzerland, where he remained until October 1939, whereupon he boarded the SS Rex from Genoa, which brought him to New York on October 14, 1939.[5] Since his brother and some of the rest of the family were already in

[5] See *My Story*, p. 203-204, for Alfred Kurz's life story.

Chicago, both brothers ended up living there. After his retirement, Onkel Alfred moved to Arlington, Virginia, to be near all of us, his only relatives. For many years he was part of our family celebrations and always had good stories to tell. Since when and for what reason he had a bank account in Switzerland no one in the family seemed to know, yet the four of us (Evy, Judy, Elizabeth, and Doris) were his only heirs and were the beneficiaries to the Swiss Bank Holocaust Litigation in 2008. We were all very surprised by this payment.

THE ALLINA FAMILY



"Tante Rosa" Allina, circa 1932

Tante Rosa, ROSALIA (Rosa), was one of Julius Schifferes' two sisters. She was born on August 22, 1880, in Vienna and was married to DAVID (Dori) ALLINA, who was born on September 14, 1863, in Miskowice, Bohemia. Their only son was named FRITZ (Friedrich) ALLINA, born in Vienna on January 27, 1903. According to a letter that Tante Else gave Frau Stubaum, who worked for the Allinas, all three of the Allinas were taken from their home by the Nazis. Onkel Dori died on June 18, 1942, after being separated from his wife and son. Fritz was murdered in Minsk, Russia. Tante Rosa was murdered in Sobibor on June 14, 1942.



"Onkel Dori" Allina, circa 1918



Fritz Allina, circa 1911

CARL (KARL) SCHIFFERES



Carl (Karl) Schifferes, circa 1904

By the time of the *Anschluss*, Bertha's brothers Ernst and Marcus had died and Arthur was estranged from the family. KARL was the sole brother with whom Bertha was in contact. Although there had been limited, if any, communication between the rest of the Schifferes family and Karl, when Karl's wife, Maria (Mandy "Senior") finally asked Karl to leave, he naturally went to stay with his cousin, Rosa. Probably at that point Karl was quite desperate because he had no income, no home, and no place to go. He attempted to get into France illegally, but abandoned that plan. Finally he somehow got to Paris and Amiens, from where he wrote letters to his daughter (who was named Marianne, but was called Mandy), his ex-wife, who had divorced him, his sister, etc.

ELIZABETH OSTERMANN



Elizabeth Ostermann Wechter, circa 1933

BILLY [Lisbeth/Elizabeth] OSTERMANN was Liese's dear friend from high school. Billy's father, Dr. Max Ostermann, was a physician who was the creator of a monthly medical publication to which physicians all over Europe subscribed. When Billy and her father fled to Switzerland, they had with them the list of subscribers and were searching for a publisher so that the medical publication could be continued. According to Billy, each letter cost fourteen Marks. Dr. Max Ostermann also wrote many books dealing with standard medicine.

His brother, Alexander Ostermann, was a lawyer who escaped from a concentration camp by swimming across the Rhine River. He eventually returned to live in Vienna. Another brother, Emil Ostermann, was sent to Siberia. A sister, Lola Ostermann, married a Mr. Deutsch. She fled to Palestine with her two daughters: Judith, who was a renowned, record-breaking Austrian swimmer for *Hakoah*[6], and Hanni. [See the documentary, "Watermarks".] Another sister, Sonia/Sofie Ostermann, married Adolf Kuerti. They both were murdered in Maly Trostinec, Belorusse.

Billy eventually came to the United States[7] and set up a medical practice in Flushing, New York. She married Paul Wechter and they had a daughter named Judy.

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[6] Jewish Sports Club in Vienna for which Steffi played soccer and handball. *Hakoah* means "the power" in Hebrew.

[7] In the U.S. Billy changed the spelling of her surname to Osterman.

INES HOCHMUTH MANDL

INES HOCHMUTH was another good friend of Liese's. Ines had a profound connection to the Schifferes family, having lived around the corner from Steffi and Bertha's home on Ludwiggasse. She also had a connection to the family through her father, Ernst Hochmuth, and Lisbeth's father, Ernst Schifferes, who went to school together. When Ernst Hochmuth founded the *Wiener Messe* [Vienna Trade Fair] in 1917, he asked his friend, Ernst Schifferes, to act as the engineer for the project. It seemed ironic that Ines would end up being Liese's good friend throughout school and beyond. Ines probably never imagined that the young lad she knew from the old neighborhood would end up being her best friend's husband! After getting married, Ines and her husband, Hans Mandl, went to live in London, where Hans was working. In 1939, when there was fear of Hitler arriving in England, they left London for Dublin, Ireland.



Ines Hochmuth Mandl, circa 1933

When war actually broke out, Robert Briscoe, who was a Member of the Irish Parliament at the time, arranged for them to go neutral Cork, Ireland. There Ines taught French and German during the daytime, and in the evenings she attended university. The only available classes were in science. After immigrating to the United States in 1945, she continued her studies in biochemistry. She became a world-renowned biochemist and biomedical researcher, having published over 200 articles. She was also a professor at Columbia University Medical School.

Liese's two dear friends, Billy Ostermann and Ines Mandl always somehow managed to keep in touch with her. And there were numerous letters from lesser-known people, asking Liese for advice about getting themselves or their loved ones out. What a burden this must have been for her. She was only twenty-two when she arrived in America, virtually alone, in a foreign country.

Chapter 3: Fortieth Reunion

When my father went back to Vienna for the very first time in 1968, Moma was no longer alive. Curiosity and his forgiving nature compelled my father to return to Austria for the 40th reunion of his high school graduating class. I accompanied my father on this trip. During the dinner, everyone who had not been at the 25th reunion was asked to speak. Although I was not actually present at the reunion, my memories of what my father recounted to me immediately afterwards are quite vivid. Apparently, since he had not attended the 25th reunion, he was asked to tell what had happened to him since graduation. And tell them he did. How distinctly I remember my father telling me how the classmate who was acting as emcee tried to silence him when my father spoke of having been born in freedom in Austria, how he caused no one trouble. And then he told his classmates his story: the loss of his job, his enrollment in a Jewish sports school in Stuttgart, his subsequent imprisonment after *Kristallnacht*, being sent to Dachau for fifty-four days, and so on. "Yes," the emcee told him, "we all suffered a lot."



Steffi at 40th Reunion, 1968
(right side of table, ninth from front)

For many years, my father displayed a lamp that his schoolmates had made for him. It had an old grapevine as its base and a lampshade that had been autographed by all of his classmates.

It was surely a trip down memory lane for my father and an especially meaningful one for me, to be there for the first time, to see all the places related to our family: the house where he was born, where the family lived at various times, the Schwarzenbergplatz near the office where he worked (*Gremium der Wiener Kaufmannschaft* [Viennese Merchants Association]), and the window at his work from which he saw the hustle and bustle of downtown Vienna. But when we walked around Vienna and he told me, "...and this is where I had to go to show the Nazis my passport...," that took my breath away. I must say that my understanding of the significance of that now is so different from what it was then.

Another extremely poignant souvenir of my first visit to Vienna was visiting Tante Rosa's house on Khevenhüllerstrasse, where we met my father's first cousin, Mandy. He had not seen her, other than from the professional photos that various friends in Europe sent him, since about 1938.

I had never met her at all. I can even remember where we were in the house when Mandy showed us papers that the Nazis "made" her mother sign. She told us that her mother claimed to have known Karl only seven months before they were married and only then did she realize that he was different because of his race. However, what she did not tell them was that she and Karl had been married for twenty years. (Their only child, Marianne/Mandy, was born in 1920.)

By divorcing Karl, Mandy Senior could save herself and her child, who would have been considered a *Mischling* according to the Nuremberg Laws.

Part of the reason my father made this first trip to Vienna was that he wanted to show his Nazi classmates that he survived despite them and that he had enough money to make such a big trip (whereas they were stuck in Vienna, doing the same thing they had done for so many years). Another reason was that my father wanted to have a relationship with his much younger cousin, Marianne Schoenauer. And this he felt he could do after the death of his mother, who had harbored much ill feeling towards both Mandys. At my father's funeral, this is one of the many fine attributes of my father that my sister, Evy, spoke of in her eulogy: that despite the incredible situation during the Hitler time, our father could find it in his heart to forgive.

Chapter 4: Inexperienced Decisions[8]

On April 27, 1938, all Jews in Vienna had to "register" all their income, debts, and belongings for the Nazis. Since my father had just lost his job on April 7, 1938, and had no money or source of income, all of the sections were simply filled in with "*entfällt*," which means escape [probably "not valid"]. From the form, we can see that my father began working for the *Gremium der Wiener Kaufmannschaft* in December 1929. In the section at the end, called "Remarks," he wrote:

> On 7. April 1938 I was given a leave of absence as employee at the *Buchkaufmannschaft Wien* [Vienna Book Merchants Association] and on 29. April was notified. In case my salary during the time of notification and the completion, according to the regulation of 27. April 1938, would be RM 1,654.80, my assets would not have to be registered. In addition, the payment of my salary was stopped on 1. July and it is very uncertain if I will even be earning anything, especially because the *Buchkaufmannschaft* has reserved the right to claim back the already paid salary. For that reason I have completed this registration as a precaution.

Steffi's salvation came in the form of an acceptance letter dated June 8, 1938, which stated that the *Reichs* Advocacy of Jews in Germany was prepared to pay for his schooling in Stuttgart at a Jewish sports school, the *Orthopaedisches Gymnastisches Institut von Alice Bloch* [Alice Bloch Institute of Orthopoedic Exercises] on Zeppelinstrasse 32 in Stuttgart. However, it also stated that they would not be able "...to guarantee [his] stipend for living expenses." The letter continued: "We are requesting that you once again try to request a guarantee for at least 6 months of your expenses from the Viennese Jewish Community. If this is possible, we will try to find a place for you in Stuttgart." Steffi was to arrive "...no later than the evening of 13.6. and come to the *Oberrat der Isr. Religionsgemeinschaft Württembergs* [Senior Council of the Isr. Religious Community of Württemberg], Königstr. 82, Stuttgart."

On the Internet I was able to find information about the pogrom of November 10, 1938, as well as the sports school in which Steffi took part. Naturally I recognized the names Edwin Haller, Alice Bloch, and Karl Adler.[9] Dr. Adler was instrumental in procuring Steffi's release from Dachau. For that we shall be eternally grateful.

> In 1935, the *Oberrat* opened a school for teaching physical training instructors, under the management of Edwin Haller and the control of *"Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* [National Representation of German Jews]." The school was housed in the Institute of Orthopoedic Exercises run by Alice Bloch, the wife of the architect, Oscar Bloch. During its existence, up to the end of 1938, the institute trained 70 teachers of both sexes in physical instruction, who received diplomas licensing them to teach in Jewish schools. The *Oberrat* also organized various sports events and competitions for competitors from all over Württemberg. In 1937, the community acquired a sports field intended mainly for the use of pupils and youngsters. Much attention was given to the question of professional training.[10]

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[8] In Steffi's letter to Liese, dated June 16, 1938, he referred to what was going on as: "...inexperienced decisions of great significance."

[9] See Appendix A for more information about the *Stuttgart Sportschule*.

[10] See www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Pinkas_germany/ger2_00141.html.

On June 10, 1938, Steffi received a letter informing him that the Jewish Community Center in Vienna would indeed help him participate in the Gym and Sport Teachers Course in Stuttgart by providing him a monthly stipend of RM 30 for six months.



Alice Bloch and Steffi, circa July 1938

Steffi was enrolled at the sports school from June 15, 1938, until his eventual departure for England in March 1939, with, of course, several interruptions, which will be discussed later.

A letter from the "*Reich* Protection of Jews in Germany, Berlin-Charlottenburg 2 – Kantstrasse 158, School Division," dated March 23, 1939, stated that Dr. Stephan Schifferes took part in the Program of Gymnastics and Sports Teachers until February 28, 1939. The letter added: "Dr. Schifferes withdrew from the course as a result of his emigration." The letter was signed by Ilse Sara Cohn.

The names of some of the other students were Albert Goss, Bernd Hanauer, Peter Meyer, Hannelore Pels, Hans Philippson, Marianne Schlesinger, Trudi Seligmann, and Rudy Siegel. According to Steffi, the sports students were nice, but he could not say that he was especially friendly with any of them.

There is documentation of the various routines and rigors of the students at the sports school. The program, whose duration was fixed for one year, began in the summer semester of the year 1938. The instruction included the following subjects: gymnastics, useful gymnastics, fundamental gymnastics, light athletics, competitive games, teacher skill, formation and instruction theory, sport theoretics, medicinal science, Judaism, eurhythmics, English.

At this time, my mother, Liese, was hoping to finish her studies at the *Hochschule für Welthandel*,[11] where she was studying business. Her thesis, which we still have, was titled "Reserves and Their Significance for Business," and was dated October 1938.

When the situation slowly became more difficult in Vienna and it was apparent that Liese would not be able to complete her studies, Steffi and Liese decided that it would perhaps be wise for Liese to seek help in obtaining an affidavit and also a position in the United States from Mrs. Edna Ellis Hilton, an American school teacher who apparently traveled quite a bit, whom Liese had met by chance at the Louvre in Paris. Dr. C. A. Ransom, a physician and avid chamber musician who was a friend of Mrs. Hilton, stepped in to help. Thankfully Dr. Ransom, a widower

[11] University, Faculty of Commerce, which would be the equivalent of graduate school in the United States.

who had two young children, offered Liese a place in his home. For this reason my family ended up in the Washington, D.C., area.



Hochschule für Welthandel. Wien, am 16. Mai 1938
(Prüfungsdatum)

Bestätigung

über die im Verlaufe der Pflichtübungen gelieferten schriftlichen Arbeiten (Erster Studienabschnitt)

Herr / Frl. Liese Friederike Strauss

geboren in Wien hat bei Prof. Fridl

die vorgeschriebene schriftliche Pflichtübung über den ersten Studienabschnitt aus

Buchhaltungs -und Bilanzlehre, erste Klausur

erfolgreich abgelegt.

HOCHSCHULE FÜR WELTHANDEL WIEN

(Unterschrift d. Dozenten)

Certificate from the High School of World Commerce, May 16, 1938

According to the U.S. Holocaust Museum, nearly 600,000 Jews were living in Germany in 1933, and about 185,000 in Austria. By 1940, close to half of these Jews had fled to other countries, mainly in western Europe, and

> about 90,000 German-Jewish rerugees were able to immigrate to the United States and 60,000 to Palestine, which was then under British Mandate. An additional 84,000… immigrated to Central and South America, and because the Japanese-controlled city of Shanghai in China did not require visas or certificates of good conduct from Jewish immigrants, 15,000–18,000 Jews found refuge there. (http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/stlouis/teach/)

However, immigration became increasingly difficult during the 1930s:

> As the number of people fleeing Nazi persecution increased, more and more countries refused to accept refugees, and by 1939 the number of havens available to Jewish refugees dwindled. Switzerland feared that massive numbers of German Jews would cross their border, and the British government continued to restrict Jewish immigration to Palestine. Unfortunately, by 1940, emigration from Nazi Germany became virtually impossible, and in October 1941 it was officially forbidden by the German government. (http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/stlouis/teach/)

The website points out that U.S. quota system (designed to keep "undesirable" aliens from entering the country), together with public opposition to immigration during a time of economic depression and "antisemitism in the general public and among some key government officials"—and once war broke out in Europe, fear of an "infiltration of spies and saboteurs"—created serious obstacles for potential refugees. It lists the "items that were required by the United States government for all applicants seeking an entry visa during the 1930s and 1940s. (More specifically, the criteria represent those for German-Jewish applicants.)"

- **Visa Application** (five copies)
- **Birth Certificate** (two copies; quotas were assigned by country of birth)
- The **Quota Number** must have been reached (This established the person's place on the waiting list to enter the United States.)
- A **Certificate of Good Conduct** from German police authorities, including two copies respectively of the following:
  - Police dossier
  - Prison record
  - Military record
  - Other government records about the individual
- **Affidavits of Good Conduct** (required after September 1940)
- Proof that the applicant passed a **Physical Examination** at the U.S. Consulate
- Proof of **Permission To Leave Germany** (imposed September 30, 1939)
- Proof that the prospective immigrant had **Booked Passage** to the Western Hemisphere (required after September 1939)
- Two **Sponsors** ("affiants"); close relatives of prospective immigrants were preferred. The sponsors must have been American citizens or have had permanent resident status, and they must have filled out an **Affidavit of Support and Sponsorship** (six copies notarized), as well as provided:
  - Certified copy of their most recent federal tax return
  - Affidavit from a bank regarding their accounts
  - Affidavit from any other responsible person regarding other assets (an affidavit from the sponsor's employer or a statement of commercial rating)

(http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/stlouis/teach/)

These were the difficulties Liese faced as she tried to get herself and other family members out of Vienna. In addition to these efforts, Liese was giving English instruction to various people. Later on, when it became more apparent that it would be best for her own future mother-in-law to leave Vienna, she, too, received English instruction from Liese! My mother wrote to Steffi that she saw his mother, Bertha, daily and that Bertha seemed to have too much time on her hands to think about the future.

At this point, I would like to mention how much strength my grandmother, Bertha, had. Not only had she lost her mother when she was nine years old, within the space of four years she suffered the loss of her husband of five years, Julius, who died in May 1913, the death of her mother-in-

law, Ottilie née Siebenschein Schifferes, in December 1915, the death of her youngest son Martin, age five and a half, in March of 1917, and the death of her father, Leopold, in October 1917. Her only remaining child, Steffi, became her whole life. After she had to close down the family business, *Brüder Schifferes*, in 1937, Steffi became the sole breadwinner. For this reason, the loss of his job on April 7, 1938, deprived them of their only source of income. Bertha was close to her sister-in-law Rosa (Allina), who also happened to be her first cousin, but Bertha had enough pride to want to work and not be dependent on anyone. So Tante Rosa's pleading with Steffi, saying that Bertha should come and stay with them, fell on deaf ears. Bertha was, out of necessity, independent and proud.

This was the first of many letters Steffi wrote to Liese and the first written from the sports school in Stuttgart.

Stuttgart, 16.VI.1938

My dear, dear Liese!

Above all forgive me that I am just writing now, but I have not had a chance until now. So to tell things in order: Monday I arrived here in the pouring rain and wandered around with backpack and umbrella to the *Oberrat*, where I was treated very nicely and spent the first night in a youth hostel. The only person there was a little Viennese watchmaker soul who was even able to find a job today, but if anyone finds out about his descent, will lose it. Tuesday I went to the Aid Committee of the Jewish Community Center and was able to find out the following: I will live in the *Beth Chaluz* [Pioneer House], that is, a home where there are lots of *Chaluzim* [pioneers] (Jews from the age of 18–33 who are being trained to be helpers for gardeners and masons) for the price of 46 RM. The cost, which will be paid by the J.[ewish] Community Vienna 30. as well as the Community Stuttgart 16., includes almost everything. 5 meals, bed, clothes washing and improvement, shaving cream, shoe repair, toilet articles such as soap, toothpaste, razor blades, haircuts, so I need nothing more other than notebooks, books, and for that reason I have an appointment at the *Oberrat* [senior council]. On Tuesday I moved out of the youth hostel, where I was received by the Hostel father Falk, and now live at Gartenstr. 30/III. Floor. I share the room with Egon Adler, who at the moment is a construction worker and will later go to *Erez* [Israel] on a capitalist certificate.

Since everything is together here, youth hostel on Hospitalstrasse, gym, and Aid Council next to it, then the Temple, then the corner house to Gartenstrasse where I now am, the students from the Hospitalstrasse are speaking to me and since Tuesday morning I have participated in the instruction. There is a lot to do and to study, as you can see from the enclosed plan of study. We are just 9 sport students (5 boys, 4 girls) the boys are 17, 21, 28, and 32 years old; the girls (2) 17, 18, and 24 years old. I am finding everyone and everything to be very nice. In the home at this time there are 24 residents, of which 6 are women who all have to do housework and are really overworked—if I could be at home during the day, then I would be completely undisturbed and therefore could also study. So you see, if I really stay until the examination, which will be before Easter next year and if I pass, I would really be a sports and gym teacher. Frl. Kahn, who is from the School Division of the *Reichs* Representative (Berlin), is here to administer the entrance examination, gave the male participants great hopes and explained that the School Division always gives reduced rates for instruction, when the Communities ask for sports instructors, since no one is available. Only a teacher who has passed an examination can teach and even at the entrance examination there is a State Commissioner (for me, an assessor Röble) present. I am so worn out the whole day long, am so physically tired during the long training breaks so that I cannot do anything else. Just yesterday at the entrance examination, where I flubbed on the apparatus since I have never practiced that, I emptied my suitcase out, with the help of my roommate. Frl. Dr. Kahn, who was

> especially nice to me, talked me out of taking on anything else, which could only be part-time work and at this time non-existent. But I am signed up for such work, in any case, at the Jewish Community Center. For now I have, unfortunately, to accept that aside from the sport school with all of the physical work and the many theories, plus learning 2 languages, that I will not have the capability of undertaking anything else other than tutoring, etc. But I do hope to do that after my body gets used to it."

[In 2001, Evan's friend, Justin Santorini, was in Stuttgart and was kind enough to "hunt down the elusive Gartenstrasse." He was told at the Jewish Community Center that the street simply did not exist anymore. The area where the street had been was converted into a commercial shopping district].

Edna Ellis Hilton, the school teacher who was kind enough to offer Liese help in getting out of Austria, wrote on June 4, 1938, that she had given the information that Liese had enclosed to Dr. C. A. Ransom. She also wrote: "You must be quite thrilled over your future. I was so delighted over a visit to Europe last summer. Travel is so wonderful! Would that I could do more than I do—now." One wonders if Mrs. Hilton really comprehended the severity of the situation. Still, this would be Liese's salvation.

On June 9, 1938, Dr. C. A. Ransom wrote a letter to Liese informing her of the letters that were being written on her behalf and that were being sent to the American Consulate in Vienna. Dr. Ransom also apologized for how long it had taken to arrange to get her visa for entry into the United States. Since there were still one or two important letters that needed to be written, he requested that Liese wait

> ...a full three days after you receive this and then present yourself at the Consulate with your own credentials, together with this letter and identify yourself to the Consul, and apply for an immediate visa. He will by that time have received my letter. If your request is favorably acted upon, please apply for immediate emigration and let us know promptly the date and name of your boat sailing. Mrs. Hilton and I will meet you at whatever port of Entry [sic] in this country you may choose. Now I have been advised by the best authority in our State Department here as to the best steps I could take and I have taken them. I most sincerely hope that our efforts will prove to be mutually happy, and that their outcome will be mutually beneficial.

On a separate piece of paper, Dr. Ransom told Liese about his collecting stamps and asked that if she could obtain any from 1840–1930, then she should bring them along. They would be admitted duty free if they were part of a collection and she could perhaps sell them at "considerable advantage." Then he wrote on that same separate letterhead that she should not retain this sheet with the typed letter he had sent her.

On June 15, 1938, Liese wrote her first letter to Steffi, numbered with the Roman numeral one. She told him that the long-awaited letter had come from the United States and she did not know whether she should laugh or cry. The letter said that she would receive

> ...all the necessary documents for immigration in a few days. And that has to happen to me when you, dear Steffi, have been gone 2 days! I have not spoken to anyone about the letter, but one thing is certain, that is that I, just as we already discussed in Vienna, but it is still the case, will not leave this country without you.

Liese wanted to be in America, but wanted first to find out if the affidavit from Dr. Ransom would be "... good for 2 people who are closely related." She hoped that her letter would not startle Steffi "... the way the one from Washington did me." Liese was hoping that she could get a response from the American Consulate in Vienna: "If that should not work, then naturally the thing has died, fell into the water."

Steffi's response to Liese's letter of June 15 was written on June 18, 1938.

> The events are indeed happening so rapidly! We were barely together, barely engaged and I have to leave now and you are supposed to even cross the great water! Everything is moving so quickly so that we perhaps both have to encounter inexperienced decisions of great significance for which, unfortunately, no one will be able to advise us. I am not speaking now of my love, which for me is steady as a rock and you have declared so beautifully in your dear, dear letters; I mean the American project. Certainly it is good, the only question is: do we have time to wait for something better?

Steffi felt that the doctor might not wait if Liese took a long time to think about his offer and also questioned the doctor wanting to employ a married woman. He was also concerned about being able to find a job in the United States and whether he would be able to tolerate "the American elbow technique. Will I be able to succeed in a country which has the rule that anyone can undertake anything for his advantage?" Steffi encouraged Liese to accept the offer. He did not believe that she would be expected to pack and leave immediately. Steffi ended the letter by saying:

> The question is only: can we, or if we are able, should we wait longer? Perhaps it is a pity for every day if it gets much worse, or there is no longer peace. If we knew the future, we could do things accordingly, but so—no one can give us good advice because no one can be smarter during this unsure state. Hopefully we will have luck, that is the main thing, I believe in both of us, I believe that we will not sink, for that reason you can count on me whenever you want, I will not leave you, if only you keep loving me as I do you.

In Liese's second letter [June 19, 1938] she stated:

> So often I am thinking of the nice days of our happiness and that always gives me hope. But I also do not want to get soft and want to show you that I am also courageous and that hope is never completely lost. Unfortunately we both know that we are being put through a difficult test, but if we get through it with the help of our love and trust, then surely it was a test by fire.

Naturally Bertha was really missing her son. She wrote:

> [I] was much too sad to be good company, but found a friendly reception at the Strausses, had to stay for dinner and Liese accompanied me to the bus because it was so late. All the members of the family whom I have met so far are dear, fine people and little Liese is a genuinely good person who is really trying to replace Stepsi [one of Bertha's nicknames for Steffi]. It is not the equivalent, but slowly, in time, it will work. I am happy to go with her and can always talk about you.

Chapter 6: Public Notice

On June 30, 1938, Steffi's first cousin, Lisbeth Schifferes, suddenly got married to her long-time boyfriend, Aryan Kahane. In a letter to Steffi, dated that day, Bertha wrote that "...Lisbeth had her marriage today." Bertha had found out the previous evening.

> The thing has something to do with the emigration so that not even a public notice took place.... I just cannot grasp it and Tante Gisi is more distressed than delighted, as you can imagine. I am frightened that people are even getting sick there [being taken to concentration camps]...
>
> I am completely confused by the news of the wedding, I had to think of it the whole night. Everything is happening too quickly.

The family seemed very surprised by the sudden decision. In a letter dated July 5, 1938, Bertha told Steffi who attended the wedding: "Frau Schuschny and spouse, Lina and Etka [Lisbeth's aunt, who was the wife of her mother's brother, Dr. Moritz Schiller, otherwise known as Ala Mor], Frau Kahane [Aryan's mother, Sabine/Simka Kahane], and a blonde friend of Lisbeth's [were there]." Steffi wrote to Liese: "What do you say about Lisbeth? Why did she have to marry so quickly?"

The day after the wedding, Aryan, who was always called Nuschu by the family, passed his examination and then left for Italy because he had a very Semitic look and everyone was fearful of him being arrested and sent to a concentration camp.

Lisbeth Schifferes Kahane wrote (circa 2003) the following memories of her wedding:

> Most people want very much to remember their wedding, but in our case, I only wanted to forget it. It was a sad affair. We all made our way, mainly by foot, in separate small groups and as discreetly as possible, to the synagogue, which was in Hietzing. The main object was not to attract any attention. After the wedding, rather than all congregate in one house for a party, we split the gatherings into two or three houses: the two houses in Hietzing (the Kahane house and ours) and the flat in Neubaugasse, where [Mama] was.
>
> My main purpose after the wedding was to see that Aryan left Vienna as soon as possible. Groups of Nazis would go around the streets in trucks, rounding up Jewish men. It was mainly the men they picked up; women were not at such risk. Aryan already had his papers so that he could leave. After the wedding, he still had to sit for his final examination at the university. One of his examiners, at an oral exam, wore a swastika and uniform. Nevertheless, he passed the exams. He left a couple of days later, for Italy, where he waited for me. I stayed on for another month because I didn't have all the papers. This was a lengthy business to arrange, and as part of the process, one also had to pay the *Judensteuer* [a tax on Jews who left].

On February 3, 1939, Lisbeth, who was already in Australia, received a letter from the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, Sydney, stating that everything was in order regarding her mother's immigration, but that they would need to provide £200 "Landing Money."

On November 30, 2008, Lisbeth's son Anthony sent a scan of the cover of a velvet-covered Bible that had belonged to our mutual great-grandmother, Hermine Jeiteles Schifferes, which had been

given to Lisbeth on the occasion of her wedding by Moma (Bertha, otherwise known to Lisbeth and family, as Tante Bate). The inscription said:

Liebste Lisbeth!

Zu deinem heutige Ehrentage alles ordentlich[?] Gute! Gottes Segen dir und deinem lieben Mann! Möge der Glück auf all Eure Wegen jetzt und in der Zukunft Euch begleiten.

In inniger Liebe

Euere Tante Bate

Wien, 30. Juni 1938

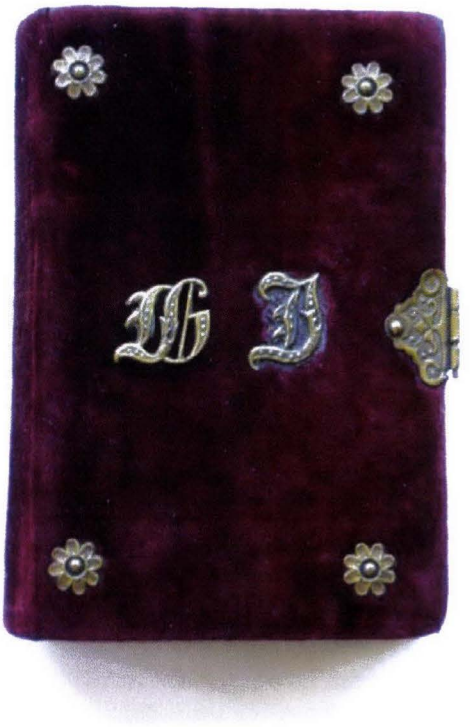
[Dearest Lisbeth!

On the occasion of your wedding day, I wish you all the best. God protect you and your dear husband! May luck accompany you both, now and in the future.

With affectionate love

Your Tante Bate

Vienna, 30 June 1938]



The Bible of Hermine Jeiteles Schifferes, which was given to Lisbeth as a wedding present by her aunt, Bertha [Tante Bate], and then given to Judy by Lisbeth's sons, Anthony and Jeffrey

On June 21, 1938, Liese wrote the following to Steffi:

> I wish I did not have to write today's letter to you, that I could protect you from the terrible event that befell our family yesterday. My father had a terrible accident on the street and is in the Accident Hospital. Is that not horrible? He simply tripped and fell so unluckily and had to be carried off by ambulance. In any case, it was a light, but lengthy Fractura colli femura (that means a broken femur). My mother and sister were telephoned… and notified of Papa's accident and I also heard in an unpleasant manner. Namely, I just happened to bump into Hede on Spitalgasse as I was going from one lesson to another, and went there immediately with her. A small operation was performed. A wire was put through the thigh bone and then an extension with weights was inserted… How will we be able to manage? I need not tell you more about our state of mind, you can surely imagine how we are.

Liese went on to say:

> My mother is close to desperation and I really have to hold myself back so that I do not lose my nerves and am there to support *Mutti* a bit. Hede and Hans now have to replace Papa in the office; you do know that there was a favorable turn of business. Of course Papa already had conferences there today and we hope that he will continue to have things to do so that all these horrible days and the big fright pass more quickly. He is certainly more courageous than *Mutti* and calmer than *Mutti* and is a very patient patient.

Then Liese apologized for putting her worries onto Steffi, "but to whom else should I pour out my feelings, if not you, dearest."

Liese continued by saying that Bertha had big hopes for Steffi finding a way to earn a living "here in the *Reich*." Little did they know how unrealistic this idea was. Then she wrote, "I must say that I have never seen such concrete fear of the American elbow technique as you have; I was against the USA because of it being unknown to me, but there are many positives and it is now the only chance."

In the meantime, Liese wrote that Ines Mandl, who was living in London, had suggested the northern states of Europe (that is, Sweden) where one did not need a visa. Ines was going to send them forms for Australia and New Zealand, but Ines thought that it would be practically impossible to get there.

Steffi's letter to Liese, dated June 26, 1938 began:

> The bad luck that struck your father and, therefore, all of you, also depressed me very much. It is really a difficult blow that fate dealt in these difficult times. God willing you and your mother will not be overwhelmed and the admirable demeanor of your father will remain and also you—at least it will be imitated. If I were to tell you that I can really empathize with your situation, and all the suffering that you, my dearest, are going through, so these are not just powerless words, but I hope that my wish for a speedy recovery together with yours will soon be fulfilled. Greetings to the dear patient from me and please convey to him my best wishes for a quick and complete recovery. Hopefully he will not have to put up with additional pains from the heat and the continuous rest. If I only am happy about your dear letters and naturally hope that you will let me be a part of your big and little worries, then you are relieved of your duties of love during this

> time where you must also, aside from your occupation, also visit your father and possibly cheer him up. I have enough insight to realize that during this time, during the hopefully rapid recovery, I will need to be satisfied with short reports. Naturally I often think of the America project. Hopefully you will still have the job, which is for the beginning just as important as the affidavit.

Then Steffi, always the athlete, encouraged Liese to do some exercises on the rug before going to sleep "...in order to exert your body." For some reason, possibly because of the training in the heat, Steffi was "completely flat" and asked that Liese not mention this to his mother.

In Steffi's letter to Liese, dated June 29, 1938, he wrote that Liese's American "project" seemed to be a great opportunity. He saw it as the only possibility to get out, "...and I will tell you once again that we have to get out...."

On July 2, 1938, Liese wrote to Steffi that there was no forward motion with "the America thing," although she was certain that the American Consulate would notify her when the affidavit from Dr. C. A. Ransom of East Falls Church, Virginia, had arrived.

During this time Liese was doing her utmost to find a solution for their dilemma. Their—Bertha, Liese, and Steffi's—dream of the three of them being able to leave together would not happen. Steffi felt he should finish the course at the sports school. Liese wrote to her cousin, Herbert Muller,[12] who owned the Claridge Hotel in New York, hoping he could be of help, but he apparently never even replied. And Liese went to the Chamber of Commerce in Vienna to look up addresses of Berlitz Schools, hoping to get a job as one of their "native teachers." She also searched for sports equipment stores, "...even though I do not even know what I would ask them..." and all "Jewish" places: "Maybe I will also write to one of the 20 Mr. Strausses." All the addresses were from Washington because that was the only available telephone book. "Hopefully we will have some luck with the game of lottery!"

At this point I would like to mention the very Viennese way of living. Perhaps eating rich Viennese food was counteracted by the long walks my family would take in the Vienna Woods. And eat rich food they did, for both my grandmothers and my great-aunt as well as my mother and my aunt were excellent cooks and bakers. In fact, my grandmother Bertha, whom everyone called "Moma," and Hede and Tante Gisi, during the "waiting period" [waiting to get out], took a pastry class in Vienna. (Even our two cousins who were not related to her called her Moma, along with my friends from school! When my sister Evy was a child she apparently could not pronounce *Grossmama* or *Oma* in German, but could say Moma.)



Gisi, Bertha, Steffi, and Ernst Schifferes an outing to the Vienna Woods, circa 1926

These cooking skills came in handy for Hede when they lived in Chicago, for she was able to sell her baked goods as a way of earning a bit of extra money. Her *Apfelstrudel* was out of this world! And the many other remarkable things that all of them baked are firmly implanted in my memory! How well I remember the *Dobostorte* my mother made for one of my birthdays—seven thin layers of cake with delicious mocha filling and topped with caramelized sugar. A Proustian moment, indeed!

The place where my father was living in Stuttgart, which was right next to the synagogue, was replete with Zionists so he honestly felt that it would be very difficult to find other opportunities. "The *Chaverim* [friends] would really be appalled if I chose a country other than *Erez* Israel. So be clever with the offers." Then he told Liese that he was sure that she would

> ...find the right words to tell Mrs. Hilton that this trip would not be a pleasure trip, that you will never be able to return, that if your parents cannot come afterwards, that you may never see them again, therefore you would rather not

[12] Herbert had been born in the United States and did not spell his surname with an *umlaut*. The Claridge Hotel, located on the east side of Broadway between 43rd and 44th Streets, was probably most famous as the location of the "Camel cigarette man," a billboard with the figure of a handsome man who puffed perfect smoke rings (see http://www.cantabpublishing.com/blog/?p=3828).

> travel alone, that you are (thankfully) engaged to me, [tell them] who I am, if they still want to help you, considering the difficult circumstance and if they can assure you of things, especially since neither you (nor I) can leave immediately. You have to tell her that we have to get out and she is the only one who can help you since my distant relatives have not responded.

The relatives of whom Steffi was speaking were Rosa Sobotka Prokurator, who had already left Vienna for the United States in the 1920s, and her twin daughters. She was related to Steffi through the Jeiteles side of the family. Her daughters married the Loewenheim brothers, with whose grandchildren I have been in contact recently. Unfortunately there was never any response to Bertha and Steffi's letters when they were so desperately trying to find a sponsor for an affidavit.[13]

My father wrote: "The days pass quickly and I am never alone and always busy or in happy company, so much so that I do not even have a chance to seriously think about our problems."

At this time men were being arrested and sent off, and were often also being released. The killings had not yet begun. But the intimidation certainly had. I vaguely remembered being told of my mother and aunt having to get down on their hands and knees and scrub the street with a small brush. As my father lay dying, I had Evy, my sister, ask him if my memories were correct. Yes, he told her. Both our mother and our aunt Hede were forced to do this by some Nazi youths. Ironically, if they were still alive, they would be entitled to compensation from the Austrian General Settlement Fund. How in the world could receiving money from the perpetrators ever take away the humiliation that was inflicted?

In her July 2, 1938, letter, Liese complained that there was not even a chance to talk about daily events because there was always something important to reveal. She wrote that her free time was being spent saying goodbye to Billy [Elizabeth Ostermann, one of her close friends from her school days]. Even the suggestion of going for a walk with Billy and their friend Breuner did not interest her, apparently because she was feeling overwhelmed with the daunting task of finding a way out for all of her loved ones and could not focus on mundane issues.

Furthermore, the general mood was reflected in Bertha's letter, dated July 3, 1938: "So you see, I do not know much news and am grateful for that because the news these days is rarely good." Bertha said that Karl wanted to sue Hacker for having been fired, that his wife, Maria/Mandy, wanted him to do it. [Hacker was a Jewish merchant who had a silver factory.] Because of the connection that Lisbeth's father [Bertha's brother Ernst] had to Herr Hacker, both Karl and Steffi had been able to obtain jobs there at various times.

Aside from the dearth of good news, there was apparently a plethora of concerns. In a letter dated July 5, 1938, Liese said: "All the work and running around would not bother me if only the worries about the past and the unknown future were less agonizing." In this same letter, Liese wrote that she was waiting for the visa from the doctor and teacher and asked Steffi if they [the *Chaluzim*, Zionists, in Stuttgart with whom he was living] would let him travel anywhere other than to *Erez* [the Land of Israel] and asked if he would still want to go to the USA despite "the elbow technique." Apparently my father had the impression that Americans were pushy! Liese also wrote in that same letter that Pepi [Joseph Deutsch, her brother-in-law's brother] and Lilly [Pepi's wife] were leaving Vienna on July 27th. The mother of Liese's friend, Ines Mandl, left suddenly and Liese did not even see her before her departure. And she also wrote that Hede and Hans [her sister and brother-in-law] were far from being able to leave.

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[13] Rosa Prokurator died in January 1937, which explains why they never heard from her.

Steffi wrote the following letter in English, dated July 5, 1938:

Dr. Stefan Schifferes
Vienna, XVIII.,
Neustift a/Walde 45
Germany

Dear Sirs,

I take the liberty of writing to you, as I have no friends in the States, to whom I could turn in my distress. As will be well known to you, circumstances in this country make it quite impossible for a Jew to hold or obtain a position. So it is a matter of life or death to find a chance of immigrating to another country and of working there. I have heard so much of the readiness to help and the kindness of the American people that I venture to apply to you, although I am quite a stranger.

I am 28 years of age, strong and healthy and of a good Jewish family. As concerns education, I have 8 years College training, a law degree (doctor iuris) of Vienna University and 2 years of Commercial High School to show. While still completing my studies I was working for 2 years at the Silvergoodsfactory Hacker, Vienna, and 8½ years till April 1938 at the Austrian Chamber of Commerce. In this latter office I worked my way up by my own efficiency as far as the position of sub-manager [and in Liese's handwriting: *"and should have had every chance of becoming a manager"*], *had it not been for the new regulations in this country.*

I have a perfect knowledge of all office routine, e.g., book-keeping, correspondence in English, French, Spanish, and German, and am a practiced short-hand typist.

Besides I am a first-rate sportsman (3 times Austrian Sports Medal of 1935, 36, 37) and many other high sport distinctions and qualified (State's examen) instructor and trainer for all kinds of sports and gymnastics. I was a member of the Hakoah *and the only Austrian, who was sent to the last* Makkabiade. *I am able to drive a car.*

What I want to beg you instantly, is to find out one of the members of your federation, who is generous enough to help me out of my sad situation, in sending me the Entrance Visa for the States. I do not doubt that I will be able to earn my living as I am willing to start with any work I will find. It is understood, that I never will put you to any inconvenience, and that the only thing I need, is the Entrance Visa and no support or financial help. If by any chance somebody could procure me besides any kind of work, I should be grateful to you. But I don't want to ask too much.

In any case I give you my dates, as I hope, you will be able to procure me the visa: Dr. Stefan Schifferes, born 21th [sic] of November 1909; employee.

Looking forward to a favourable reply as soon as possible,

I am, dear Sirs,

Yours very truly

Schifferes

On July 6, 1938, Liese received notification from the American Consulate that her emigration papers had arrived, but that they would have to be verified. Apparently this delay made her happy because it would give her more time to clarify things, "Because despite everything, I still cannot imagine our near future." What she was wishing for was a second affidavit so that she and Steffi could travel together. Everyone seemed to be giving her warnings about the danger and consequences of delaying the departure. Night and day she was plagued by regrets of having to give up their plan:

> ...Despite my great fear, I still think that a miracle will take place and another solution will present itself. I am not fearful of traveling alone nor being alone, if only I knew that the latter would be brief, because unfortunately I know that in the beginning our life will certainly not be easy and great sacrifices will be asked of us.

By July 1938, Bertha began searching in earnest for an occupation and began to help out her dear friend, Käthe Neumann. Bertha would spend one day a week with Käthe's mother, all the while searching for a way to be a domestic closer to Steffi. She wrote in a letter dated July 9th:

> Do you need something? Write me what! Do you want sausage? Otherwise I do not know of any news from Neustift. We hear nothing about being *marod*[14] and are living quite peacefully here. As Liese surely wrote you, her father remains a lawyer. Is that not good news?

According to the regulation of April 27, 1938, all Jews who had more than RM 5000 had to complete forms relating to their net worth, called *Verzeichnis Über das Vermögen von Juden.* On July 11, 1938, Liese sent Steffi forms from the *Vermögensverkehrstelle*[15] [Property Control Office] that needed to be filled out immediately and sent to Strauchgasse. The forms had to arrive at Strauchgasse by the 16th. Liese continued to inform Steffi of the latest regulations because she was uncertain whether he had read about such things in the newspaper. She also advised him that for such unexpected things, Steffi should give his mother a general power of attorney.

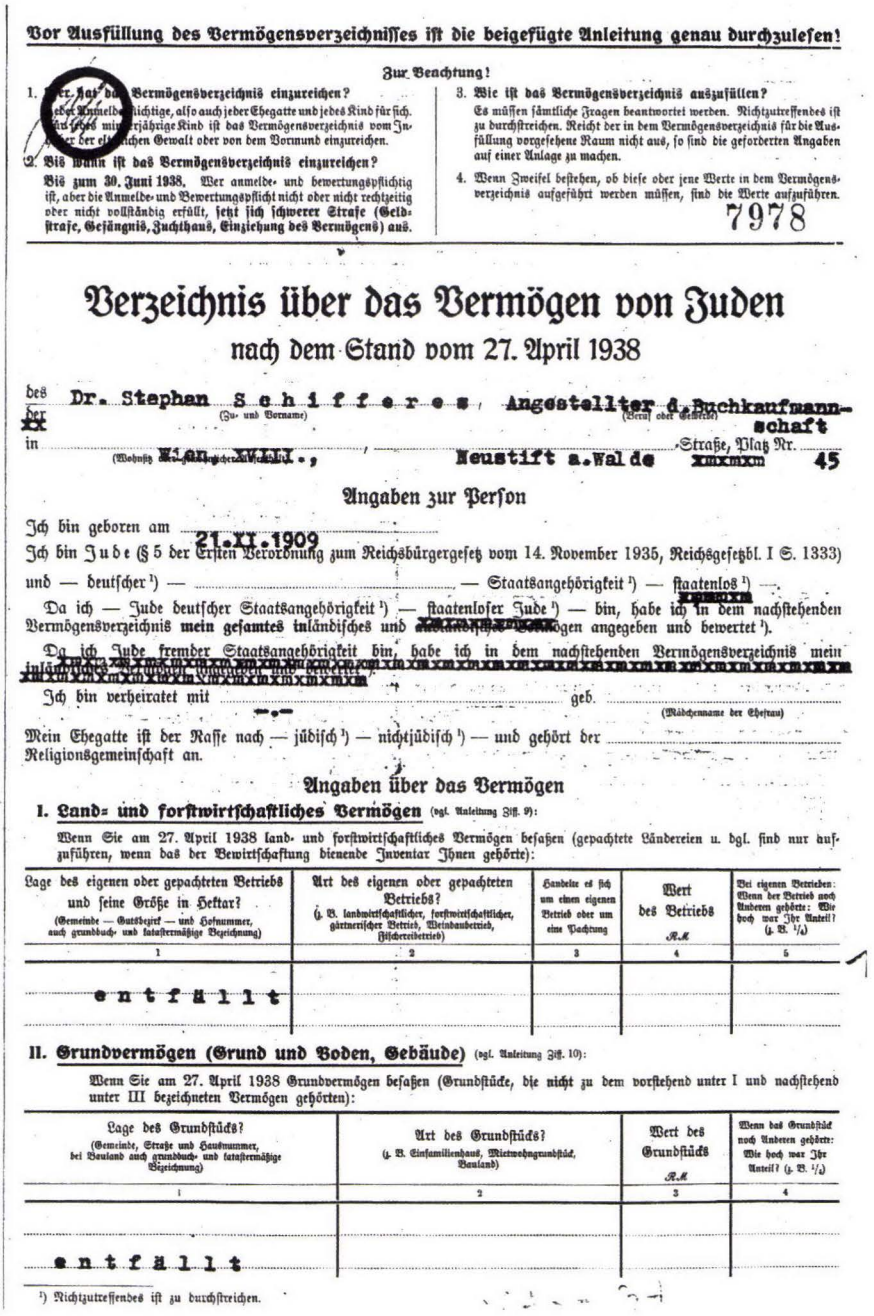
(My father completed his form on July 15, 1938. It stated: "I was let go as an employee of the *Buchkaufmannschaft Wien* [Book Merchants Association of Vienna] on April 7, 1938, and evicted on April 29. During the period that the ordinance of April 27 was in effect, I had a net worth of RM 1,654.80 so that my registration is not necessary." He also wrote that he completed this registration just as a precaution because there was no certainty whether he would be able to earn any money at all.)

Liese wrote that she saw all of her students on two long days and aside from that, was busy with errands. She also expressed frustration with the Loewenheim relatives in Rochester, whom she said could have at least answered if they were still in Rochester. "One should try absolutely everything."

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[14] The German word *marod* actually means "weary, exhausted, tired out," and that was the "secret" way of indicating that so-and-so had been transported to a concentration camp.

[15] According to Peter Zimmer, the more appropriate translation for the form would be: "Authority for the Expropriation and Aryanization of Jewish Companies."



Vor Ausfüllung des Vermögensverzeichnisses ist die beigefügte Anleitung genau durchzulesen!

Zur Beachtung!

1. Wer hat das Vermögensverzeichnis einzureichen?
Jeder Anmeldepflichtige, also auch jeder Ehegatte und jedes Kind für sich. Für jedes minderjährige Kind ist das Vermögensverzeichnis vom Inhaber der elterlichen Gewalt oder von dem Vormund einzureichen.

2. Bis wann ist das Vermögensverzeichnis einzureichen?
Bis zum 30. Juni 1938. Wer anmelde- und bewertungspflichtig ist, aber die Anmelde- und Bewertungspflicht nicht oder nicht rechtzeitig oder nicht vollständig erfüllt, setzt sich schwerer Strafe (Geldstrafe, Gefängnis, Zuchthaus, Einziehung des Vermögens) aus.

3. Wie ist das Vermögensverzeichnis auszufüllen?
Es müssen sämtliche Fragen beantwortet werden. Nichtzutreffendes ist zu durchstreichen. Reicht der in dem Vermögensverzeichnis für die Ausfüllung vorgesehene Raum nicht aus, so sind die geforderten Angaben auf einer Anlage zu machen.

4. Wenn Zweifel bestehen, ob diese oder jene Werte in dem Vermögensverzeichnis aufgeführt werden müssen, sind die Werte aufzuführen.

7978

Verzeichnis über das Vermögen von Juden

nach dem Stand vom 27. April 1938

des/der Dr. Stephan Schiffer e s (Zu- und Vorname), Angestellter d. Buchkaufmannschaft (Beruf oder Gewerbe)

in (Wohnsitz [redacted]), Neustift a. Walde xxxxxx 45 (Straße, Platz Nr.)

Angaben zur Person

Ich bin geboren am 21.XI.1909

Ich bin Jude (§ 5 der Ersten Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 14. November 1935, Reichsgesetzbl. I S. 1333)

und — deutscher [1]) — ..... — Staatsangehörigkeit [1]) — staatenlos [1]) —.

Da ich — Jude deutscher Staatsangehörigkeit [1]) — staatenloser Jude [1]) — bin, habe ich in dem nachstehenden Vermögensverzeichnis **mein gesamtes inländisches und** [redacted] angegeben und bewertet [1]).

Da ich Jude fremder Staatsangehörigkeit bin, habe ich in dem nachstehenden Vermögensverzeichnis mein [redacted]

Ich bin verheiratet mit -.- geb. ..... (Mädchenname der Ehefrau)

Mein Ehegatte ist der Rasse nach — jüdisch [1]) — nichtjüdisch [1]) — und gehört der ..... Religionsgemeinschaft an.

Angaben über das Vermögen

I. Land- und forstwirtschaftliches Vermögen (vgl. Anleitung Ziff. 9):

Wenn Sie am 27. April 1938 land- und forstwirtschaftliches Vermögen besaßen (gepachtete Ländereien u. dgl. sind nur aufzuführen, wenn das der Bewirtschaftung dienende Inventar Ihnen gehörte):

Lage des eigenen oder gepachteten Betriebs und seine Größe in Hektar? (Gemeinde — Gutsbezirk — und Hofnummer, auch grundbuch- und katastermäßige Bezeichnung)	Art des eigenen oder gepachteten Betriebs? (z. B. landwirtschaftlicher, forstwirtschaftlicher, gärtnerischer Betrieb, Weinbaubetrieb, Fischereibetrieb)	Handelte es sich um einen eigenen Betrieb oder um eine Pachtung	Wert des Betriebs RM	Bei eigenen Betrieben: Wenn der Betrieb noch Anderen gehörte: Wie hoch war Ihr Anteil? (z. B. 1/4)
1	2	3	4	5
entfällt				

II. Grundvermögen (Grund und Boden, Gebäude) (vgl. Anleitung Ziff. 10):

Wenn Sie am 27. April 1938 Grundvermögen besaßen (Grundstücke, die nicht zu dem vorstehend unter I und nachstehend unter III bezeichneten Vermögen gehörten):

Lage des Grundstücks? (Gemeinde, Straße und Hausnummer, bei Bauland auch grundbuch- und katastermäßige Bezeichnung)	Art des Grundstücks? (z. B. Einfamilienhaus, Mietwohngrundstück, Bauland)	Wert des Grundstücks RM	Wenn das Grundstück noch Anderen gehörte: Wie hoch war Ihr Anteil? (z. B. 1/4)
1	2	3	4
entfällt			

[1]) Nichtzutreffendes ist zu durchstreichen.

Steffi's Declaration of Assets of Jews, according to the Regulation of April 27, 1938

Aside from the massage classes and training at the sports school, Steffi was involved with studying Hebrew, Spanish, and English, and also had occasional opportunities to play chamber music. He wrote Liese about a sports festival in which he participated, but said he could not win a prize in either running or jumping. "I think I did not train enough and unfortunately have other worries."

Tante Rosa wrote in a letter dated July 15, 1938, how much they all liked Liese and how good she was to Bertha. She told Steffi that he should continue writing letters to his mother because she would always share the letters with them and he was their favorite topic of conversation.

As the situation around them worsened, Steffi wrote Liese that a Cantor in Stuttgart whom he had befriended told him that Liese absolutely must leave Germany. In that same letter, dated July 16, 1938, Steffi mentioned that Frau [Alice] Bloch, who was the director of the sports school, was leaving for Switzerland and the sport and Spanish teacher would be leaving in November for Argentina. Still, the organization continued to function.

Although the Nazi regulations for Jewish lawyers were becoming more stringent and some of the Jewish lawyers were demoted to "consultants," still my grandfather, Dr. Hugo Strauss, was able to prove that he had been accepted as a practicing lawyer in 1912, and was somehow allowed to continue work as a consultant. On July 15, 1938, however, the notification that he and his wife and Liese were to be evicted in November arrived, although they were hoping to delay the eviction until the following February because of my grandfather's health. That seemed unlikely because, as Liese said, "at the moment… no one can rent to Jews." In a letter dated July 16, 1938, Liese informed Steffi of the eviction of her parents from their apartment. She also wrote: It seems that no one in this District is unaffected."

So they prepared to leave their comfortable apartment in the 18th District [*Bezirk*], which was in a quiet neighborhood quite near to where Liese and Hede, as well as Ines Hochmuth and Billy (Elizabeth) Ostermann, my mother's best friends, went to school [at the Bischof Faberplatz]. At this point, Liese realized the severity of the situation and the absolute need to get out of Austria: "We are certain that the immigration must earnestly begin."

Then Liese informed Steffi that he must arrange his passport "situation" himself in Vienna, since his permanent residence was in Vienna. She spelled out the complicated procedure:

I. Passport business (immigration)

   a) Wehrgasse (Jewish Passport Office). There one can obtain the instructions for the known obligations for

   b) Commissary on Schulgasse, where one receives the renewal of the passport and a stamp. Then one has to take this to

   c) Immigration Office at Herrengasse. Then one must await notification of the permission to immigrate at Wehrgasse and gets, if one has the certificate of taxes being paid and in case one is a man under the age of 45, if one has the

   d) military certificate or dispensation of the Jewish Community Center and the current military commando.

II. Certificate of No Taxes Owed:

   a) Tax Office

   b) Tax interview with advisor and collection of the forms.

   c) old Rathaus (re: Währingerrathaus)

   d) Tax: decision of the certificate.

Liese's immigration was making headway. Dr. C. A. Ransom sent a letter from East Falls Church on July 25, 1938, in which he assured her that she would "receive favorable and early consideration" from the Consulate. He mentioned that two or three of his patients worked in the "Department" and he had been heeding their advice that Liese should "apply on the basis of a

domestic, and tell them that you have my assurance of a salary of thirty-five dollars a month." Then Dr. Ransom waxed sentimental:

> I feel somewhat as you do. It is entirely possible that Fate is finally being kind to an unfortunate woman in Vienna, and is at the same time helping a somewhat discouraged physician in America. If you will show whatever appreciation you feel in kindness and help to my children, you never need feel under obligation to me.

Dr. Ransom also included a copy of a notarized letter he had sent to the American Consul, which stated that for the past fifteen years he had been Coroner of Fairfax County, Virginia. He also stated that he would "undertake care of this individual in order to prevent her [from] becoming a public charge."

Bertha wrote that Dr. Sch.[iller, Gisela Schiller Schifferes' brother] was still "very ill" and then complained how Lisbeth had no time for writing or concern for the family. If Bertha did not call, she would not hear from them. Bertha went to visit Dr. Strauss, Liese's father, in the hospital and recounted that he had a good sense of humor. During the visit, Dr. Hugo Strauss told Bertha that he hoped he would not have to wait for another forty years for a visit from her!

Apparently Liese was going to visit Steffi in Stuttgart so Bertha wrote him that when Liese came "...she will tell you everything that one does not and cannot write."

In the meantime, in July 1938, Karl was trying desperately to find work. Karl wrote to Steffi that he had heard that Steffi wanted to find Karl work as a cellist even though he had had a lapse of playing for eight years. Even if Steffi could only find him a job at a firm, he said, "It would be nice to be together." Steffi was very willing to try to help Karl, but first, he wanted to make certain that his mother's situation was in order.

Tante Rosa, who, as I mentioned earlier, was both cousin and sister-in-law to Bertha, wrote Steffi telling him how upset his mother was by his writing that she could not follow him wherever he went. Tante Rosa said that "a few dear lines" would straighten out everything and Fräulein Liese could explain everything when she returned to Vienna, "but always think before you write because writing is different from speaking". Furthermore, she said that she could not understand why he did not thank his mother for the delicious baked goods that she had made for him with love:

> Yes, you are young and are hopefully going to a nicer, better future. You know how much we all wish that for you, but do not forget your good, fine, only mother. I beg you once again not to be angry, but I feel so sorry for Mama.

Der Polizeipräsident in Wien.

KB. 527 F. 8. (Soh.) Wien, den 19. JUL 1938



Zeugnis.

Dem ~~Herrn~~ Dr. Stephan Schifferes

~~Der Frau~~

~~Dem Fräulein~~

am 21.XI.1909 in Wien geboren,

zuständig nach Wien

in Wien, XVII., Neustift am Walde 45 wohnhaft,

wird auf ~~sein~~ ihr Ansuchen zum Zwecke der der Erlangung des amerikanischen Einreisevisums

hiemit bestätigt, daß gegen ihn

Nachteiliges nicht vorgemerkt ist.

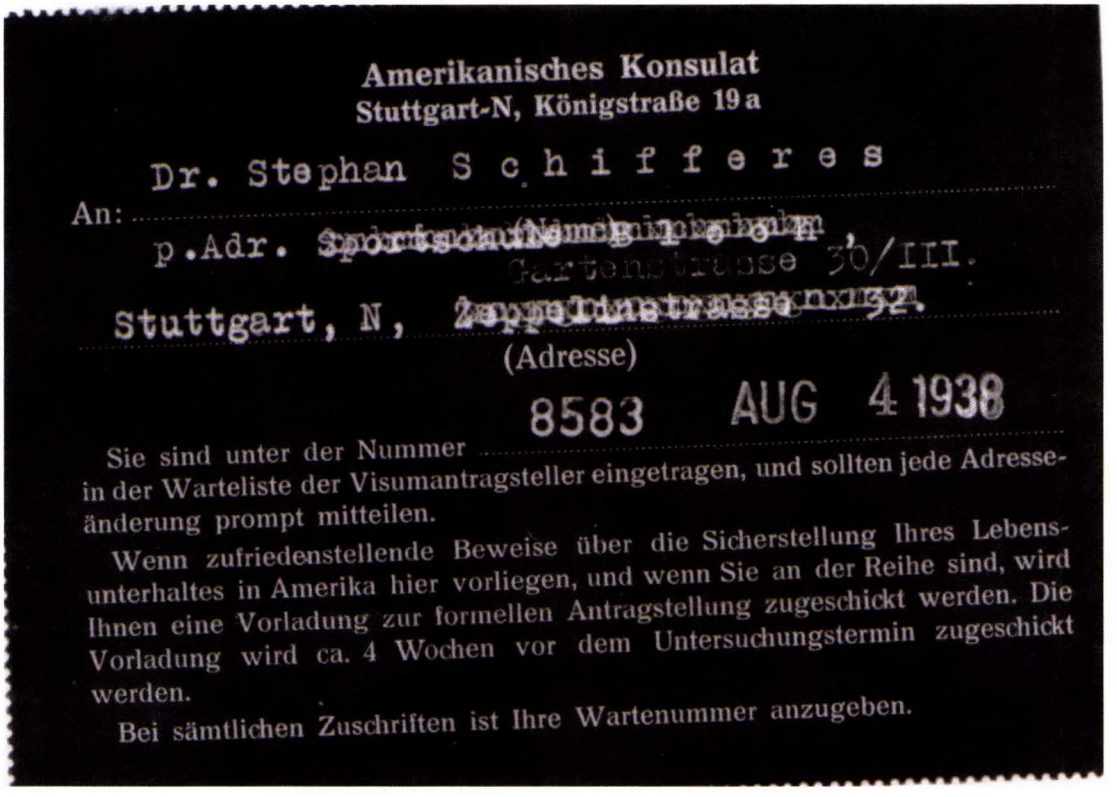
Der Polizeipräsident in Wien

J. A.

Document sent by the Police President in Vienna, dated 19 July 1938, stating that Dr. Stephan Schifferes received an extension for his American Immigration Visa

Chapter 8: The Best Thing in the Reich

At the beginning of August, Steffi wrote Liese that the social worker thought that his mother should go to England as a housekeeper, although that would mean she would be far from both of them. "This time they did not say 'send her,' but rather asked her if she would like to do that, so that she would not be offended. So if Mama does not want to go to Tante Rosa's, I think that would be the best thing in the *Reich*."



Amerikanisches Konsulat
Stuttgart-N, Königstraße 19 a

An: Dr. Stephan S c h i f f e r e s

p.Adr. [illegible] Gartenstrasse 36/III.

Stuttgart, N, [illegible]

(Adresse)

8583 AUG 4 1938

Sie sind unter der Nummer ..... in der Warteliste der Visumantragsteller eingetragen, und sollten jede Adresseänderung prompt mitteilen.

Wenn zufriedenstellende Beweise über die Sicherstellung Ihres Lebensunterhaltes in Amerika hier vorliegen, und wenn Sie an der Reihe sind, wird Ihnen eine Vorladung zur formellen Antragstellung zugeschickt werden. Die Vorladung wird ca. 4 Wochen vor dem Untersuchungstermin zugeschickt werden.

Bei sämtlichen Zuschriften ist Ihre Wartenummer anzugeben.

Document from the American Consulate General in Stuttgart, Königstrasse 19a, which gave Steffi's number as 8538, issued on August 4, 1938

The only question would be if his mother should actually go immediately or should rather wait until April of 1939, when Steffi's course would be finished. Steffi had turned in the rest of his papers at the American Consulate (for the Quota). Steffi also wrote Liese that Herr Haas suggested that he play clarinet a half hour per day and that in late autumn he wanted to take him and Frankenstein (Ludwig, Steffi's friend who played viola) to England, although Steffi felt that he was not trained enough. Steffi also wrote that he had not done anything about the ship ticket:

> Maybe I will "paddle" my way to Vienna with Philippson, but it would probably already be too cold. In any case, I will not be leaving as abruptly as you, poor Lieschen, and will also be leaving without military cover. Should I write to the hotel school in W.[ashington], if yes, tell me and I will send the English translation to you so you can check it. I remember so often the few wonderful days for which you do not need to thank me, I also do not thank you for coming or for your love, which will hopefully soon bring us together forever.

Then he wrote that Dr. Moritz Schiller, who was called Ala Mor, was released from Dachau [concentration camp] and had to give up his [dental] practice, that is, to his predecessor, who just

happened to appear on the scene. Then Steffi wrote that he would never see his first cousin Lisbeth again. And when Bertha wrote Steffi on August 6, 1938, she said that she went to Tante Gisi's to say a final goodbye to Lisbeth, who was flying from Vienna to Italy on that day to join her husband:

> I still cannot grasp that we will probably never see Lisbeth again in our lives.
>
> Everything is, thank God, in order at Tante Rosa's, just that there is mostly a sultry mood because, as you know, if a newspaper does not lie straight it is upsetting [to Onkel Dori]. I often say to Tante Rosa, "Do not ruin yourself." She is very good to me, I always get food, of course behind Onkel Dori's back. I do not need money.

Bertha, my grandmother, wanted:

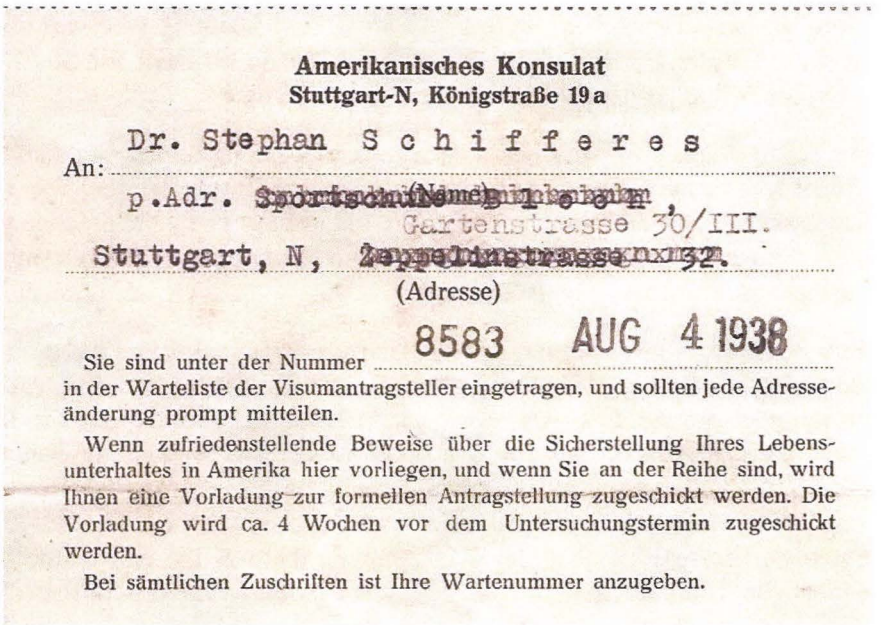
> ...to start working today rather than tomorrow. As long as I am not yet old, I would like to work... not that it needs to be 8 rooms, like at Frau Schmal. Naturally you can understand that I would want to be near you and Liese. But if there is no possibility in Stuttgart or environs, I would go to England, especially if I could help you both. But to sit here and allow myself to be supported by Tante Rosa, who has to fight with her husband for every penny, is not for me. I have worked hard for many years without any success, I do not have to atone for it and take a hand-out if I am still well and strong, and can't I, as many others do today, earn my bread through a household? At the same time as I got your letter, I received a letter from a woman from the Rhineland who is offering me a job in her household. There are only two people there. But I think it does not make any sense to travel so far into the German *Reich*, I could rather go to England right away. I still do not know if I should give up the apartment or wait until I get notice [eviction], which will happen sooner or later.
>
> Seppi Huber [son of Steffi's father's first cousin, Rosa née Hofmann Huber] is well again [released from Dachau concentration camp] and that is since Thursday. Liese looks very well. She was at my place at 8:30, after having given lessons the whole day. She is really a good, nice person, everyone likes her. I, myself have great respect for her because she is really an engaging, full of feeling being, which one rarely finds. God grant you both lots of luck because Stepsibub is a delicious boy and there is no one else like you.
>
> Do you not think it more correct for me to take a job? It is not for always, naturally one cannot be so sure about a position to stay there for years. I do not want to sit and wait here without something to do, until, God forbid, something turns bad and Tante Rosa, or Anna [Tante Rosa's cook] leaves. You know the old man, I do not get along with him and he would only like what Anna cooks. Should I wait for the unhappiness of someone else [*Schadenfreude*]? No, I am not even thinking of that. So many people do that, that they accommodate themselves to what is happening, many, who have more money in their pockets than I do, why should I not begin a different life? I still have the desire now to do it, perhaps later I will not. Do not write to Tante Rosa that she should keep me here, she also wants me to wait in Vienna, it is surely meant well by everyone, but every capable person will realize that I can still work and that nowadays it is necessary. One also occasionally needs something to wear, shoes, little things, should one beg for everything? You say I should perhaps go to the Jewish

Community Center to get [financial] support, that just really is not necessary. I emphasize again, I am well (you asked me repeatedly) and can perhaps give up more than much younger people. You see, it is not without thought, I do have enough time to think... I would absolutely like to take a job, though not necessarily the first one offered!

Chapter 9: Sweet Goal

In August 1938 my father was still in Stuttgart, attending the sports school. Liese was preparing her documents to be able to leave Vienna for good. Steffi wrote that she should not break her head over these things. If he could still get out [despite the pending war], he would also come "over there." He added, "I will manage, especially since I have such a sweet goal." Steffi said Liese should ask the doctor if she should finish her examination in Vienna so she could assess his feeling about a further delay. Steffi hoped to still get to Vienna before Liese's departure and then she could show him all the old things that she would be shipping over. At which point, Steffi asked "...when will we be able to make use of them in our new home, hopefully very soon [?]!" Liese asked him about getting married, but Steffi felt that she should go to the U.S. alone.

Liese also wrote that the doctor was wealthy and knew many people. Steffi told Liese to take a fast ship. "If you think of how people are scurrying to leave and that I will not see many, e.g., Lisbeth, ever again, awful". Then Steffi alluded to the general state of affairs throughout the Third Reich: "The evictions are awful, but not as bad as other things." And he thought that Liese should devote herself to passing the examination and the departure and not give lessons anymore. He assured her that he would also marry her without the title she would gain if she passed the examination, but she had put in so much time, effort, and money for it. "For the same reason, I feel I should complete the sports course even though I have had enough..." and furthermore, he had an argument with someone and was reprimanded at the *Obberat* "...like a schoolboy." He continued to encourage Liese by adding: "...and when we have accomplished our goal ... then we will bring Mama to us and step by step will feel well in a new homeland. Let us pray that there will not be too many delays and we will love one another, as always...."



Amerikanisches Konsulat
Stuttgart-N, Königstraße 19a

An: Dr. Stephan S c h i f f e r e s
(Name)
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Gartenstrasse 30/III.
Stuttgart, N, [illegible] 32.
(Adresse)

8583 AUG 4 1938

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Wenn zufriedenstellende Beweise über die Sicherstellung Ihres Lebensunterhaltes in Amerika hier vorliegen, und wenn Sie an der Reihe sind, wird Ihnen eine Vorladung zur formellen Antragstellung zugeschickt werden. Die Vorladung wird ca. 4 Wochen vor dem Untersuchungstermin zugeschickt werden.

Bei sämtlichen Zuschriften ist Ihre Wartenummer anzugeben.

Notification from the American Consulate informing Dr. Stephan Schifferes that his name appeared on the waiting list as number 8583

In the meantime, Liese was concerned about her future mother-in-law, whom she, at this point, was already calling Mama. Liese suggested that Mama find a position in Vienna, where people could care for her if she became ill. "Being sick in a foreign country is equally dangerous for young and old people. And there is no going back, as you well know" [August 9, 1938].

Liese was hoping to be able to travel in four weeks, but it could also be two months. In response to Steffi telling her about Herr Haas and his desire to take Steffi to England to play music, Liese wrote: "Herr Haas should rather take you along to the USA." Liese thought that because Dr. Ransom was a music-lover and moved around in musical circles perhaps she could gain his sympathy and get Steffi an affidavit that way. She even went so far as to suggest that Steffi make a recording with a pianist or a cellist—which, in those days, was no small feat—claiming that it would not be expensive and would be a good recommendation.

All the while, Liese's father, my grandfather Dr. Hugo Strauss, was making a slow recovery from the streetcar accident and was still in the hospital. Liese told Steffi about her father's roommate in the hospital, who knew Liese from the streetcar and Steffi from the *Hakoah*. This man was an athlete and a jeweler who needed an operation, but was going to Mexico to work as a jeweler. His huge appetite reminded Liese of Steffi. "Apparently an athlete needs greater quantities of food," she said.

Steffi realized what a sad journey it would be for Liese because it meant saying goodbye to so many relatives. And he hoped that Liese would be able to find time to be with Tante Rosa and his Mama during her last days in her homeland. In response to Liese's suggestion of making a recording of his clarinet playing, Steffi wrote that it could not be done in Stuttgart and, aside from that, it would be too expensive. Liese had wanted Steffi to make a "demo" so he could perhaps get a job as a clarinetist in the United States.

By August 12, 1938, Dr. Hugo Strauss was released from the hospital. The medicine practiced in 1938 was so different from today's. In a letter dated August 13, Liese wrote that her father would have to be in bed for 8 days, sit in a chair for 8 days, spend 14 days with crutches, and then he would be able to walk. All the while, my grandmother, Sophie, was frazzled and could not sleep because of her concerns about her husband. In addition, her daughter, Liese, was getting ready to leave Vienna forever. Hans Deutsch wrote to his brother, Pepi [Joseph], who was already in the States with his wife Lilly and young child, Ruth, to ask for an affidavit for Steffi. And Liese wrote: "Hopefully we will all, especially you, reach our goal in time."

When the move to the Liese's father's new office took place, she helped as much as possible, remarking to Steffi that many things were thrown out and not all the furniture was taken along. "The new office is not so large and inviting as the old, but unfortunately the practice will also not be [the same]...," though the location was a good one and she hoped her father would be able to get to experience it soon.

The fear of Steffi not being able to get out of Nazi Germany was real. Liese wrote to him saying that she wanted to ask Dr. Ransom and Mrs. Hilton for an affidavit for him, but was fearful that this would cut off other possibilities. And, as much as Liese would have liked to help Steffi's mother with the running around, she could not do so because everything had to be done personally. Moreover, Liese, announced, German Jews could not get married. How she wished that all the preparations to reach their goal were already accomplished. Despite her desire to complete her studies, she realized that she would not be there at the end of the year for the examination so that she would not gain the title "*Diplom Kaufmann* Liese Schifferes." "For that," she said, "I would not leave even one hour later." But still, she continued to do the studying because she thought that the delay of her trip would happen all by itself. Little did she know that by the end of the year she would have most likely been forbidden from taking the examination at all.

Everyone seemed to be apprehensive. Bertha had no idea what she would do. Her friend, Käthe Neumann, offered her a place to say in the 9. District, on Grünetorgasse, until February. Bertha

wrote to Steffi: "I hope I will not need it and will already be at a job because there is no solution.... I only have Stepsi and he is so far away and will soon be even further away and will not need me anymore." Meanwhile, she said that Lisbeth should have already written from Italy and Karl was also thinking of emigration, and, upon the suggestion of his brother-in-law, wanted to sue his boss. The Hubers [Rosa née Hoffmann Huber was Julius' first cousin through the Siebenscheins] went to Tante Rosa's house every Sunday "...since they do not go anywhere else." And she related that Ernst Hoffmann, Rosa Huber's brother, had written from New York and promised to go to see Helene Loewenheim. "Unfortunately, she added, "I do not expect much from them."

By the next day, in a letter to Steffi dated August 15, 1938, Bertha wrote how the situation was deteriorating more and realized she should leave to go to England rather than stay with Tante Rosa. She knew that the situation would not remain the same. Apparently on that same day Fritz Allina, Tante Rosa's son, married Mary Kohn, a marriage that did not last very long [August 15, 1938–August 25, 1940]. Furthermore, Bertha related how she had gotten money from Tante Rosa and also had to get some from Tante Gisi. She spoke of preferring to work honestly for her "bread" and said that she would not want to work in Vienna because of the "*Schadenfreude*" it would bring. Naturally, she wrote, Tante Rosa would take the piano, but Onkel Dori "...is living on an island of souls who do not wish for any change. The main thing is him and that he earns a lot." According to Bertha, the business [leather and hides] was doing remarkably well. Fritz always said, she wrote, "...we are the beneficiaries of the demise." Lina Schiller, Tante Gisi's sister, had not yet sold her store, which carried second-hand clothes, because apparently there were enough customers who were shopping there. "Dr. K.[orolanyi] was "...waiting for a miracle and he thinks because of his beliefs[16] he will be treated differently." Then, all of a sudden, in the next sentence, Bertha inquired whether she should sell their radio.

Furthermore, if Bertha went to Tante Rosa's, she would have to share a room with Fritz. At least at Käthe's she would just be with her. But her preference was to go to England. She wrote to Steffi:

> Please, dear fine boy, let me get a job in England. I would rather spend these next months near you and do not understand why you are against it. I am just happy that I will at least have you here a few days, if nothing special ruins it. If I do not have you here, then I do not want to be here because everything reminds me of my good boy, I cannot even go the same way that we so often went. I am very lonely and absolutely need to work. Why should I get sick? There is nothing wrong with me and I am not really that old.

[16] Dr. Hans Theodor Korolanyi, born January 24, 1896, was an employee at the Creditanstat Bank. He and his family, who were neighbors of Bertha and Steffi at 47 Neustift am Walde, had converted to Christianity, and, therefore, thought that they would be protected from the Nazi wrath. He fled to Trieste on July 6, 1939. His son, Peter, went (most likely by *Kindertransport*) to England on February 2, 1939, where I believe he encountered my father in northern England. Liese gave them English lessons while they were still in Vienna. It is uncertain what became of Peter Korolanyi.

Chapter 10: Where Is Everyone Moving?

Tante Rosa told Steffi in a letter dated August 15, 1938, that Bertha had been evicted, like many others. Tante Rosa also asked Steffi to write Bertha

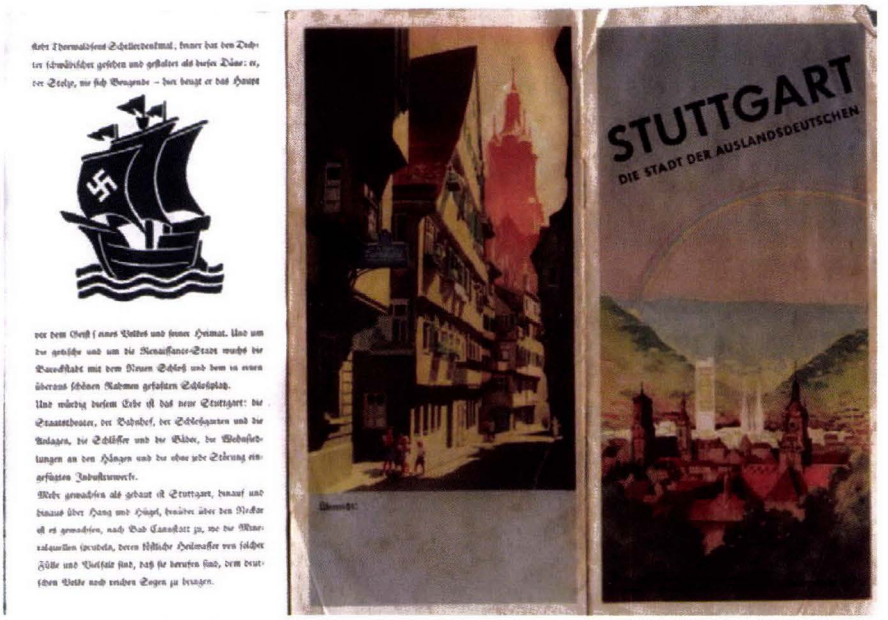
> as soon as you can and namely calm her down and tell her that we absolutely would like to have her stay with us, and that she can accept it without qualms and she does not need to worry about it; now you certainly know that she does not want to be a burden and for that reason is so unhappy that she is without a home.

Bertha herself wrote Steffi how she was not actually surprised about the eviction, but would have had to leave anyway because she could no longer afford the rent and felt it even more necessary to find a job. Upon hearing of his mother's eviction, Steffi wrote her that there would be no other choice than to find a job in Vienna or abroad. He felt bad about the furniture and the piano and advised her: "To sell now would be to give it away." And he wondered if the piano could even be sent over the wide ocean, though he realized it would not be worth the expense, and a better one could be bought abroad.

When Steffi wrote to Liese, he wondered: "Where is everyone moving to who got evicted?" He also expressed concern about being able to deal with things if their separation was longer than they anticipated ("...and despite everything, I long for Vienna ...").

Steffi wrote:

> Tomorrow [August 18, 1938] is the big foreign German celebration... the *Stellvertreter* [representative] of the *Führer* will speak, everything is draped in flags and lit up. I myself have a soccer match and hope not to get hurt so that I can continue to train for the examination.



Stuttgart was known as "The City of Foreign Germans"[17]

[17] In 1917, when Germany was still under King Wilhelm II, a German Foreign Institute (*Deutche Ausland-Institut* [DAI]) was founded to promote German interests abroad and improve the nation's image. A

Then Steffi wrote to his mother that if the package had not yet been sent, to include the piano part for the first Brahms Sonata.

Liese thought that the idea of Bertha going to England was a very good one, but that English houses were very large and the job would be much more strenuous than in Vienna. Liese wrote that Dr. Ransom wanted her to be in East Falls Church by the beginning of the school year, although she did not know exactly when that was. But she thought she would not be able to leave until the middle of October, although even that seemed too rushed. Liese had also just received a copy of Dr. Ransom's affidavit and wrote: "...he is very rich and respected and surely has fabulous connections." In the letter that accompanied Dr. Ransom's affidavit, he wrote that Liese would be hired as a domestic, but would not be treated as such. She wrote to Steffi:

> Everything sounds fabulous and I am certain that things will go well for me. If things could possibly go well when one is separated from one's beloved. Still I hope that things go well so I can get you a trip and possible profession and that the time of separation passes quickly.

Then, moving on to more mundane things, she wrote about having gone shopping for things and was overjoyed "...that we will have such nice and really only beautiful things." She then proceeded to tell Steffi that he would also like them and that his mother also gave them some items, which was very touching to Liese and her mother. "I am already curious when and where we will unpack."

Liese wrote to Steffi that Hede and Hans, whom she referred to as HeHa, "...now have more hope for a quick resolution, but one cannot be happy too soon." Pepi and Lilly had not written from New Jersey and everyone was concerned. And everyone in the family was upset because the Deutsch parents were evicted and had no place to go, and Tante Stephy was evicted as well. "But one cannot even be upset anymore." It seemed that the situation was worsening for everyone. Liese was uncertain whether she would be able to finish her studies. Her longing for her fiancé continued: "It seems like it was today that we were on Zeppelinstrasse (in Stuttgart) and were admiring the gorgeous view. How large will our longing be if... but I do not want to be as insecure as you and also have great hopes. Also great responsibility because everyone tells me I must be able to get something for you. So if we believe in our luck, then it has to work!"



Liese, July 12, 1938

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museum was placed in the Wilhelm Palace, which housed 37 exhibits of the 30 million Germans and people of German descent who were living outside of Germany, and a War Memorial of German Achievement Abroad was instituted in Stuttgart. During the '30s, the DAI became a Nazi propaganda instrument. On August 27, 1936 Hitler officially decreed that Stuttgart be given the designation of "City of Foreign Germans." (www.von-zeit-zu-zeit.de/index.php?template=bild&media_id=391) (http://www.ifa.de/ifa/geschichte/).

Bertha referred to Liese's sister as Dr. Deutsch. Dr. Hedwig née Strauss Deutsch was acting as Bertha's lawyer and had put in an appeal for the eviction.


HEDE DEUTSCH
beehrt sich anzuzeigen, daß ihre
PROMOTION
zum
DOKTOR DER RECHTE
am Freitag, den 19. März 1937, stattfindet.
Wien, im März 1937

Hede became a Doctor of Law in March 1937

Bertha wrote [August 8, 1938] how she would have liked to stay in the apartment until at least November so she could sell the belongings in peace, so she could go through the things with Steffi and perhaps store certain things at Tante Rosa's. "You know how uncomfortable she was with us storing the travel basket[18] because of Onkel Dori. And if Anna[19] does go, should I be the one to wait on my sister-in-law Mandy and her daughter? I do not want that and you cannot want it either. I would rather be with a stranger and would like to earn money and work. You and Tante Rosa mean it well, but I do not really want that."

Liese's reaction about her future mother-in-law moving in with the Allinas was expressed in a letter to Steffi. Liese said she could understand why Bertha would not want to live with them. Liese was also concerned about a possible age limit for "domestics" in England (50 years old), but hoped that would not be the case. She also said that she felt Bertha would have enough to do with dissolving the household and told Steffi that his mother would actually prefer storing the furniture at the Allinas until she could sell it for more. The shipping, she said,

> ...is very expensive, almost more than buying new there. What a pity about everything. I know and understand that you are attached to the things, but unfortunately one just has to detach oneself from some things.

How wise my mother was already at the age of twenty-two! She continued by saying that she spoke with Mama "...in a quiet manner. But she practically got upset and I am sure you would not want me to make her cry." Then Liese wrote [August 19, 1938]:

> Today Papa stood up for the first time, it went very well. In 3 weeks one will hopefully not even know that anything happened. We are not even that upset about the eviction, which makes me wonder because the parents hope for a lengthening of the eviction date for no apparent reason and somehow one has to find an apartment or at least a room.

---

[18] This may very well have been the straw suitcase that held the many letters that were found in Steffi's house on Portal Drive!

[19] Anna was Tante Rosa's cook.

> My immigration is only making a little progress this week since I am not going out so much because of a little angina which I have had since Tuesday, but which is better today. And one must be persistent, otherwise the thing will not go. One must stand only 5 hours in most of the offices, even though it may happen that one accomplishes nothing. At Wehrgasse and at the City Hall one has to stand from 10 o'clock at night, then one gets a number with which one once again stands from 10 o'clock or what I will do is purchase a number. There are so many people looking to immigrate, aside from that one needs a new passport so that, e.g., I had to make another trip just for the passport. In my opinion you should arrange for your trip here, you surely will not get it in Stuttgart because of the certificate of paid taxes. In any case, send a power-of-attorney re: what I said in the earlier letter, also for me since Mama should not stand for so long.

In a letter dated August 21, 1938, Steffi wrote Liese about having gone to an athletic meet where he "saw an American Negro jump 2 m and his white teammate did 4.27 in the pole vault". Then he wrote: "It rained yesterday and today and if the weather continues like this, I will become a pretty good clarinetist."

In Liese's next letter to Steffi [August 22, 1938] she wrote about her friend, Trude Willheim, who was already in England and wanted to get them both jobs as "a married pair household help." But, according to Liese, "...the situation did not warrant running away as quickly... I am always for slow developments, when the bullets are flying, (then I will know that it is too late, but one must be a bit of a fatalist) or the prospects are so good that we cannot turn them down." If they took domestic jobs, that would be all they could be and it would only be for one year. Then she wrote, "...I cannot see why I should interrupt the course if I would only get a 1-year domestic servant permit, with you..." [and then perhaps find a better possibility].

Steffi seemed to express much longing for Vienna and his family there when he said that the desserts from Vienna only reminded him of what a good cook his mother was. There was also an occasional hint of jealousy, as when Liese wrote that her friend, Paul Stein, was comforting her, Steffi wrote, "...right Lieschen, because aside from your dear father's accident ... things are not so bad with you."

Then he said that things would not be so bad for his mother at Tante Rosa's. She would just have to let Onkel Dori and Fritz "know they are right."

On August 22, 1938, Karl spent the night at his sister's because he feared eviction. If he left, then his wife and daughter could change the apartment to be in their name and they, in turn, as Catholic Austrians, could remain in their apartment on Beheimgasse 57. In a letter to his nephew, Steffi, he wrote that he wanted to put together an orchestra, but he knew that a smaller orchestra would be better:

> ...6–8 people could be used on ships. I also had good Jewish musicians here through the Director Silving.[20] The whole dance chorus of 6–8 men could leave tomorrow. Do not forget to practice clarinet a lot, but make sure to do dance and salon music because I know from experience that one can always earn money from that. Do you have opportunity to practice E flat or B saxophone? That is very easy for a clarinetist.

[20] Bert Silving [changed name from Albert Silbiger], 1887–1948, was a well-known musician and conductor in Vienna.

In the same letter, Bertha wrote about Karl while he was not there, therefore she was able to tell her son that Karl sought refuge at her place.

> The poor thing not only has problems with the apartment now, but also with his daughter who naturally is on the other side and has been living with M.[21] since Saturday. Neither Karl nor his wife are pleased with their future son-in-law.

The "little one" (Mandy Junior), said Bertha:

> ...just wants to be here and is still waiting for the fruits of her labor. Every offer to go to Holywood [sic] or anywhere else is ignored. But she is no longer on his side. You can imagine how upset he is. He is smoking all the time and is now waiting for emigration to an unknown land.

By December 1938, Karl had been "thrown out" of his apartment by his wife and they were divorced.

[21] Gustav Manker, the man to whom Mandy was engaged and subsequently married.

Chapter 11: A New Homeland for Our Life

[From Liese's letter to Steffi, dated August 22, 1938]:

I want to make you aware of the following which you perhaps do not know or to which you are not paying much attention. From the 1st of September all Austrian passports are invalid, same for Aryans and Jews. That means that everyone who has an Austrian passport must turn it in and get a German one. Now that, as you know, needs to be done in person and with you there, [that] is the extra added complication of your residence: there is no doubt that you need a new passport. The question is if you will get one in Stuttgart. I believe so, but in order to do that you will need your old passport as well as a residency certificate from Vienna, which Mama must obtain for you. Another difficult chapter is the immigration which I already wrote about in the last letter. This is, unfortunately, not yet of pressing importance, but still you have to have it because the regulations are becoming increasingly stricter. I know very well that you do not have time now before the examination and perhaps will even be angry about such demands, but I assure you that it is not a "sudden idea" of mine, but rather a necessity which must be taken care of as soon as possible. Aside from that, it is unclear if you need to obtain the immigration permission from here and Stgt and for that reason you need to clarify these things before the vacation (fine!), what kind of immigration is necessary so that you will not have to return to Vienna again, especially for some sort of stamp. Inquire please in a roundabout way at the police commission or at the passport place, however it was called in the old *Reich*:

1) If one would make out a passport for you in Stuttgart and what sort of documents you will need for that (that is, if perhaps the registration form which Mama still has, is adequate, or do you need to have a proof of police registration which will certainly be valid for 1 week). Whether you mention either Vienna or Stgt as your residence depends very much on the information in number 2.

2) Please inquire if they will give you the immigration from there since you will be emigrating from Stgt, then do choose (1.) tax (2.) military without hesitation. I am doubtful of that, but it might be possible. If yes, then you will certainly need various things from Vienna, which you then would have to take care of here. As for the needed military certificate of good conduct, as to your being a complete Jew, you should be able to obtain that there, it is also just a question of if you are authorized at the local *Wehrkommando* which would give you the certificate of the proof from the Jewish Community Center. Now this becomes more difficult because they are only prepared for the time that there is peace.

I myself was at Wehrgasse today to inquire about everything even though it depends more on the officials there; since I did not like to line up at night, I was not seen. So you will just have to take the time to inquire about this because it certainly is not a good idea to let the passport expire. If you answer quickly, then you could have the old passport (expr. certif.) by the end of the week. I could actually send it to you now, but will rather wait for your opinion. Also write me immediately about the information on the immigration so that as many of the necessary things can be taken care of here without you actually being here.

Something else: you will need a police registration certificate if you come to Vienna, in any case, do not forget to obtain it before your emigration. But there is time for that; I just happened to think of this.

You will probably make fun of my "farsightedness" and will be angry or will be wondering (depends on which mood you are in when you read the letter), but if Mama and I should not be here anymore when you have your immigration, you will surely not want to come to Vienna extra just for one imprint, right? Aside from that, such a joy does cost money. Today I was finally at the DDLS. You did get the right information, namely that the Donau only leaves from Paan. That really has no purpose, is possibly more expensive since there would be a railroad tariff because of the distance and takes longer. See that you get the discount on the train, if not, take the vacation ticket with return, soonest after 7 days (30% discount). Also about making the recording, I inquired at Trude's, where I was last night. For example, 1 side (4 minutes) cost about S 10.- a year ago. She also gave me an address. They are leaving at the beginning of September for L'n.

Yesterday I was invited to the Monday friends, Fischl, with HeHa in Klosterneuburg. In the morning I lay down there in the grass (naturally in the shade). In the afternoon there was a walk in the big garden, aside from that, there was a thunderstorm. From this you can see that I am once again well, just tired from the fever I guess, but the same thing would have happened if I had been lying in bed until I recovered.

Papa is standing well, he is thin, but looks quite well. From all the lying down, he has [lost] so much muscle that if one, for example, touches his calf, one feels only skin. Because of that when he stood up for the first time he actually had muscle pain. As of Friday he is allowed to walk with crutches and maybe already Sunday he can actually walk in the street, if he has enough strength. Finally this unlucky, lengthy thing is coming to a happy ending!

Your Mama is doing well, she is so looking forward to your coming that she is taking many other things much easier, such as the move and the departure. What did you mean when you said that she should write to England from Vienna? Where? One can write to the Jewish Woburnhouse [sic], and I will actually do that, or mail an advertisement, which apparently should have better results, but costs RM5.-.

Liese added that Grete Deutsch, the sister of Liese's brother-in-law Hans Deutsch, apparently already had her affidavit and Liese acknowledged that it would be easier to procure an affidavit if someone from the family were already over there.

On August 24, 1938, Tante Rosa wrote to Steffi to tell him that Liese was the first to call her on her birthday and how nice it was of her and him to have thought of her. "I was very moved, especially at this difficult time, she said, adding: "Anna [the cook] is our only luxury and that has to stop." They had financial difficulties and, in addition, Tante Rosa complained that Bertha did not tell her anything.

Steffi's explanation to Liese for continuing his course was

> ...that I cannot emigrate in the foreseeable future and it gives me a regular occupation and also an opportunity to develop myself, especially from the physical aspect which I could use abroad.... Herr David said I should assume that Dr. R. would also have you if you came from England and one should get out as quickly as possible and as soon as the opportunity arises.

Apparently my father felt conflicted because on the one hand, he wanted to finish the course, but on the other hand, he wrote: "I do not want to be in a bad situation here and would prefer to be out of here already, preferably with you." Next, he wrote that he went to inquire about the passport. For Jews, he wrote, the Passport Office was in the Police Academy and aside from the certificate of domicile, he needed a birth certificate and certificate of good conduct from Vienna. He wrote that he would try his luck to get it even though he had only been in Stuttgart less than one year. The letter ends with a lonely expression of love:

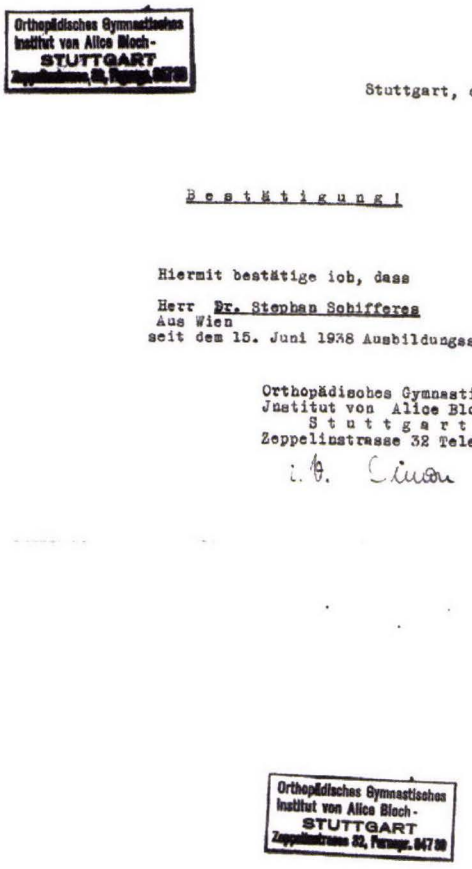
> To make the end less short, I once again have to assure you how much I love you. You know it and all our outings, walks, and benches remain unforgotten, I long for you so much and would like the Vienna weeks to complete the Stuttgart love and to soon have a new homeland for our life.

On August 27, 1938, Liese wrote to Steffi:

> I never thought that you are "moody," that you know very well and if I write mood in my letter, that was surely meant as disposition. Actually I only wrote this really to excuse myself, but not while I am (unfortunately without any success) trying to work out our thing, but rather because I was fearful that I made you rebellious. I also know that the latter is not the case because you are much too quiet and the only excuse for such a letter is that "when the heart is full, then the mouth overflows."

She continued:

> You spoke of a certificate of good conduct from the Viennese Passport office in your letter and neither I nor other people could express an opinion as to what is meant. Here there are, as far as I know, just mil.[itary] and tax certificates, but I will inquire and ask that you also find out more about it. Then you do not write if you want your passport, maybe it would be adequate evidence for the certificate. In any case, I cannot urge you enough to take care of this matter as quickly as possible in Stuttgart because there are many invaluable advantages in it for the journey. Try to get a military certificate as soon as possible. If that should not work from there, then write immediately so we can take care of it here. —The handing out of immigration permission is also not more actual since the new passports—no, I am mistaken, nothing has changed, but it only means that one should certainly only be able to leave if one has both certificates. This would not be indicated in the passport, but one must show it to the group.


Orthopädisches Gymnastisches Institut von Alice Bloch- STUTTGART

Stuttgart, den 26. August 1938

Bestätigung!

Hiermit bestätige ich, dass

Herr Dr. Stephan Schifferes
Aus Wien
seit dem 15. Juni 1938 Ausbildungsschüler des Institutes ist.

Orthopädisches Gymnastisches
Institut von Alice Bloch
Stuttgart
Zeppelinstrasse 32 Telef. 647 39
i. V.

Orthopädisches Gymnastisches Institut von Alice Bloch- STUTTGART

Certificate stating that Dr. Stephan Schifferes had been enrolled in the *Orthopädisches Gymnastisches Institut von Alice Bloch* as of June 15, 1938

Liese was also concerned about bureaucratic matters:

> What did I want to ask you: Do you know when I turned in the form for the American quota? That determines when I will be notified if the affidavit is adequate or not. You turned it in at the hospital, right? Perhaps you remember the date. I am happy, by the way, that we both came to the same conclusion independently about England. I only wrote very little about it because I did not want to influence you in any way. Unfortunately Trude's letter was just a shot fired in the air because until now I do not know anything new about it. I wrote to Jane Smith, who is handling it, about Mama.
>
> Yesterday I was with Kurt König for the last time, that is the very young, but serious and nice colleague about whom I told you. —He is going to *Erez* and from there to Australia after his re-education. It is so strange when one sees people for the last time, even if one was just a bit friendly with them.

As a postscript Liese wrote:

> We got nice silver dessert silverware for 6 people from my piano teacher.[22]

[22] Luise Bermann, Strauss family friend and Hede and Liese's piano teacher, born June 7, 1866, was deported from Vienna to Theresienstadt on July 22, 1942, and murdered there on November 2, 1942 [www.doew.at/cgi-bin/shoah/shoah.pl].

TUTTLEMAN LIBRARY OF GRATZ COLLEGE
Melrose Park, PA 19027

Chapter 12: Counting the Days

Bertha was still conflicted about where she should go to live. In her letter dated August 29, 1938, she wrote Steffi about her expenses and her need to find work. She said that Karl had been invited to Tante Rosa's but was spending more time with her (Bertha).

> With that, I must immediately remark that your only theme always has to do with Tante Rosa and Onkel Dori and you do not tell me anything at all about you. Because you always speak about the same thing, I must always answer the same thing. I never complained about Tante Rosa, even though she sometimes speaks nonsense, she always gives me as much as she can and for that I am also very thankful. But she simply cannot give me more and I also must live. Because, as I have told you before, I have other expenses other than just food: shoes, stamps for letters, stamps for the authorities. Even the meal at noon, which I always get from Tante Rosa, is not sufficient for me for the whole day. You realize yourself that I must earn and also want to. Stop it already that I should stay with Tante Rosa. I only informed you how unpleasant it can be there at times and do not take it so tragically, otherwise I would not be going there every day. That one is more sensitive when one is always the "taker" is surely understandable to you.
>
> Concerning Karl, he has, as you can see from his lines, landed at my place, despite the fact that he is always invited to Tante Rosa, but Onkel Dori and Tante Rosa can take him just for a few hours, but he comes to me for longer periods. Actually he only slept here with me for one night, but ate there two days. So, you see that I am not so bad to him and he can always ask me for something, if he needs to. You surely realize that he is always naturally thankful for it. Tante Gisi has not been in touch at all. I learned from Robert and Ida Weiss that Mor. Sch.[iller] will already be traveling to his sister-in-law this Thursday. You perhaps already know from Liese that Fritz Weiniger has been very ill[23] for three months.
>
> Karl is working things out with Silving, (you surely know him from the radio), concerning something in [illegible, possibly Bizerte, Tunisia]. Hopefully it will work out or something similar before he has to go through the same disappointment with his wife as he did with his daughter. He looks very bad and actually has not much energy. He is really a poor fellow who is showing a remarkable spirit of sacrifice. He was not evicted from the apartment, as he had feared.

On August 30, 1938, Steffi wrote Liese: "Karl's situation is sad, but it was predictable because of the worshipping of the child and the Manker Family."[24] Seemingly, the general family situation was deteriorating. Tante Rosa wrote Steffi: "We are all stuck with many worries and I feel bad that we are not younger so that we could overcome these things more energetically."

Tante Rosa wrote to Steffi [August 30, 1938] saying that his mother was complaining to her about him writing too little about himself "...and despite all the worries, you are the main thing." Then, the next day she wrote again that Tante Gisi was the only one who was thinking straight and Steffi should not say anything to his mother about the money that Tante Gisi sent him. "Mama

---

[23] Meaning, in a concentration camp.

[24] Mandy, the younger, was apparently engaged to Gustav Manker at the time.

has many unpleasant things happening with the apartment and is in a very anxious mood, therefore you should write to calm her down. Hopefully everything will work out."

On August 31, 1938, Liese wrote on the train back to Vienna, after a ten-day visit with Steffi in Stuttgart: "I am already curious to see what awaits me at home, hopefully just good things." She added, "Our parting was fast, but not without pain." Little did she know the pain awaiting her during her next visit to Stuttgart in November.

And Steffi, the eternal "poet," composed the following poem in English for Liese on a scrap of paper:

1) My beloved and dearest sweetheart thou
Again I try a poem now
To show you how I think of you
and that my love is always true.

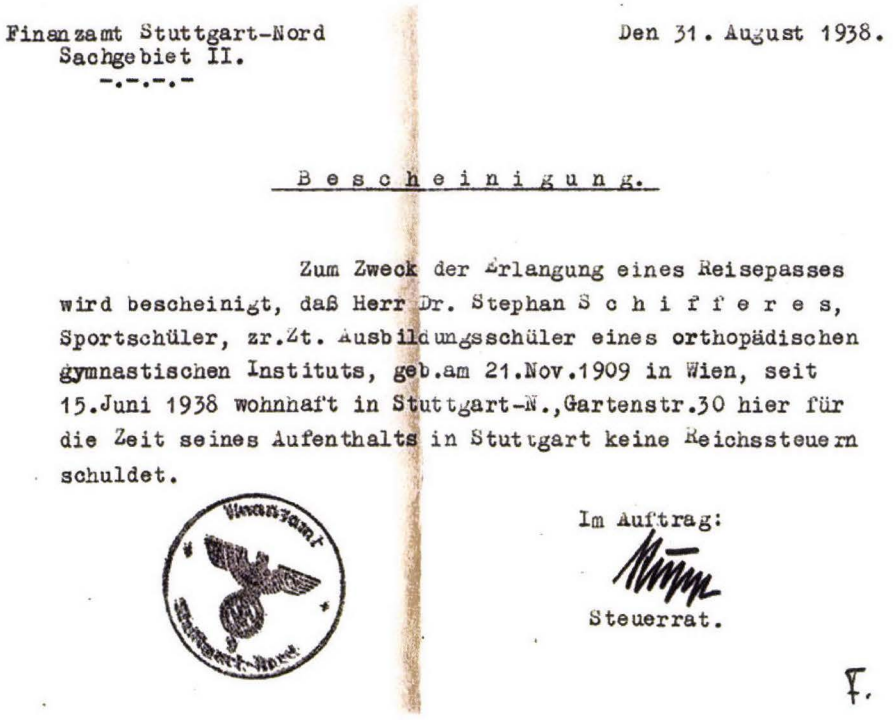
2) Indeed we got some heavy blows
but as for me my great love grows
Therefore I wont [sic] complain my fate
for we come together at any rate.

3) Confide in me like I in you
And hope the days becoming few
which cruelly none separate
a loving pair that wants to mate.

4) I am indebted to you for your pain
which will be rewarded by love in main
and you shall be for all my life
my only sweetest beloved wife.

Upon Liese's return to Vienna, she wrote [September 1, 1938]:

> Dearest Steffi,
>
> I thought that the package did not even arrive because it should have gotten there much sooner. Wasn't the *Gugelhupf* [delicious Viennese cake] hard as a rock? I did not think that the *Krapferln* [Viennese cookies] would break, they must have really had a hard shock. Were the peaches still green or did they ripen during the trip there? I intentionally did not send ripe ones. Enjoy everything!



Finanzamt Stuttgart-Nord
Sachgebiet II.
-.-.-.-

Den 31. August 1938.

Bescheinigung.

Zum Zweck der Erlangung eines Reisepasses wird bescheinigt, daß Herr Dr. Stephan Schifferes, Sportschüler, zr.Zt. Ausbildungsschüler eines orthopädischen gymnastischen Instituts, geb.am 21.Nov.1909 in Wien, seit 15.Juni 1938 wohnhaft in Stuttgart-N.,Gartenstr.30 hier für die Zeit seines Aufenthalts in Stuttgart keine Reichssteuern schuldet.

Im Auftrag:

Steuerrat.

Certificate stating that Dr. Stephan Schifferes was not obligated to pay the *Reichssteuer* (Reichs Taxes) during his stay in Stuttgart

Liese also expressed her disappointment that Steffi had registered so late for the American quota. She continued:

> This date for turning things in is necessary in order to receive the date for the summons to the Consulate and the medical examination. I had hoped that I had turned things in during April (I have no particular reference point), then I would be summoned pretty soon and once one is that far, and the affidavit is deemed adequate by the Consul, then one can leave within 1 week. But I want nothing more than to be able to begin in October. There seem to be the same ordinances for passports as there were in the old *Reich*. For that reason I will not eliminate my passport now because otherwise I would have to leave within 3 weeks (apparently!). Your passport business is rather complicated! I think you should try to straighten things out in Vienna; I will still inquire about what you need from Stuttgart, I believe nothing. You requested to leave when I got back and I do not think that one will give a change of address, especially since you will be registered again in Vienna, but it will just be a vacation. But I would like to know that the military service certificate is taken care of here and could do it because of your birth certificate, too. Either have a copy made, but I think that you could also send the original.—you really will not need the welfare certificate, it is a waste of money.

Liese added a health update:

> My father is doing quite well; he is limping along and in 10 days will be x-rayed once again. It seems that everything is healing well (so said Prof. Oppoltner from the emergency station who was there with him the other day). When he does not need the crutches anymore, then he will be able to go to the office again.

> You are right, because of all the passport things, we hardly write about ourselves. Now, as far as me, everything has remained pretty much the same, 2 female students in Josefstadt who stopped in August are beginning again so I have my same schedule, but have added Korolanyi. Hanni is supposed to leave any day now, the next person going to L'don is taking her along. Aside from the lessons I do not get to do very much, I am at home very little for I have many errands to take care of, the other day I sorted stamps, a boring job. Today I learned how to make *Apfelstrudel* at Mother Deutsch's,[25] it was even edible (apparently it was even good). Saturday we went on an outing (HeHa and Onkel Alfred) and got terribly rained on. We marched from 3–7 p.m. in the rain and arrived home like drowned mice.

Liese continued:

> Why did you not send the English book directly to Mama? Mama is studying diligently and has greatly improved her pronunciation. I would really have liked to give Mama my London position, but this woman is looking for a young girl, aside from that, the work was too hard. Jane Smith is the co-worker of Trude. She is supposed to be coming to Vienna and I hope to speak to her about Mama. One could advertise, but the time that will elapse between the ad appearing in the newspaper and the arrival of the answer will be very great, so the possibility for finding something like that is minimal. That has to occur from L'n.

Bertha wrote [September 2, 1938]: "...you are worrying much too much about me. Rather think of yourself and that you come to Vienna in good health. Unfortunately the reunion will not last, but I am already counting the days until I have my fine good boy here. I am already curious how you look." She then reassured him that she still had money and added: "... [I am] also eating enough since I am thinking of my future position so that I do not look bad and therefore too old." Tante Gisi had sent the money that she owed Bertha to Steffi, as Bertha had asked her to do. Meanwhile, Bertha secretly hoped that Tante Rosa, knowing that Steffi did not have enough money for the trip, would send him some.

Then, she talked about Liese coming to dinner twice a week, after Liese's lesson with Dr. Korolanyi, and Bertha was always happy to see her. Liese was helping Bertha with her English accent. Fritz Weiniger, Steffi's friend, was "still not well" and was in a "German hospital" [meaning that he was in a concentration camp in Germany]. Tante Rosa, she said, had "...worries about their existence" because of Herr O.[26] and Karl, who luckily could still stay in his apartment [on Beheimgasse].

Bertha also wrote that she had neither a passport nor the pictures for a passport. "The pictures that Dr. K. promised are so bad that I do not want to send them to you because I myself think that I will not look like that for another twenty years." For the passport she needed five photos. Then she wrote about the tailor, named Duda, and having Steffi's jacket fixed and the suit cleaned "...so it would not be eaten up by moths." Then, she said she would go to the glass factory to see if she could order replacements of the missing glasses: "So do not worry, I have enough money. I wrote you exactly what I received and I have not had larger expenses recently."

---

[25] Elsbeth/Ella Deutsch, Hede's mother-in-law.

[26] A well-known Viennese baker named Schamburek bought the Allina'shouse on Khevenhüllerstrasse, but because he owned too many "Jewish" houses, a Herr Opitz acted as his "agent."

If Bertha had needed more money, then Tante Rosa would surely have given her some, as long as Bertha was still in Vienna. Then, immediately, there was a change of topic within the same paragraph:

> About the nightshirts, I do not think you have all of them with you and in winter you are likely to wear pajamas. Can I prepare something for you for when you come to Vienna, I mean so that you do not have to spend all your time at various departments. Since today there has been sunny weather, after it poured on Sunday. It was truly a deluge."
>
> Yes, just imagine, Karl said that if he had only gotten money from his boss, he would have immediately sent it for your trip. Seppi H.[uber] is taking a course to be an optician. The family goes to Tante Rosa every Sunday and are happy to be able to spend a few hours in the good air.[27]



Above and below, Steffi Training in Stuttgart, September 1938



[27] Tante Rosa's house was on the outskirts of Vienna, far from the "madding crowd."

Chapter 13: Karl Schifferes

(Written by Stephan Shiffers in 2003)

Karl Schifferes was born in Vienna on June 22, 1894. He was the fifth child of the marriage between Leopold Schifferes and his wife Hermine, née Jeiteles. Shortly after his birth, his mother, who had already had six births, died. During this time many women died after childbirth (childbirth fever); she must have had, as my mother, Bertha assumed, a weak heart. The family of my two grandfathers (Leopold and Samuel) lived in the same house on Rembrandtstrasse, so Samuel's wife, Ottilie, took the baby upstairs, to the top floor and cared for him. She had a bit of help from her fourteen siblings and two grown daughters (Tante Rosa Allina and Tante Malwine Pollak).

After grandfather Samuel's death (1897) my father, Julius, who had just completed his one year of army service, which he had to do after completing the *Gymnasium*, worked in the family business (*Brüder Schifferes*). Naturally Karl's father (Leopold) saw that he completed middle school so that he could join the service.

The World War began in 1914 and Karl was enlisted as an Ensign and served as Lieutenant in a Supply Regiment (Train) on the Isonzo Front for four years, until the end of the war in 1918. The young Lieutenant fell in love with a Miss Pieringer, who was working at the War Ministry towards the end of the war. To no avail Moma,[28] being the nine-year-older sister, tried to convince him not to marry. She found Mandy and explained to her that he had neither a profession nor an income nor a place to live. As Moma reported, Mandy was rude to her and Moma never spoke to her again.

After the defeat the economic conditions in the very small part of Austria that remained were more than hopeless and therefore, through no fault of his own Karl was unable to find a job with a steady income. Though he did play cello in chamber music with his much older cousin Julius Schifferes (my father) and then later for pay with various groups, including jazz and even taught himself [how to play] the banjo. However he was never able to have a steady income and there were many weeks without work, especially after the birth of his daughter Mandy (1920), when he had to ask for financial help from Tante Rosa, Moma, Ernst, and probably also his older brothers. Moma and Ernst never had anything to do with Karl's wife, Mandy.

In the year 1928 his brother Ernst was able to get him a job at the silverware factory Hacker, where I also did bookkeeping for a year. The old clients had visits from the old salesmen and it was practically impossible for Karl to get new clients. So he lived from hand to mouth with his wife and child on Beheimgasse until the Nazi times until his wife, as Moma surmised, more or less threw him out, that is, she convinced him to cross over the border illegally and said she would come later. So he arrived in Paris, always with the hope of finding work in a music group, but was sent to the Provinces by the French and was then transported to the East, where the Nazis murdered him.--1942.

[28] Moma was Bertha Schifferes, Karl's only sister.

From October 26, 1914, until March 31, 1919, Karl did his military service. It is unclear where he worked immediately after his release from the military. On October 7, 1918, Karl married Maria Pieringer, whose nickname was Mandy. There was much objection on the part of the whole Schifferes family because Karl had no job and no prospect of earning money. Their only child, Marianne [also called Mandy] Schifferes was born in 1920.

Here is a list of some of the places he was employed:

- 23 June 1920–31 October 1922: Caro & Jellinek Shipping, 1. Deutschmeisterplatz No. 4/16
- 16 March 1923–2 June 1923: 'Praga', Int'l Shipping Company, Vienna, IV. Margarethenstr. 1
- 22 June 1924–15 November 1924: Allg. Finanzierungs Co., I. Wipplingerstrsse 1
- 8 December 1924–21 May 1925: Eilgut Int'l Shipping, VI. Apollogasse 1
- 23 July 1929–31 August 1929: Conditorei Zauner in Bad Ischl as cellist.
- 1 July 1930–June 1938: Moritz Hacker Silver Co., I. Operngasse 2

From the *Versicherungskasse* (Insurance Records) dated June 20, 1929, one could see that Karl worked as a cellist in cafés in various locations in Germany:

- Simplizissimus, Köln,1.I.1928-29.II.28
- Palais de danse, Düsseldorf, 1.III.1928-12.V.28
- "Pressa" Hans Harke, Köln, 13.V.28-31.VII.28
- "Gross-Köln," Köln, 1.VIII.28-31.VIII.28
- Caffee Bauer, Frankfurt am Main, 1.IX.28-31.X.28

Already in July 1938, Karl wrote to Steffi, who was enrolled in the sports school in Stuttgart, that he was grateful for Steffi trying to find him a position as a cellist. Karl wrote that somehow he had to earn money and going back to playing cello after an eight-year lapse seemed like the only option. Furthermore, he wrote, he also played banjo and guitar. Or perhaps Steffi could find him a job at a Jewish firm. It would be fine if the earnings would be just enough for him. "It would be nice if we were together."

On January 7, 1939, Karl wrote Steffi how everyone in the group had passports but Silving, who should be getting his in the next few days. In the meantime, Karl was waiting for a work contract for Bizerte, Tunisia. Apparently the local French Consulate was giving only Aryans passports. The non-Aryans must take care of that in Paris. Then Karl asked if he could go to England with Steffi "...in order to wait the thing out there, since I am losing my nerve. As I said, I would like to remain in England only a short time."

In an undated letter from Paris to his ex-wife, Mandy, Karl described his life in Paris. He wrote about the mail coming five times a week and how it was put in a mailbox by the *portier* and then distributed. Every day the place was cleaned up by a woman. He attempted to describe the strange Alsatien German accent of a family staying there with them. And then, returning to the reality of the situation, he wrote:

> With God's help and your thoughts which remain with me, everything will be good for us. For I do hope that the time will come that we will be united. You are also thinking the same? Are you not? Because one cannot forget 20 years and I always loved you and also love you now. I often think about how I wrote you from the field, that was also a similar thing, then we found one another. Now it will also be the same. But this time I am laying a strong foundation. I trust in

> God and you. But the main thing is take care of yourself and see that you regain your full health ... Trust in me again!

In March 1939 Karl was still living in Paris and wrote that he went to see his friend Wildmann at Schmeichler and Associates. They were all overjoyed to see him, he wrote, and Wildmann told him that he was living too expensively and got him a room in the same hotel where all of them were staying,

> ...5th floor, there I am paying only 30 Fr—I moved already that evening. So I am now living: Paris 3e, 19 Rue de Vertus. So please send the suitcase there. Do not send food... [because he had to pay duty on what had been sent earlier].
>
> What Paris is, you just cannot imagine if you have not seen it yourself, just the Metro alone (subway) is a thing by itself, for 1 Fr. 30 centimes you can travel as far as you want with a transfer, when the train is loaded, the door where the people go in closes by itself and when one gets on, the doors of the train where one went in close automatically. There is a huge crowd at midday so that one is afraid and anxious, but then it goes so quietly, without muss or fuss. The city itself is unbelievably huge. The traffic on the equivalent of Neubaustrasse outdoes the traffic at noon-time at the Vienna Opera by a lot. Cars go in the 2nd and 3rd lane, in between the bicycles and motorcycles. There is a discipline for crossing the street which I do not understand. If a child wants to cross the street, the policeman immediately stops the traffic and takes the child, if it is a little one, across [the street] himself. We were also told not to speak German on the street. Lighters must be stamped. For example, I am not allowed to light someone's cigarette on the street with my lighter, first I must light the cigarette and give him a light from that. —Grocery stores here are worth seeing. There is butter, meat arranged so nicely, fish, vegetables, whatever your heart desires in vast quantities. Fruit from the roughest to the finest, everything arranged beautifully and tastefully. Plates for every kind of dish, absolutely ideal. On the main streets, beautiful stores, gorgeous displays, beautiful toiletries, suits. There are hundreds of Kärtnerstrassen[29] and they are actually only side streets. I have not even seen the local main streets.

And, Karl wrote, he already spoke French "quite gallantly."

Around this time Mandy the younger was engaged to an older man named Gustav Manker. In his letter dated April 20, 1939, Karl questioned his daughter about Manker's intention of marrying her and asked his ex-wife to arrange things with Frau Manker. "Times have changed and you must also change and use different methods." Then Karl remarked how the situation seemed to be making Mandy the elder nervous.

Many of Karl's letters expressed the hope of emigration, whether to Tunisia with the conductor Silving, or with a Viennese refugee conductor wanting to form a symphony orchestra

> ...though it will take some time, but we could have full rights for permission to stay. Furthermore, we are supposed to play on 26 May [1939] under the auspices of the local organization and we will be set up with a manager who wants to travel to America with a dance group and orchestra. Things are happening. Our instruments were given to us so we should be getting them in the next few days.

[29] Kärtnerstrasse is the main, elegant shopping street in the heart of Vienna.

Karl wrote the following to his ex-wife from Amiens [April 26, 1939]:

> I swear to you that I still have not touched a woman and have not even thought about doing it because I still love you as before, as if it were yesterday, I also want to do everything that you want and hope that we will once again be happy …I also do not tell anyone unnecessary things, but you cannot assume that I do not speak of you and Mädi with others [and tell them] how much I love you and Mädi. Am I not permitted? Other things are not said to others.

As of May 15, 1939, Karl's address was: Amiens, Somme, 41 rue de l'Aventure. From there he wrote how the committee took care of them and how he did not want to be sitting around coffee houses because "...that makes bad blood." Before Karl left Paris he went to the committee and got a new suit and raincoat, which was "...actually not new, but is good." While at the committee Karl had to give information and showed Mädi's[30] picture "...which was passed around and was admired." Karl received 80 Fr from the committee from which he spent "...1.50 on lunch, 65 Fr for a room, 120/month 60/person is not a lot, but we will eventually have to save as much as we can."

On June 1, 1939, Karl wrote to his daughter from Paris and told her how he was playing with Weininger (pianist and accordionist) three times a week at a café in Amiens.[31] For that he received 50 Francs, playing from 10 p.m. until 2:30 a.m. At 8 p.m. he had supper in the coffee house: soup, excellent meat with good fruit or strawberries, vegetable salad and cheese, dessert and 1/2 liter wine. The price for guests was 22 F. Then there was a two-hour break to recover from the eating. Once the playing began, he would get a drink from the bar every hour and a half, whatever he wanted, but would only drink lemonade. On Monday evening, because it was a holiday, he would also play. A Hungarian who lived in England was there and Karl got a bottle of Sekt and they earned an extra 27 F per person.

Karl wrote about Mary Kohn, who was his cousin Fritz's [Allina] wife for a short time. Mary was writing Karl letters and asking for suggestions for legal ways to get out of Vienna. At this point in time, it was called Vienna, Germany, as seen by the postmarks on various envelopes. But Karl wrote his ex-wife that Mary was "...not doing anything about it, otherwise she would have already done something." He added: "Regarding Rosa, I am not surprised for she is unfortunately living on the moon." Then Karl thanked Mandy for her efforts and said he would "not bother" her anymore. Karl complained about Karli [Karl Pieringer, his brother-in-law], who had not written. Apparently the brother-in-law was busy and at the time was a new bridegroom and an "*Obermacher*" [big shot]. Karl wrote: "In the evening, when I think that people whom we knew for so long forget so quickly, it hurts so bitterly." Then he added:

> It would be the nicest day for me if I could help you financially, so God willing, you will not have to wait long.... And now, concerning us. It pleases me no end that you write me so nicely and well. You are still my beloved little wife and golden child. I am so happy with your words. You are right, we belong together even if it takes a long time and this gives me renewed desire to live, only to work for you. I want to always tell you everything so that you are always up-to-date and we both and our child will not... [Letter ends abruptly.]

---

[30] *Mädi* is a term of endearment, an abbreviation of the German word, *Mäderl*, which means girl. Apparently Karl sometimes referred to his daughter, Mandy, this way, since his ex-wife was also called Mandy.

[31] At this point he was apparently living in Paris and traveling to Amiens to perform.

In another [undated] letter, Karl wrote that since the previous day, he was no longer getting money from the committee.

> I gave it up voluntarily, as did the others; the president of the committee was happy about it because unfortunately there are cases here where people worked and received support at the same time. This is dishonest and they were reported, so I can count on receiving support again if I really need it.

Indeed, Karl had 150 Fr. and continued to play. With that money, he bought:

> ...a tie and a collar for 6 Fr, shaving soap 1 Fr, *Eau de Cologne* Fr 2.50, everything is so cheap here. 20 Fr for strings. Just the trip to Amiens is expensive, e.g., car, porter, and car in Amiens. I get lunch at the *comité* because I am alone, married people must cook for themselves, but for 1 Fr 50 centimes I cannot buy as much as what is given.

Karl ended the letter by asking his ex-wife "...to say hello to Pötzleinsdorf[32] and everyone who asks about me."

As Karl was trying to survive in Paris by playing "gigs," as they are called by professional musicians, his daughter, who was still in Vienna, was beginning a career as an actress. In his letter from April 2, 1939, he asked her for the picture that appeared in the newspaper: "Am already looking forward to it." He also wrote that he had received another letter from Mary Kohn, Fritz Allina's wife, asking Karl to inquire about the possible countries to which she could emigrate with money. Karl went to the Consulate and reported "Chile" to her, "...that is, she has to send an application here in Spanish!" Apparently Mary was doing this behind everyone's back, so Karl wrote his ex-wife that she should not tell Mary that she knew anything about her inquiry. So great was the secrecy that Mary even asked Karl not to send the answer to Pötzleinsdorf, where the Allinas lived.

In 1968, when my father returned to Vienna for the first time for the 40th reunion of his high school class, he and I met Mandy at Tante Rosa's house, which he had inherited from Tante Rosa. It was definitely a trip down memory lane for Mandy and Steffi. I remember distinctly Mandy showing us papers that the Nazis "made" her mother sign, stating that she only knew Karl some seven months before they were married and only then did she realize that he was different because of his race. So she divorced him, probably to save her life and the life of her child, who, according to the Nuremberg laws, was a *Mischling* [mixed race].

> As defined by the Nuremberg laws in 1935, a Jew was somebody who had at least three Jewish grandparents—regardless of religious affiliation or self-identification. The latter did matter for people with two Jewish grandparents: if they belonged to the Jewish religion or were married to Jews, they were classified as Jewish; if neither, they were considered *Mischling* of the first degree. Somebody with only one Jewish grandparent was classified as a *Mischling* of the second degree. [R. Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 150ff]

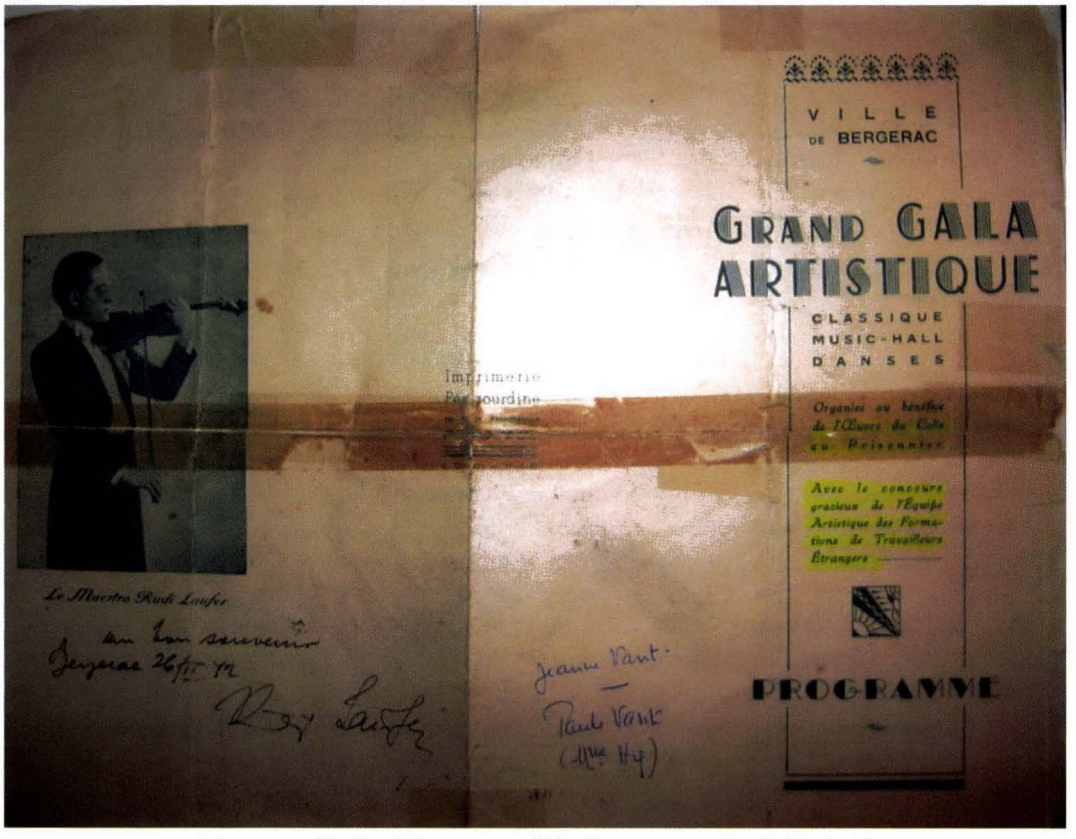
Karl ended up in Paris, hoping that the conductor Silving would be able to procure papers to take an orchestra to Tunisia. This never materialized. It is unclear exactly when Karl ended up in Soudeilles, France. There he was part of the *Groupe Transit Étranger* (GTE). We recently found

[32] Pötzleinsdorf was the neighborhood where his family lived, including cousin Rosa and sister Bertha.

historical articles written by an Israeli woman who was born in France, Dr. Renée Poznanski, who discussed in great detail the life in the camps. In addition, two French people, a married couple, Paul Estrade and his wife, Mouny Szwarckopf-Estrade, who were from Soudeilles, have written a book in French about the camps, including a list of people who were there.

Through my contact with the publisher, I was finally able to get a letter to the Estrades, who were extremely interested in learning more about Karl Schifferes, my great-uncle, and his family. I sent them photos and copies of letters that Karl had written from various places in France. The Estrades were kind enough to put me in touch with Paule and Jeanne Vant, two sisters who actually knew Karl when he was part of the GTE Corrèze. In the autumn of 2006 I wrote the Vant sisters a letter, explaining who I was and my connection to Karl and asking them about him and the other refugees who were in the camp. I was moved practically to tears when I opened their reply[33] and found a copy of an autographed program of a concert that took place April 26, 1942, which they had included. There in front of me was Karl's signature: "Bon souvenir, Schifferes Charles." In that particular program Karl had performed "*Le Cygne*" and "*Traümerei.*"

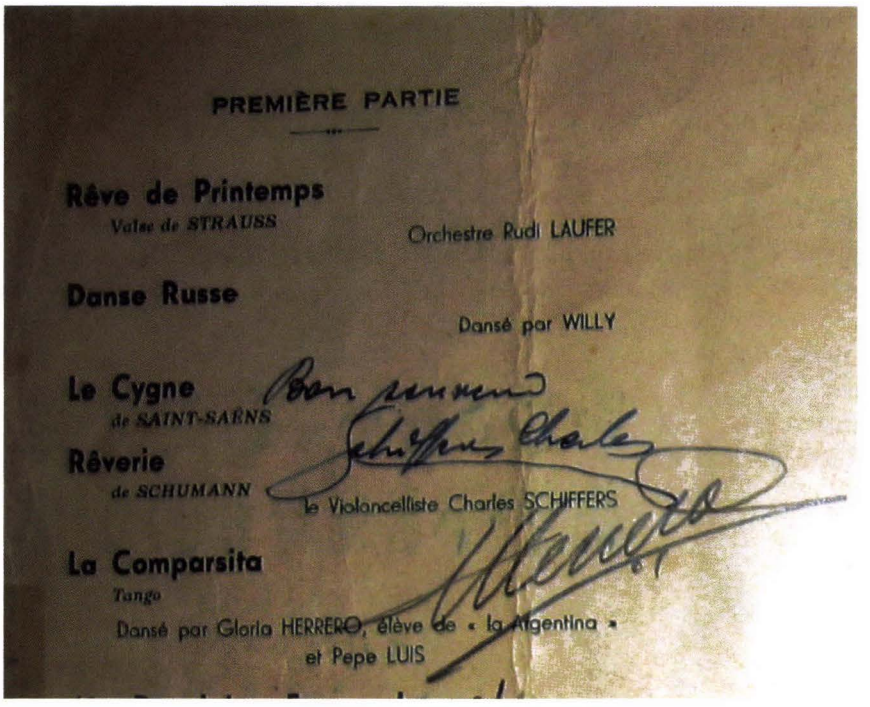
Karl had the unfortunate distinction of being among the first three Viennese musicians (with Frederick Steissel and Rudolf Laufer) to be deported from Drancy to Auschwitz[34] on August 26, 1942.



(above and below) Program of Karl's concert, April 26, 1942

[33] See Appendix B, Estrade Letters.

[34] Deportation with Transport 24 from Drancy, France, to Auschwitz on 26 August 1942 (www.doew.at/cgi-bin/shoah/shoah.pl).



"Bon souvenir, Schifferes Charles"

THE "TWELVE" FROM CORRÈZE

The Estrades' book includes the following description.

> The collusion in Austria of the conservative right and the extreme Fascist right necessarily brings us back to 1938, to the annexation of this country by the German Reich, to the persecution and exile of the anti-Nazis, to the forced departure of three-fourths of the 200,000 Austrian Jews. One must remember that in France these immigrants—who were considered suspect and undesirable at the end of the III Republic and even more so under the Vichy government—were formed into brigades of groups of foreign workers (GTE) from 1940 until 1944, alongside of thousands of other foreigners (Spanish, German, Polish, Czech, etc.).
>
> During historical research devoted to one of these GTE ("Un camps de juifs oublié: Soudeilles, 1941-1942. Treignac, Corrèze, Éditions les Monédières, 1999), we could ascertain that the workers of Austrian nationality—whom the Vichy authorities were intent on identifying as ex-Austrians—were systematically eliminated. They were not forgiven for being Jewish and anti-Fascists. The first two convoys of deported Jews formed in Égletons, in Corrèze, in the non-occupied zone, on the 23 and 27 of August 1942, included, from the GTE de Soudeilles, 12 [who] were Austrians among the 52 "leavers" headed for Drancy, then Auschwitz.
>
> Among these "twelve," were three renowned musicians who were part of the artistic group of the GTE: the violinist and conductor Rudolf Laufer, the cellist of

the Vienna Opera, Carl Schifferes,[35] the pianist from the Vienna Radio, Frédéric Steissel... In this way the opposition and the Austrian intelligentsia were exterminated. In Austria there is not one single monument, not one plaque commemorating the existence and the martyrdom of these men. A scandal then. And today, disturbing. We will see where this leads...[36]

SCHIFFERES, Carl or Charles. Born 22-VI-1894 in Vienna. Austrian. Musician, cellist in the Vienna Opera. Married to a Catholic, divorced automatically at the entry of the Germans into Vienna, one child. Taken into the 665th under the number 665.181, having come from the 313th. Sent to the singers of Colombier (Lamazière Basse). Presented to the group on 1-I-1942. Participated in the artistic team of TE, and then placed into the 653th (Égletons) beginning 26-I-1942. Took part in concerts, shows, and excursions of the group. Deported from Auchères on 23-VIII-1942 and to Drancy with the destination of Auschwitz on 26-VIII-1942.[37]



The group leader and one of his assistants in the office of the 647th GTE (groups of foreign workers) in Chancelade - Coll. Ms. Annick Palacio (Note the poster on the wall advertising a concert of Charles Schifferes and others from the GTE.)

[35] The Vienna Opera has no records of Karl ever performing with them; see Appendix B: Estrade Letters for text of e-mails from Silvia Kargl, hist.archiv@wienerphilharmoniker.at.

[36] *Mouny Estrade-Szwarckopf et Paul Estrade – Orléans* http://www.humanite.presse.fr/journal/2000-02-14/2000-02-14-220086.

[37] Mouny Estrade-Szwarckopf et Paul Estrade, *Un Camp de Juifs oublié, Soudeilles (1941-1942)*, Éditions Les Monédières, 1999, p. 207, 208.

Additional details are provided in French archival documents:

> There was a poster depicting a photograph of the French Head of State which announced a gala presented by the group of artists from the foreign workers (Travailleurs Étrangers) for the benefit of the imprisoned workers, at the Casino de Paris, at Périgueux, on April 22 and 23, 1942. Such galas also took place at Bergerac. This group of artists was formed by the foreign workers of the 653 GTE (Group of Foreign Transit Workers) from Égletons and of the 665 GTE Jews from Soudeilles (Corrèze). They organized tours in Corrèze, Dordogne, and Haute-Vienne during the winter of 1941–1942 and added Austrian and Spanish dancers and singers.
>
> Four Jewish soloists have star billing on the notice: an Austrian violinist, Rudi Laufer, who directed the ensemble, a cellist from the Viennese Opera, Carl Schifferes, two pianists from the Viennese radio, Frédéric Steissel and Kurt Weininger. The proximity of Pétain and these Jewish artists on the same wall should not deceive you. Not everyone was pleased by the group's success. The round-ups of August 1942 broke up the group, Frédéric Steissel and Carl Schifferes were deported to Auschwitz with convoy number 24 on August 26, 1942, Kurt Weininger was deported to Ma'danek with convoy number 51 on March 6 1943, Rudolf Laufer saved his life by escaping. The General Commission for Jewish questions studied the recreation of the group with non-Jewish participants and; its report concludes: "[The artistic group] will then reflect the value of the Aryan Foreign Workers who have a different allure and a different ardor for work than the Jews, who were just clumsily trying to avoid any manual work."
>
> (Report No. 676 from August 28, 1942. Arch. Dep. Haute-Vienne, 985 W 454)[38].

Karl's last address given was at Tante Rosa's, Vienna XVIII., Khevenhüllerstrasse 20.

In Washington, Steffi tried to arrange Karl's entering the United States. There was to be a hearing for the Visa review. On October 21, 1942, Steffi received a letter from the State Department which stated: "Visa at State Department declined. On October 23, Steffi received a letter from HIAS,[39] "lately sent to an unknown destination." Too little, too late.

In response to the question I had concerning who Maria Schifferes was, who was buried in one of the cemeteries in Vienna, Nani (one of Marianne Schoenauer's twins) wrote me an e-mail dated November 23, 2006:

> Why didn't I think of it! We never knew our grandmother [Maria/Mandy Pieringer Schifferes, Karl's wife]. She died a few months before our birth. Of course! I thought she changed her name. We never spoke much about her and certainly never developed an affinity to her through Mami as we did to our grandfather (Karl). Her name was Maria—not Marianne. Strange that I only long for and love my grandfather—the other grandparents from mother's and father's side never existed in my feelings—and family connections—no one really spoke about them or seemed to want us to know anything about them.

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[38] http://judaisme.sdv.fr/histoire/shh/dordogne/caiss4/caiss4.htm.

[39] Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.

In a letter to Steffi, dated April 19, 1999, Feli (Dr. Felicitas Schoenauer, daughter of Marianne Schoenauer) wrote that "...all the Pieringers [Marianne Schoenauer's mother's family] liked Karl and were more pro-Semitic than some Jewish Austrians. They would have wanted to help him financially, but did not have any money. The Pieringer family, as well as Mandy, thought our family [Schifferes] had money and could have helped him [Karl] emigrate from Austria, but because he married a Goy [Yiddish word for Christian] they thought he no longer belonged to our family." Apparently Mandy never forgave her own mother for abandoning him and not emigrating with him. Mandy always said that her mother's actions—divorcing him so that she and Mandy could find work during that period—brought him to the KZ [concentration camp]. Feli thought that a divorce during the Hitler era never saved anyone from going to the concentration camps. It was only the children of such a marriage who were spared, but only in the first years [of the Nazis].

E-mail from Nani/Marianne Schoenauer, Karl's granddaughter, February 2007:

> Yes, Gustav Manker[40] was Mami's husband. Apparently, they met before the war, around 1938 and he supported her during the war, providing her with a minor office job in the early years of the war when Mami was not allowed to work as [sic] actress because of Jewish (not full as per the Nurenberger Laws). This office ironically was opposite where Feli now lives. She can tell you more.
>
> During the last years Mami was not allowed to work and finally she had to hide as they went for every Jewish blood no matter how much. She married Gustav Manker after the war, but was divorced some 2 years later. He got on very well with Karl's divorced wife, Mami's mother, which was always upsetting for Mami. Manker married again another actress [Hilde Sochor]. He was an architect I think and turned stage set designer, then director and became director of the Vienna Volkstheater in the 9th district. He had a son [Paulus Manker] with that actress who is this Manker you find still alive.

E-mail from Dr. Felicitas Schönauer, granddaughter of Karl Schifferes, dated February 2007:

> My trip to Auschwitz was very important for me and through it I could close an "open" part of our story. Because of the many visitors and because of the professional American organization in Auschwitz, for a short time, at the beginning, one loses a sense of the horror that I had expected, especially at the entrance into the camp area itself. When I rode into the town of Auschwitz itself I was more fearful. But later, when one takes the tour and one goes into the individual, well-maintained, photo-documented barracks, then suddenly one can really feel the gruesomeness quite intensely. Also when one stands in the individual rooms where the hair was cut off, in another room where the eyeglasses were taken off, some still had the names written on them, later one is filled with fear and must cry. The unique thing about this was also that at that moment I did not feel connected to my grandfather, it was as if I wanted to protect myself from something even more gruesome. Somehow I had the feeling that this place had nothing to do with Grandfather, I could not imagine that he was in this camp, even if it was for a short period of time. Then, when I was

[40] Gustav Manker [born 1913, died 1988] married Hilde Sochor (born 1924). They had three children: Katharina Scholz-Manker (born 1956), an actress; Paulus Manker (born 1958), a well-known Viennese director; and Magdalena Manker (born 1967), a medical doctor.

standing in the gas chamber, exactly there where everyone was murdered, I suddenly did not feel anything, I honestly felt nothing at the moment!

Then I lit exactly 4 candles there for Karl and for all the others who were murdered there; at this point I felt a strong feeling of departure from Grandfather and [in order] to honor him, as one should for every dead person. For until now, no one in our *Mispoche* [Yiddish word for family] has ever been to the gruesome grave of Karl! And I found it to be a very large mercy of God that I could demonstrate my last honor to my grandfather here. Despite the gruesome place, it gave me a very warm feeling, also because through this I was able to complete this for my mother.

I will send you photos, also from the "*Arbeit macht frei*" [work will make you free] gate through which I walked, what horrible cynicism.... Also the barracks from Buchenwald where the train filled with the deported arrived at a well-organized camp and an SS man determined with a quick diagnosis and a thumbs-up or down as the deported stepped out of the train, who would go straight to the gas chamber, or who was well enough to go to the work camp. Of those who went immediately to the gas chamber, there was, above all, not a trace of them so that nothing is specifically known about Grandfather, when he arrived in the camp and what happened to him there; if he had to play cello for the SS? In any case, at the camp I made an inquiry as to his exact stay and filled out a form. Weeks later I received the information that all traces of Karl at Auschwitz had been lost.

Chapter 14: Converted to Sarah

In a letter dated September 3, 1938, Steffi apologized for beginning his letter with the weather report. He said that despite the bad rain, they could always do their training. But on that particular day, it was pouring and he did not even get out to borrow a notebook from his colleagues. Earlier in the day he was able to go on his bicycle from Königstrasse, which was still decorated because the Propaganda Minister [Joseph Goebbels] was supposed to speak there. "But now this monotonous, hopeless rain [prevents me] from training at the sports place, and only through daily training can I improve." Then, in the next sentence, he inquired about how long he would be able to keep the summons to the American Consulate. The date of his having turned in his documents at the K.G. (Jewish Community Center) was written on the piece of paper which he sent to Vienna. Steffi bemoaned the fact that he could only get better if he trained daily. "Unfortunately we are getting competition from the Italian Jews. I am thinking of Frau Hochmuth [mother of Liese's best friend, Ines] and her brother who probably had to leave his teaching post. Do you hear something from Ines or others about this, what the Jews there [in Italy] are doing?" [My mother's dear friend, Ines Hochmuth, married very young and was already living in England.].

The very next paragraph began: "The peaches were perfect, thank you very much, the *Gugelhupf* will be saved to the end, I am rationing things so that I have enough until the end." Then there was an elaborate description of the necessary documents and steps needed for Steffi to obtain a passport. In the same paragraph, my father wrote that he had heard of Dr. Lifczis' *Aliyah* [emigration to Palestine] from the radio. The *Hakoah* member Dr. [Adolph] Topf, who had a position at the *Chajesgymnasium* [Jewish school named after well-known Viennese rabbi Zwi Perez Chajes; under the Nazis, the school still educated Jewish children in preparation for emigration], wrote Steffi that when he [Steffi] returned to Vienna there would be no more *Hakoah* members there. Six of them whom he knew personally went "illegal" to Palestine, and probably also Kurt König. "Yesterday 900 people left Vienna."

Steffi remarked that returning to Vienna signified departure for him, so he saw this trip with mixed emotions, even though he was looking forward to it. And then Steffi wrote that he would slowly have to begin to study for an examination that was coming up.

He asked Liese to continue to write to him, but to not say anything about the USA thing in postcards, warning: "You would not do that anyway. Today I was asked here (*Beth*)[41] why I got mail from the American Consulate and explained once again that I really wanted P., but if somehow the opportunity arose, considering the conditions in Vienna, I would take it on."

Steffi concluded: "Hopefully you will be outside the borders before you are converted to Sara.[42] We already named Hannelore Pels... '*Geilchen* [Sexy],' Helga Levin 'Schlumche'[possibly from

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[41] *Beth Chaluz*, on 30 Gartenstrasse, Stuttgart, was where Steffi lived during his time at the sports school. The *Chaluzim* were Jews seeking immigration to Palestine and were being "re-educated" in Stuttgart.

[42] In the year 2006 we were finally able to find out that my mother actually did have a Hebrew name, as is customary for all Jewish children. According to the birth registry entry from the Vienna Jewish Community Center, her name was listed as Liese Frieda Friederike Strauss and her Hebrew name was listed as Sara. Actually having a middle name was unusual for Jewish children at this time. A child was given a "Christian" name and the Hebrew name would be after a deceased relative. To that Hebrew name Ben (for a son) or Bat (for a daughter) of the father's Hebrew name would be added. For example: my father was supposed to have been named Samuel, after his deceased grandfather, Samuel Schifferes [born in Prague on November 1, 1841, died in Vienna June 3, 1897]. Apparently his parents felt it would have been too

Yiddish word *schlump*, inept]. Since I will not give up my name Stephan, I will have no choice in being named Israel."[43] In closing, he sent little Hanni, one of Liese's students, greetings and the best for her departure.

Nazi rules and regulations for the Jews became more stringent and onerous. In July 1938 it was decided that Jews must have a special identity card. In August yet another regulation was announced. There was a special list of Jewish names. Whoever had a non-Jewish sounding name would be given the middle name of Sarah (for females) and Israel (for males), which needed to be used in signatures and when the person said his or her name. The actual date of implementation of this regulation was to be on January 1, 1939. That is why my father wrote my mother saying he hoped she would be out of the country by then.

My mother's official middle name was Friederike, presumably after her deceased paternal grandfather, Friedrich Strauss [born in Szlanicza, Hungary, on February 25, 1846, and died in Vienna on August 6, 1902]. Neither my sister nor I had ever heard anyone mention our mother's Hebrew name. I am not even certain if members of our family were able to provide the Rabbi with her Hebrew name at her funeral in December 1956. The Hebrew name of our aunt, my mother's only sister, Hedwig Marianne Strauss,[44] was Esther. And although the Strauss family was Jewish, coming from an assimilated Austrian family, they were just as apt to write about Christmas, although I know they did not really celebrate Christmas. It was probably just a manner of speaking of the holidays that come around that time of year. Though there was a certain irony in actually finding out what my mother's Hebrew name was, there was also a certain logic. The mother of my maternal grandfather, Hugo Strauss, was Selma/Sara Plaut. So indeed, my mother's Hebrew name was already Sara when the Nazis decided to impose the middle name of Sarah on all Jewish women.

In addition, the Nazi documents of June 1938 (from a law from April 27, 1938) required all Viennese Jews to list all their possessions: jewelry, stocks, bonds, paintings, etc. There was no such form for my mother or my grandmother, Sophie Strauss, because apparently the form was to be filled out only by Jews who had assets over 5,000 RM.

On September 5, 1938, Liese wrote:

> I am glad that you are in a good mood, I am also, considering our near future. I am not thinking about saying goodbye or our separation now, but rather only about a happy reunion, actually as soon and for as long as possible. That is fine that you got the discount, so you were able to save again. Regarding your trip, I would like to suggest that you travel at night because the trip is not so beautiful, and anyway, you already know it, and furthermore *carpe diem*!

Liese's request [September 7, 1938] for her fiancé to go to the office of the American Consulate in Stuttgart to see a Mr. Louis Greenspan was unsuccessful because apparently no one there had heard of such a person. And Steffi seemed apprehensive about Mr. Greenspan, saying Liese

---

Jewish sounding a name for Vienna; therefore he was named Stephan and his Hebrew name was Shmuel ben Chaim.

[43] The 1938 Nuremberg Laws imposed the names Sarah and Israel on Jews if their given names were not "Jewish" enough. Unlike other Old Testament names, Sarah and Israel were not common among German Christians, and therefore the two names were imposed because of their brutal irony. Sarah was the mother of a people. Israel was the founder of a nation. In Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, the reference to Jews as the "Chosen people" was, in fact, a way of mocking them.

[44] Hede's middle name was after her father's grandmother, Marianne/Anna Schaumburg Plaut.

should make more inquiries about him, to find out his address "...since he did not appear in the telephone book." Then he asked her how she knew that her turn would be this year. "Is there a deadline concerning the wait list, just as here? Whoever submitted [documents] after August 1 would not be summoned."

Among the documents I found, there was a postcard addressed to my father from the elusive Louis Greenspan, first sent to Stuttgart, Gartenstr 30/III, then forwarded to Vienna, Neustift a/ Walde 45. It was written on notepaper from the Hotel Villa Majestic Berlin, although his return address was Berlin W 50, Tauentzienstr 4 and he wrote that he would be staying in Berlin indefinitely, but if he did come "to your place" next Spring, he would contact my father.

Chapter 15: Fell into the Water

On September 9, 1938, Liese wrote:

> Dearest Steffi, too bad that the hope for the U.S. fell into the water. I do not know any more about him [Louis Greenspan], also not about Yvonne. I am going to Trude's [Willheim] and will tell her about this.

Then Liese related that a letter from a school in Washington had arrived at Steffi's mother's house which said very nicely that they could not send an affidavit, and that Liese should take care of that herself when she was in Washington. "That is not a new idea." At the same time, she was hoping her number would come up so she could still leave that year.

Concerning her studies, Liese was bound and determined to finish her degree, all the while realizing that

> ...it was not so simple, the material is enormous and if I have the will to begin, it is a *Chuzpe*.[45] I will do the work by myself, just a small chapter will be covered by a friend of Papa. It is somewhat finished and should be good. Regarding the oral test, I will have to re-learn it, everything but the law. I did always like to learn, even if I complain, but this time I am just going to rely on luck.
>
> Now I am counting the days until your arrival, hopefully I will have miscalculated and will not even have to get to 0.
>
> If you travel at night, do not forget to dress especially warmly, I do not know if you have already traveled at night and therefore already know how freezing cold the night trip is, even in the middle of summer. On my return trip from Stgt [Stuttgart] to Vienna I froze terribly despite my dress, jacket, suit.

Then she reassured Steffi that she was still concerning herself about his "passport thing," as she called it, though at that time it seemed impossible to make any headway. She ended:

> When I think about it and calculate that it has been "only" 6 weeks since we saw one another, I cannot even imagine how it will be when I am over there. I also always thought that work was a good distraction, just not for everything. Do you feel the same?
>
> On Tuesday Papa had an x-ray, hopefully he can walk without crutches. You cannot imagine how depressing it is to see him hop around.

Steffi's response to Liese [September 11, 1938]:

> Dear Lieschen!
>
> First of all I have to tell you that I am still alive and that is an absolute miracle. The day before yesterday I had a bicycle accident on the steep Herdeweg, from which I emerged with 3 small scrapes. I do not know this street, which is the actual beginning of the ascent to Degerloch. On a little challenge, instead of putting on the brakes when a car came towards me, I ran into the side wall. But I flew adeptly on the sidewalk between the house wall and the trees, thus emerging

[45] German way of writing the Yiddish word *chutzpah*, meaning nerve, gall, audacity.

with the least possible injuries that could have occurred by such an accident. The bicycle was ruined so today I will ride to the sports place on a different one.

He wrote how he had left a letter for this Mr. Gr.[eenspan], whom nobody knew, at the American Consulate and asked him for an appointment regarding his emigration.

> What does one do when one does not know the Vie.[nnese] Quota number? Everything that is turned in here has to have the questionnaire number on it, so I will not be that far along for some time, still one can inquire. Perhaps they know approximately which numbers were for May 31 and June 1.

Steffi expressed concern regarding Liese's diligence, fearing that because of that she would overwork herself. He added:

> By the way, at the moment, I am acting as English teacher. The landlady has two daughters who, just as I, want to go to the USA and they asked me to help them. They attended classes. One knows a little, the other is a beginner and it is hard for her to learn the "s" in the third person singular in past tense because she belongs to the group of people who do not know German grammar well. I am not paid, 1. the girls are poor and work very hard for their few Marks and 2. I would have to hand over my earnings here, which I would not really like doing.

Steffi was given a gift from the library—a recorder and a "piccolo flute": "...and now [he was] blowing even more horribly."[46]

Undated letter from Liese, September 1938:

> To dear Steffi
>
> Dearest Steffi,
>
> This should be the last shipment before your vacation. Hopefully everything will taste good. If you are not hungry, then you will just have to eat less potatoes and tuna, so says Mama!
>
> I see from your letter that you are really doing well and you have no idea about all the worries that we have here. Nothing much has changed visibly, that means for example, on the street one need not be afraid, but the summons are increasing, e.g., Peter's [Korolanyi] father was also summoned. That is why I will use every possibility, even what Trudl offers. Though I have not had any news yet. On the other hand, you are right about your fatalism, it just conceals a big risk. Perhaps you will understand what I am saying from these unclear words, we could speak about it better in person. Sometimes I think that the smartest thing would be to do as the Viennese, just that the people in Stuttgart seem to be cleverer. But to such a thing one cannot give advice. But I do want you to get your passport in order; we will get entry to another country. Naturally it would be a pity about the course, but it cannot be worth much to prevent everything else. Naturally I am not giving up Washington, but would, if possible (that is, if it really takes that long until I get the visa) go somewhere else to wait, that is only

[46] When going through Steffi's belongings after his death, we came upon the recorder and piccolo flute, and wondered why my father had these instruments that no one had ever spoken about!

if something else comes up before then because I am not worried about me.... If only September were over with.

If you have time, write me again, please! I am amazed at my diligence. Many 1000 intimate kisses

Your Liesl.

Letter from Bertha to Steffi, dated September 12, 1938:

My dear Stepsi!

Since I unfortunately still do not know when you are coming, I want to write you once again because I want to ask about the apartment. Herr Strauss spoke on my behalf at the District Court about lifting the notification and the hearing is on the 22nd of September. Since I am not sure if you will already be in Vienna on that day, I would like to ask you how long I should actually stay in the apartment. Unfortunately nothing has come through for me for England yet. Mostly I would like to be out of Vienna already. But that will not help anything. Have you not asked more about England at the local Jewish Community Center? I will try tomorrow at the local Jewish Community Center, they are also supposed to be doling out jobs abroad and also have advertisements in an English newspaper. Please answer me about the apartment and also about when you are coming.

Yesterday Karl was here with me. He is already rehearsing with a choir consisting of 10 men and hopes to leave soon. Tomorrow I also want to ask once again about renewing your and my passports. Supposedly one is supposed to get them without an immigration. Can I also sell books and music? Which music do you want to keep? Dr. K.[orolanyi] in our building already sold a lot of furniture and books and music. By the way, he had his date changed to the 9th.

Since I know that you have a lot to do, I do not want to keep you. Write me just a short post card.

I would like to have you here already. Many Issubs[47]

Mama

[47] Stephan and Bertha were fluent in speaking German backwards (i.e., left to right) "Issubs" = Bussi, which is Viennese way of saying "kisses," but backwards!

Chapter 16: If We Have Luck

In a letter dated September 12, 1938, Liese wrote

> ...today I can tell you more about further concrete hopes than last time. It seems that everything that we wished for even before your trip to Stuttgart is going to be fulfilled, if we have luck.
>
> Saturday I received news from HIAS that my cousin, Herbert Muller, has declared that he will be sending me an affidavit. I immediately went to ask for Herbert's address. Everything else you can imagine.

Liese was told that her Washington affidavit would most likely not go through, so she wanted to have Herbert's as insurance and to strengthen her affidavit with a supplementary one.

> If Herbert consents, as I hope, then we need not wish for anything more. He is probably also going to be able to help you.
>
> I assume and hope that you are just as happy as I about this ray of hope; I will also send Pepi there to "work" on Herbert.
>
> Naturally I have already figured out the details: if we have luck, then in 6–8 weeks we could have the affidavit here. Soon thereafter I would be summoned to the Consulate, but unfortunately for you it will be dragged out.

She told Steffi to inquire in Stuttgart if the Consul there could expedite matters. If they could both leave for England, then they would be able to get "...used to the English life, earn money, and find Steffi's mother a job." Liese's turn would come in November, but Steffi would first get his summons in January or February [1939].

On September 12, 1938, Liese wrote: "So Steffilein, *mazeltov* [Yiddish for congratulations], hopefully we will have luck. We will also try to get you a passport when you are here. A few days ago HeHa and also I reserved tickets for the ship ("Normandie")."

Liese was surprised [September 15, 1938] that Steffi was in Stuttgart to "develop his artistry" [practicing clarinet so much]. She was familiar with the Herdeweg, most likely from her wanderings during her Stuttgart visits to see her fiancé. She wrote that "...it is not really appropriate for a bicycle race and I hardly understand that you would expose yourself to such dangers. But thank God everything worked out (I presume that you told me the truth about your injury) and hope that you will ride more carefully on the new bike." Liese wrote about her lack of patience to concentrate on studying and how Steffi's delay in coming to Vienna made her sad. She had hoped he could skip some classes. Then she wrote that she was unable to find out the address of her cousin Herbert Muller, but wrote him through HIAS and asked Pepi to find him and intervene on Steffi's behalf. And she asked him to inquire about his Quota Number in Stuttgart and to certainly not let it expire:

> My affid. from Dr. Ransom will not suffice, [not] because he is not related to me, but rather because it says in it that I have a job. Apparently the various Consulates have different regulations in different places. Then Herbert would also not be related to you and that is another reason that the affidavit should be turned in in Vienna.
>
> Today Hede will send in your complaint; hopefully it will have success.

As chaotic as Liese's life was at this time, she did find time to teach a few students. The only opportunity she had to see Steffi's mother was after she taught the Korolanyis. Other times, Bertha would go to see Liese at the Strauss parents' apartment. Liese continued:

> I am practically convinced that I will not take the exams, I cannot even get the necessary learning materials or ask for help.
>
> The main thing for me now is that you are well and come here. Can you not find some excuse and come sooner? I also hope to hear your test results. Today Hanni's parents and my colleague Trude and her parents are leaving. Father is already walking with 1 crutch and a cane, the x-ray showed a perfect healing. That is at least a ray of hope. Just that father looks very bad.
>
> Something else: Make certain that you arrive in the morning because from the 22–26 there will be blackouts[48] in all of Vienna and it is difficult to find the way, and the transportation will be minimal.
>
> I would have called you upon receiving your last letter in which you wrote of the accident, but then I realized that I do not even know the tel. no. Would be good to know, one never knows if one needs it!

In reply [September 15, 1938] to Steffi's question as to what he should bring Liese when he returned to Vienna, his mother answered that probably Liese would, just as she herself, want him there rather than any gift. Furthermore, she continued, the Strausses were buying Liese everything she needed.[49] Because of the pending blackouts and because she wanted to see her only son again, Bertha suggested that Steffi make up an excuse for leaving the sports school earlier because "...if you are not going to remain in Stuttgart anyway, then you do not have to be so strict with it."



Steffi, Stuttgart, September 1938

Bertha said that Lisbeth and her husband, Aryan [nickname, Nuschu] had left for Australia by ship from Italy on September 5, 1938, and that Karl was rehearsing diligently in a "salon choir" consisting of ten men with the conductor Silving and was again speaking of a trip to Lisbon. She added that Tante Rosa was having great difficulty with her husband, "... but, unfortunately one

[48] In September 1938 there were air-raid blackout drills in Vienna. During the blackouts, the enthusiastic Viennese Nazis used the shield of darkness to attack Jews and would, apparently, also throw them in front of passing streetcars. Because of the fear instilled in the Viennese Jews, there was a panic of emigration.

[49] Everything she needed for her dowry.

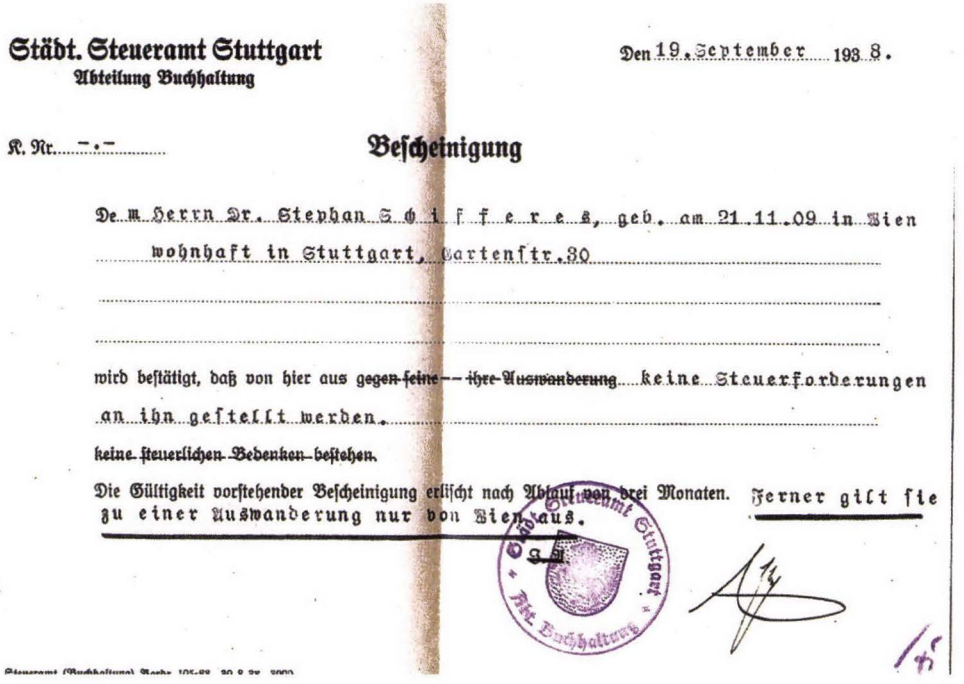
cannot be of help nor give advice." Tante Gisi, she said, was busy preparing for her departure and did not have time to stay in close touch with Bertha. Liese was busy with her own things.

There were so many worries for everyone, but especially for Bertha, my grandmother, whose life revolved around Steffi after the death of her husband and younger son. The letters certainly reflect her loneliness and sadness. In the continuation of the same letter Bertha wrote:

> [There is] great tension here regarding the awaited developments and I am already terribly disquieted. If only you were already safely here in Vienna. See that you come back as soon as possible after the examinations. Everyone is looking forward to seeing you. Dr. Strauss always tells me when I visit: I am so looking forward to seeing Steffi.

On September 16, 1938, Steffi wrote to Liese that the examinations went well. Unfortunately, parts were given in the pouring rain. He wrote: "I won in the ball toss with 9.85 m and in the high-jump 1.64 m, a good score since I am in good physical shape. The other scores were less impressive...." He said he was not certain what his mother should say at the appeal [for the eviction]. Perhaps remaining in the apartment until December would be adequate so that she could liquidate things in peace. He added:

> I cannot come before Saturday since I cannot use the negotiation as an excuse. I will probably travel at night, but not because of the blackouts because I know my way around well enough. If you do not have time, just write short postcards... America!



Städt. Steueramt Stuttgart
Abteilung Buchhaltung

Den 19. September 1938.

K. Nr. -.-

Bescheinigung

Dem Herrn Dr. Stephan Schifferes, geb. am 21.11.09 in Wien
wohnhaft in Stuttgart, Gartenstr. 30

wird bestätigt, daß von hier aus ~~gegen seine~~ ihre ~~Auswanderung~~ keine Steuerforderungen an ihn gestellt werden.

~~keine steuerlichen Bedenken bestehen.~~

Die Gültigkeit vorstehender Bescheinigung erlischt nach Ablauf von drei Monaten. Ferner gilt sie zu einer Auswanderung nur von Wien aus.

Städt. Steueramt Stuttgart Abt. Buchhaltung

Yet another certificate stating that Dr. Stephan Schifferes owed no taxes, and that immigration could only be made from Vienna

On September 20, 1938, Liese wrote to Steffi on Gartenstrasse 30/III in Stuttgart:

> How do you feel as a tested athlete? Hopefully very well. You made us very uneasy with the news about the sick people in the house, for that reason I was twice as happy to receive your card. There is nothing much new. We are getting used to driving on the right.[50] Father is already going to the office. I am dreading the test day and the amounts I know—oh dear—are—0. But that does not matter much, why should I not be able to experience a flunking for my money.

Steffi wrote [September 21, 1938]: "Now it is serious, on Friday I will pack and will probably be in Vienna on Saturday." The vacations were mandated in Berlin, therefore the sport school had to follow that schedule. Steffi was really looking forward to being in Vienna, but did not want to upset Liese's schedule and wondered if he should bring the bicycle along so he would have a way of getting around. He wrote of having seen a Palestinian film, "The New Way," although he did not write anything else about it.

On September 22, 1938, Liese sent an express postcard in which she expressed dismay that Steffi was not going to take the train at night, but despite that, she was really looking forward to seeing him.

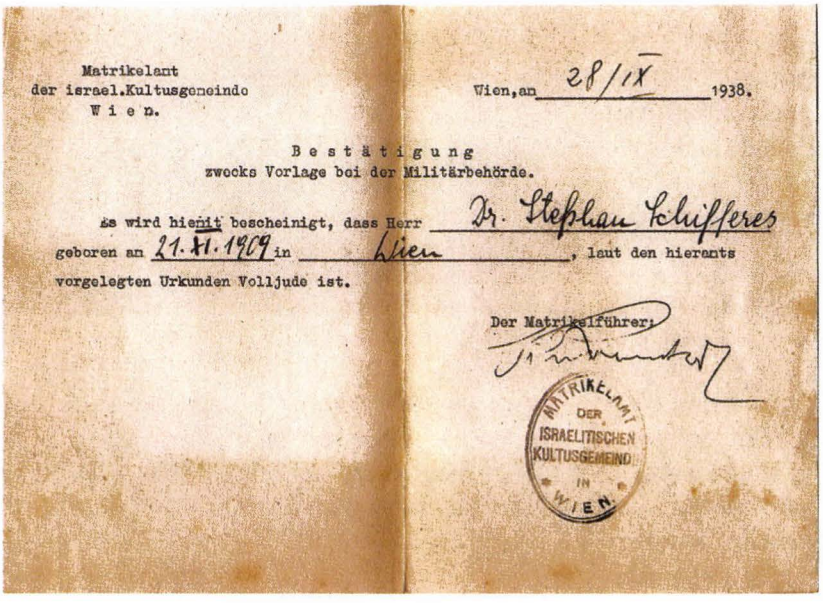
> Even Mama found it terribly annoying to be out on the street at 7:30 during the blackout. But do not delay your trip because of that. Just leave Sa[turday] morning, if you want. —About the bicycle: Do not bring it! You will not have to go so many places.... And in any case, since your letter, I have had quite enough with your bicycle-riding [accident], especially since driving on the right side [of the street] is still a new thing here.

As to what he could bring his mother, Liese made some suggestions, including a suitcase (although she was certain that Mama would prefer to pick it out herself), "...cologne, scarf or warm gloves for winter? I know even less than you what would give her pleasure. Perhaps a cover for her documents..." And both of them would surely be at the train station to meet him. "Hopefully we will find you in the dark! I am already looking forward to it! Do not get to the train so late like...." [inferring that Steffi was always late].

[50] With the arrival of the Nazis came the switch from driving on the left.

Chapter 17: So Be Careful!

On September 27, 1938, Jewish lawyers were stripped of their license to practice. Nor could they refer to themselves as lawyers, not on their stationery, in the phone book, nor on their house sign. In October of that same year special passports were issued for all Austrians, whether they were Gentiles or Jews. The Jewish passports were marked with a large red J, which was implemented to satisfy the Swiss and thereby prevent an influx of Jews into Switzerland.



Matrikelamt
der israel.Kultusgemeinde
W i e n.

Wien, an 28/IX 1938.

B e s t ä t i g u n g
zwecks Vorlage bei der Militärbehörde.

Es wird hiemit bescheinigt, dass Herr Dr. Stephan Schifferes
geboren an 21.VI.1909 in Wien, laut den hierants
vorgelegten Urkunden Volljude ist.

Der Matrikelführer:

MATRIKELAMT DER ISRAELITISCHEN KULTUSGEMEINDE IN WIEN

Certificate dated September 28, 1938, stating Dr. Stephan Schifferes was "*Volljude*," or "completely Jewish"

My father had a friend from the sports school named Ludwig Frankenstein,[51] who played viola and lived in Hannover-Linden, Germany. Ludwig wrote Steffi, as he had promised, after being back home with his sick mother for two weeks. He said that he would not be back in Stuttgart until the end of October because his parents had their silver wedding anniversary on the 28th. During the time Ludwig was at home he had the opportunity to rehearse with a quartet regularly—two or three times a week—and said how much fun he was having. He said that the others were much better than the musicians they both (he and Steffi) played with in Stuttgart. Then he asked Steffi if he would be bringing his clarinet back to Vienna and also how Steffi's bride's plans for emigration were going. His own plans were uncertain. And he wrote of there being gossip at the *Beth* [*Chaluz*] that unreliable people had other plans. Steffi was among those who had been mentioned. "So be careful!" he concluded. The assumption was that everyone who lived in the *Beth* was going to emigrate to Israel, so any mention of other plans was apparently looked upon as being "unfaithful."

Steffi's *Hakoah* colleague, Dr. Adolf Topf, mentioned earlier, had many questions in his letter [October 5, 1938] about the teaching method that was being used by the sports school in Stuttgart, what my father was learning, and what, if any, changes were implemented in the new *Reich*. Then, moving on to more "worldly matters," he said that "the Palestinians [meaning those Viennese *Hakoah* members who were intending to emigrate to Palestine] unfortunately all

[51] Ludwig Frankenstein, born September 9, 1914, was murdered by the Nazis in Riga [www.yadvashem.org].

returned: but apparently will be leaving again." The news about the other *Hakoah* mutual friends was not particularly happy. Fink was studying masonry and his sister and mother were unfortunately still "sick" [in concentration camp]. He went on: "I am happy that you, as the only Viennese there, are having nice success and as a consequence are a good emissary for the Viennese world of sport." Then Topf wrote about the Viennese Jewish boxers who were still able to train in a ring that they themselves put together and who were also training many young people.

> We were granted permission to be called *Makkabi*, Jewish Gym and Sports Union of Vienna..... It pleases me to know that you like it there. Hopefully you will not stay in Stuttgart longer than you want. Seeing that every stay in Germany is just a passing thing. That goes without saying. I also want to leave here, thinking of Palestine, just do not know if my parents can get out. We unfortunately cannot afford a capital certificate. Perhaps you can find out something about the prospects for certified Jewish gym teachers in *Erez* [Palestine]. There is supposed to be a need there!
>
> All my young students, the ones who have not crossed the border and all the light athletes, incl. Walter and Karl Kohn send you greetings. Topf [52]

Then Steffi's friend Franz [last name unknown] added a note to Topf's letter:

> I am unfortunately still here. Instead of me swimming, my possibilities are [swimming]. Many of our friends are abroad. Willi Kaiser, Heinie Scherratter, Fritz Deutscher in Switzerland, Gustl in France. Our friends from Frankfurt wrote me that also they are leaving in the next few days. One feels so terribly alone. How are you? At least for the moment you have no worries. Keep in touch. Many greetings, Franz

My father did leave the sports school in Stuttgart in order to arrange various matters in Vienna. His driver's license was renewed in Vienna on October 13, 1938, as was his passport.

On October 25, 1938, he received a letter at his mother's in Vienna (Neustift am Walde 45) from the *Hechaluz* Stuttgart [Stuttgart Pioneer Group], reminding him that he had told them that he would be returning the previous week. For some reason he had extended his vacation. The letter said:

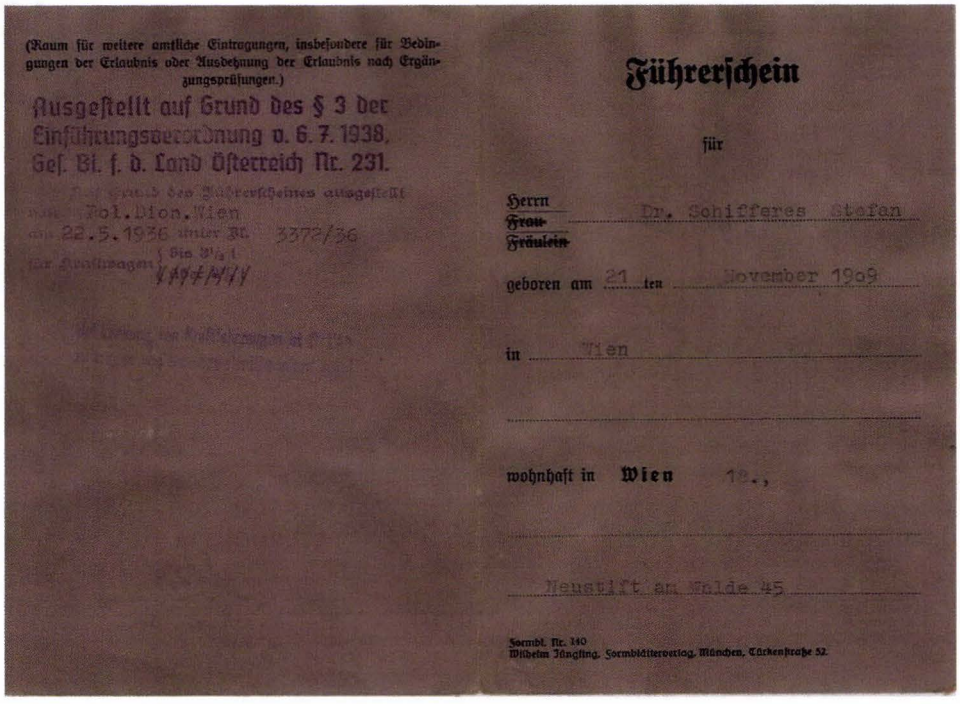
> ...In any case it would have been your duty to notify us of the reason for your delay. We await your correspondence within three days of receipt of this letter as to when you will be coming, otherwise your place here in the *Beth* [*Beth* is the Hebrew word for home] will be given to another *Hachscharah* candidate.

It was signed "*Schalom* [Hebrew for Greetings]! Vera." Then, on October 27, 1938, the *Oberrat der Isr. Religionsgemeinschaft Württembergs* also sent him a letter to Neustift am Walde saying they had been informed of his failure to return to the sports course after his vacation.

> You should have informed the Jewish Emergency Aid in Württemberg-Stuttgart as well as us about this. We are obligated to inform the *Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland*, Berlin, and just wanted to determine with this

[52] Adolf Topf, born June 28, 1889, was deported from Vienna to Opole, where he was murdered on February 26, 1941. [www.yadvashem.org]

correspondence if and when you will be returning to the sports course and for what reason you have not yet returned.



(Raum für weitere amtliche Eintragungen, insbesondere für Bedingungen der Erlaubnis oder Ausdehnung der Erlaubnis nach Ergänzungsprüfungen.)

Ausgestellt auf Grund des § 3 der Einführungsverordnung v. 6. 7. 1938, Ges. Bl. f. d. Land Österreich Nr. 231.

Pol.Dion.Wien
22.5.1936 unter Nr. 3372/36

Führerschein

für

Herrn
~~Frau~~
~~Fräulein~~ Dr. Schifferes Stefan

geboren am 21 ten November 19o9

in Wien

wohnhaft in **Wien** 18.,

Neustift am Walde 45

Formbl. Nr. 140
Wilhelm Jüngling, Formblätterverlag, München, Türkenstraße 52.



Herr
~~Frau~~
~~Fräulein~~ Dr. Schifferes Stefan

erhält die Erlaubnis, ~~nach Ablegung der Prüfung~~ *) ein Kraftfahrzeug mit Antrieb durch

Verbrennungsmaschine

der Klasse drei, vier zu führen.

Wien, den 13 OKT. 1938 ten 19

Der Polizeipräsident in Wien
Verkehrsamt

Stempel

(Unterschrift)

Liste Nr. 20699/U

~~Nach bestandener Prüfung ausgehändigt~~

, den ten 19

Der amtlich anerkannte Sachverständige

Liste Nr. (Unterschrift)

*) Bei Führerscheinen der Klasse 4 sind die Worte „nach Ablegung der Prüfung" und der Vermerk über die Aushändigung durch den Sachverständigen zu streichen.

Eigenhändige Unterschrift des Inhabers:

Driver's license, issued October 13, 1938

By October 28, Steffi was back at the sports school. Liese immediately sent him a letter [dated October 27, 1 p.m.] saying that she was doing just as she had promised—writing him immediately after his departure! In the letter Liese recounted her visit to the Consulate regarding

her affidavit. The official there had asked her if the affidavit-giver was a relative, if she had ever been imprisoned or in a mental institution, where she would be living. Apparently the official was not certain whether Dr. Ransom lived in the District of Columbia or in Virginia. Liese could not answer her. Then she asked what Liese would be doing there, to which Liese answered that "as a J.[ew]..." she had to emigrate and therefore would be living there. "Not a very intelligent answer," she continued, "but every more intelligent answer would have been 'riskier.'"

> Then I had to sign 4 photos, then 2 folders that had papers that I handed in and then I could wait once again. I passed the waiting time chatting with the couple and with Dr. Hess, whom you perhaps know and who is leaving on the 9th. Things became complicated because a Herr Strauss was also there and was mistaken for me.

After about one hour Liese was called upon to be examined. This is how she described the examination.

> The examination is less rigorous for women than for men. I had to look through a mirror with each eye and read
>
> E T B
>
> D L N
>
> P T E R
>
> F Z B D F
>
> (I notated this, perhaps someone with bad eyes can use it, though it does not matter if one cannot read it.)
>
> Then my heart and lungs were listened to (I think that is how one says that), had to stretch out my fingers and had to walk back and forth in the room (to check the nerves). Some people had their pulse listened to.
>
> Then I again waited and was called to the Consul, who really was very nice. As I was going in, he said "raise your right hand," which I did in a rather perplexed manner because I did not know that one had to swear to the correctness of the statements. He asked me the same questions as the official and in addition asked who is paying for my trip. Luckily I was told about that beforehand and I said my "parents," which they prefer to hear. When I then had to sign, I was very happy. He neither asked about the job nor anything else.
>
> I will get the visa on the 2.XI. and on the 31st of the month [October] I will have to go there to pay 25 RM for it.
>
> At the end I asked him about the possibility of having my husband summoned, however got a negative answer because a man can do that for his wife, but not the opposite. The other questions about marriage were superfluous, but I still asked them and received the answer that he would have to ask the affidavit giver, that I would have to bring a new passport in which I got the visa. In other words, all negative answers. Herbert Muller would have to fill out an affidavit for you, that is, re-write it so that the sent one is valid but has been re-done. I really hope that he will do it.

With that, the thing at the Consulate was taken care of for me. I still wanted to inquire about the Quota number for you and [Onkel] Alfred, but this division was closed at 12 o'clock and my continuing to try to persuade ended with me being thrown out and then they threatened to call the police. Since I am going there again on the 31st, I will stand in line very early in order to find that out.

I have no idea what I will do now, if I will still give lessons tomorrow or not. All I know is that I have an enormous amount of things that need to be done before I leave. I was already at Air France (re: French Line). I was told that it is improbable to obtain an English visa. There is not a direct airline from Stuttgart to fly to Paris or L'n, just from Cologne through Frankfurt, where it seems there are fewer flights. The next Normandie is leaving on the 3rd of December, but I really do want to leave earlier because I hope that I can accomplish more and it will bring us closer to our goal.

Your poor mother was terribly upset about my departure, but I hope that she has calmed down a bit. In her eyes, the prospect of being reunited with you seems a long way off. But hopefully you will have a bit of luck and then everything will happen sooner than one thinks.

How were you received by your classmates? Was David nice? I am already very curious to have news from you.

Today I will write to all sorts of people, also to Dr. Ransom.

I will also write you very, very soon again and less confused than today.

So, every discussion about Dr. R., if we should cheat on him or not has been deemed superfluous and all of our plans regarding this have fallen into the water. But still I hope and think of your words, that if we love each other so much, we have to be together. And we do love one another!

Be well in Stuttgart, take care of yourself and just write soon and a lot, when you have time.

I kiss you intimately from

Your Liesl.

Chapter 18: Lawsuit

With the loss of his job, Steffi lost his income. As a result, he decided to sue his former employer, perhaps because his future father-in-law, Hugo Strauss, was a lawyer. According to Bertha's letter of October 28, 1938, the lawsuit was to be settled with an offer of the amount of RM 400. Then she asked Steffi what she should do with the money: "...buy a suitcase or put it in the savings account? Can one then withdraw it at any time?" She would give Liese the other mail that came for him which included a correspondence from an aid society in the USA regarding an affidavit that arrived. Although she said that there was really not much to relate, she added:

> I cannot believe that Liese will be leaving soon and that you will also be following shortly thereafter. Still, I do not want to complain, the main thing is that you both are well and will be happy, I do not want and cannot allow myself to think of me because unfortunately I am only a worry for you.... Were you able to calm the people in Stuttgart down, are you back on track? Did you not forget your music stand? Tell me everything that Liese should bring along. Could you sleep on the trip? Did you take a porter?

Then she wrote about having gotten money from a Herr Visser and said,

> So you see, I am not really worried about money and you certainly should not think that I am lacking anything. Just that I miss my good boy all the time. That will not change, if I just hear that he is well.

Bertha was still hoping to remain in her apartment until December so that she could sell her things.

In preparation for her departure, Liese asked for recommendations from the parents of the children to whom she had been teaching English. She received the following recommendations:

> Vienna, 28. October 1938
>
> I certify that Frl. Liese Strauss taught my daughter the English language from the very beginning basics. Through her special love and affinity to children she made learning a pleasure and through her pedagogical awareness never lost her patience. My little one made tremendous progress during this time and I am very thankful to Frl. Strauss for her pleasantness.
>
> Frau Rosl Weinstock
> VII. Floriangasse 51
>
> Recommendation :
>
> Confirming that Frl. Liese Strauss instructed my 9-year-old daughter in English and my child was able to speak and write proper English after 2 years. Frl. Liese really loves children, has a lot of patience with children, and has an excellent teaching method. My child was very attached to her and her departure had a profound effect on her. Unfortunately Frl. Liese had to leave us because of her departure, and we wish her a good future. I can really recommend her highly. Respectfully
>
> Eugenia Klier
> Vienna 28/X. 1938.



Zentralstelle für
jüdische
(Dienststelle)
(Aktenzeichen)
(Ort und Datum)
(Straße)

Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung

(Gültigkeitsdauer: ein Monat ab Ausstellung)

Gegen die Ausreise des(r) Strauss Liese Sara
(Beruf oder Stand, Vor- und Zuname)
(Wohnung), geboren am 9.6.1916 in Wien,
und seiner Ehefrau, geborene, geboren am
in, und seiner Kinder, geboren am
, geboren am , geboren am
habe ich keine Bedenken.

(Unterschrift)

Liese's Certificate of Good Morals, dated October 31, 1938

Steffi wrote to Liese [October 29, 1938] about the reaction the people at the *Beth* had upon his return. They had presumed that Steffi would not return after his vacation, just as his friend Ludwig [Frankenstein] did. Ludwig, as we know from his letter to Steffi, remained in Hannover where he was studying music with an Aryan friend. Herr David did not hold Steffi's delay in returning against him—the course actually resumed on the 19th, "...so I did not miss too much. The new gym teacher is a bit more sympathetic than Halle[r]. You met him briefly." Steffi was already looking forward to Liese's visit and was going to make a list of things he had forgotten so that she could bring them along. "Hopefully nothing will interfere [with your visit]." Then he encouraged her to stop teaching because she was just exhausting herself and perhaps would then have to stay in Vienna longer. But he asked her:

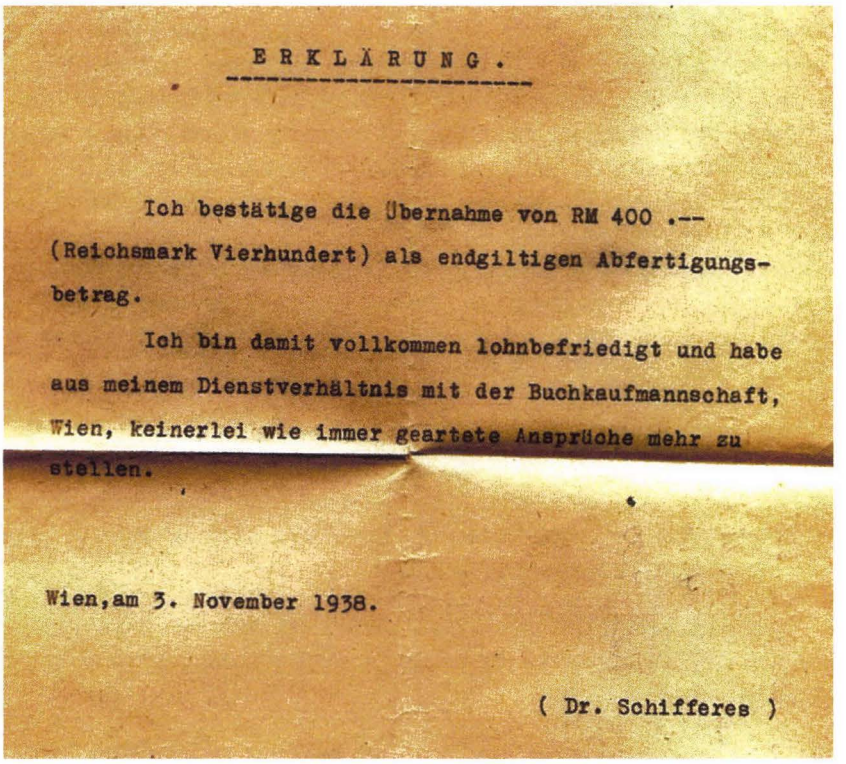
> Do look in on my mother occasionally and greet her for me and do console her in my name. Be a good daughter to her, just as you are my only beloved Lieschen. Hopefully the farewell that will take place when you come here, to which I am really looking forward, will not be for too long.

Then he sent greetings to Liese's parents and thanked them for all the good food. He also asked Liese to find out from Tante Gisi about the story of the family that she had made in Prague, "...even though I have other worries, I would still like to have a copy of that." He reminded Liese to not write anything about the USA in a postcard, but rather put the letter in an envelope. "I really do not know how I am going to tell my colleagues about your thing [emigration], but I send you nothing worse to worry about and now send you greetings and kisses ..."

Steffi's Viennese friend, Egon Brenner, wrote him from Budapest, saying that he had a guilty conscience for not having written sooner. He had been in Budapest for six weeks and now had to move on. "If I have luck—but it seems that I do not—a handsome visa for abroad will come in the meantime, otherwise it is very pleasant. Perhaps France, where many of my relatives are already," he said. Then he wrote that he hoped to see Steffi and Liese in the USA.

Miraculously, the lawsuit that Dr. Hugo Strauss, Steffi's future father-in-law, brought against Steffi's former employer, *Buchkaufmannschaft, Wien*, ended in a settlement in Steffi's

favor—RM 400. The letter my father then sent them (shown below) stated that with the payment of the RM 400 they were released from their financial obligations to him.



ERKLÄRUNG.

Ich bestätige die Übernahme von RM 400.-- (Reichsmark Vierhundert) als endgiltigen Abfertigungsbetrag.

Ich bin damit vollkommen lohnbefriedigt und habe aus meinem Dienstverhältnis mit der Buchkaufmannschaft, Wien, keinerlei wie immer geartete Ansprüche mehr zu stellen.

Wien, am 3. November 1938.

(Dr. Schifferes)

Explanation stating that Dr. Schifferes was accepting RM 400 "severance" pay from his former place of employment, B*uchkaufmannschaft*, Vienna

Liese wrote [November 2, 1938] that she hoped that the people in the *Beth* had already forgiven my father for returning late and that she was sorry that Ludwig [Frankenstein] and Baumann [Julius] had left, but she hoped that the new people were nice. She thought that the simplest thing would be to tell the people living in the *Beth* that she was visiting him as she did in July, rather than that she was going to see him on her way to America. Neither Liese nor the sports students had any inkling of what was about to occur a week later [Kristallnacht].

> Today I will fetch the visa from the Americ. Consulate, but that does not mean that anything is taken care of. Then I still do not have the certificate, and then there is always the question of the ring [Bertha's engagement ring which Steffi gave to Liese]. The exchange place allowed me to intervene on my own behalf because I could prove the worthlessness and the age. The shipping line apparently does not take RM so I will perhaps have to take another line. In any case, I will not be getting an Engl. visa, I hope to get a Swiss one for 1 day. I have to take care of that today. Today someone was here from Hirsch, the things will be packed up on Friday. I ordered a nice suitcase, though not at Weidler, but really good. If your Mama likes it, my parents will have another one made for you. Tomorrow information should be coming from the Jewish Community Center, and after that I am going to Gildemeester.[53] In any case, I thank you very

[53] "A month after the Anschluss a Dutch philanthropist named Frank van Gheel-Gildemeester had set up a group to help poor Jews and non-Aryans escape, and he introduced several innovations Eichmann would

much for the suggestion. Onkel Alfred, who turned his documents in at Prinz Eugenstr. at the same time as I, already has his certificate.

Through all the mess that I am writing you about, you can see that the work is practically growing over my head. In addition I have (I do not know why) quite a bit of work to do at the dentist and am spending an hour there every day. I gave up my teaching anyway. Unfortunately I now have a terrible cold and feel like I want to go to bed instead of waking up everyday at 6 and running around the whole time without accomplishing anything and then going to bed late. But that will be over in 2 days and once the things are at the shipper's and I have the certificate, I will be calmed down. I still do not know when I will be leaving here, but the plan—if things go as I wish, I would leave at the end of the week so that I can break up the trip from Zurich to Havre with a 1–2 day stop in Paris. Please can you get a room for me in any case, but unfortunately it will just be for 2–3 days! When I know more, I will tell you.

Your mother just called and told me about your news. I will talk about the thing with Papa, but still do not know if one should be so valiant and if it might not be too late. Mama probably already told you that a very nice letter came from one of the help committees. I will ask Herbert to check into it (re: in order to bring him up to date), or at least to find out about this.

Hopefully your muscle strain has healed. Maybe the *Beth* can have a longer bed made for you considering how long you are, seeing that you are already sleeping in an unheated room.

Yesterday I already went to say goodbye first to Mutti's Onkel and Tante, from whom I got a beautiful gold chain, then to the Deutsch parents and in the evening to Tante Gisi with your mother. Your uncle did not have a family tree made, Tante Gisi remembered that someone in Prague was researched, but the chronicle never arrived. We could, if you are still interested, do it from over there, if we do not have any other worries, yes?!

Also Polinisi, etc., were here, not requested. Please see if you can find out if I could eventually get a Swiss transit visa at the Consulate in Stuttgart when I have the ship ticket. Furthermore, I heard that one cannot travel with a passport that has a J secretly put in it. There are supposed to be new regulations about that. Otherwise I cannot and do not want to burden you with anything else.

I already have terrible fear about all the goodbyes. For that reason I cannot actually look forward to Stgt even though I am doing it. My poor mother is so upset and looks bad, is not sleeping, etc. Also for that reason I want to shorten the departure. Everyone is really helping me and there are always little things that come up that need to be taken care of.

So, in the meantime it has gotten late, I am going to the shipper, etc., and have to end now because of that.

---

copy. Wealthy Jews who contributed 10 percent of their fortune to the Gildemeester fund could use its facilities to emigrate, while their money would also help indigent Jews to leave. Before it shut down in 1940 and its activities integrated into the IKG [*Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien (Vienna Israelite Community)*], Gildemeester helped some 30,000 non-Aryans to emigrate." Thomas Weyr, *The Setting of the Pearl: Vienna Under Hitler (*New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 138–39.

Please, please write soon and I kiss you intimately and full of love
from Your Liesl.

My parents etc. want to make you happy on your birthday and so I am asking you to give me a few tips so that I can pass them on. Please do it because I really do not know if you have special wishes.

Bertha wrote Steffi [November 2, 1938] and asked if there was anything in particular that Liese should bring along for his birthday. She was expecting some money that she would immediately put into the savings account, as Steffi had wished. Then she wrote:

As for me, I have enough money. Just think of how successful I was at selling books in the last days!

Grillparzer RM 10.-
Nestroy and Byron 5.50 (Byron had already yellowed)
Lessing 3.-
4 diverse Fairy tales 4.-
some piano music 4.80

What do you say about that? Today Milly is coming from Strauss and will look at the bedroom. Naturally I have already paid the rent. I would really like to still stay here in December. After I took in more money, I immediately put an ad in the *Times* for the 8th of November and am hoping that for once in my life one of my wishes will be fulfilled. I am in no particular hurry to sell the oven, I would like to get RM 45.- for it and they only want to give me RM 40. Yesterday Liese and I were at Tante Gisi's and also wrote a few lines to Lisbeth. I understand what you wrote about the Jewish Community Center, but if you have gotten so much from them, they certainly will not give me also. I would not say no. Naturally I will give Liese the things that you forgot, including the washcloth. Do you not need a music stand? Both are here. I heard that the viola player is not going to return to Stuttgart. That is too bad, does that mean that he is playing chamber music again? So you had an epidemic there just like in Vienna [meaning that there were more arrests and therefore, more people sent to KZ]. Hopefully I will be able to find a job without the help of *Herr Oberrat* [head counselor]. At the moment everything is in order here. Neustift already has gasoline buses with the N 23; I can only start using them on the 6th, when my identity card has once again been renewed. Dear good Stepsi, I thank you very much for the fine chocolate, I will really enjoy it. You are just a good Stepsi, and there is no other and such a delicious boy has to be so far from me and makes himself worry about his old mother who really still wants to work, also so that the boy will not have to worry in the next months. Hopefully I will continue to have luck with selling things. Now we are having quite nice weather and it is once again warmer during the day.

Write me what you need so that Liese can bring it with her, do you have enough clothes, handkerchiefs?

Stay well, my Stepsi, many Issubs

Mama

Chapter 19: Land Rats

Steffi wrote:

(Kurrent) Stgt., 3.XI. 1938.

My dearest Lieschen!

My cold is already better and everything is in order here concerning my delay in returning here. How I am going to do that with you, I do not know, since I already made various hints, I should be able to receive letters from over there. Now to you, my dearest. Do not leave until your cold is completely gone because you will surely catch another cold on the train and on the ship passage it will certainly not be a small thing for us land rats. You surely are having a difficult time, all the errands, all the goodbyes, and in addition you do not even have the certificate of good conduct. On top of all that, you are spending your nerves at the dentist. I am all for you leaving as soon as possible, but just in a leisurely manner. In the end, this rat race is stupid, but you have to be well, Lieschen, please take care of yourself, be careful when you are sick, I do love you so much, you probably do not even know how much. As soon as you have the visa—take the Normandie only if you do not have to show your reservation, otherwise take a ship that only has one class—so you could go in the evening to see Herr Friedmann at the A.G. and ask him to expedite your situation. In the meantime, should you have received the summons from the Prinz Eugenstr., so ask Friedmann what is happening with my thing. I would really like to go to a notary, but if nothing at all is happening, I would not like to have to spend more money for nothing. Unfortunately, I have little time, daily from 8–1 o'clock and 3–6 o'clock and also later. Only Friday afternoon and Saturday are completely free, then I will certainly go to the Sw[iss] Consulate, but I still do not know when you are coming. Do you still want to come this week? You actually wanted to leave today. Please write as soon as you know something. Today I was already worried because you said that you would be writing soon and still no letter has arrived. Why did you have a new suitcase made, will it enable you to leave better? Still, I do not want to hold myself up with these questions, but rather let it wait until your dear visit and ask you about the things that I have forgotten, as much as I can remember. There is your blanket, I mean the thin one, since the quilt for my bed will be too large (flannel). Then I have ping pong balls that I could give away here, whereas there they will be of no use to anyone. I would naturally rather have the RM 400.—better than nothing. You need not concern yourself about not being able to travel with the J on the passport, that only concerns the passports which, as I told you, pertain to other countries. What will be with my passport I do not know, perhaps when Hede has a chance she can inquire, what kind of Austrian goes through the education and then lives in the old *Reich*. This does not pertain to you, but I still have to follow the laws and here they are still not aware that we do not have a Board of Trade. I forgot my stationery box as well as my notebook. Enclosed I am sending the last pictures. In the meantime, the chorus has already begun and I will get there too late. That really does not matter since I do not sing along anyway.

So hopefully you are better, in any case a speedy recovery and heartfelt greetings to you, beloved Lieschen, with many

Strong kisses from your

Steffi.

Greetings to Mama, Tante Rosa, your parents, and Hede, Tante Steffi, and Onkel Alfred. I do not have any wishes since every gift would be unnecessary and would stir up trouble.

On November 3, 1938, Steffi's friend Ludwig Frankenstein wrote again from Hannover-Linden, Germany, telling Steffi that he was practicing very hard and wanted, once and for all, to become a good violist while waiting for his brother to get to the U.S. "Then we have to leave everything to Fate. Just be happy that your bride got her visa. Then you will have your turn already next year!" He then wrote that he was still missing some of his chamber music and that Steffi should really occupy himself with retrieving it and sending it to him.

On November 5 Liese wrote:

My dearest Steffi,

First and foremost I want to tell you that I am completely well! You need not worry about me and at the time that I wrote the last letter, I had a pretty bad cold, but it was gone by the next day. And was in a bad mood (and am) because of all the other things because I still do not have the certificate. Yesterday I spent practically the whole day at P.[rinz] E.[ugen] Strasse, but at least now I know that the certificate is there and is ready, but I still do not have it in my hands. If I do not have it by Tuesday, then it would be too late to send off the luggage. I even was at Friedmann (naturally without making reference to you) and he put me on the urgent list. I now have to wait to see if it has any success. I did not ask him anything about your thing, so he knows nothing. I believe that you should absolutely have the picture notarized because the card that your mother received refers to the date and it would be too late to write back and forth.

I thank you for the dear pictures; the one with both girls in the tub is adorable. Hopefully you are doing well and your cold is over. If everything works out, I would like to leave here on Thursday eve. [November 10th] and fly to Zurich Sunday or Monday [November 13th or 14th] (if I get the Swiss visa). I would like to stay there 1 day, then 2 days in Paris and then—goodness!

Today I will pack, the suitcase is very nice and big; hopefully everything will fit in it. And 4 big crates are standing next to and on top of one another so that one would think that the apartment is a warehouse. Monday the packers are coming and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday are supposed rest days on which I still only have to take care of the final errands of the ticket (Normandie), then dentist and farewell visits, and also the shipping of the suitcase, etc.

Hede will inquire about "Israel." I will tell you about muj [illegible] when I see you; for the moment you should be happy with that. I see your Mama often and she is helpful whenever she can be. She will hopefully have the eviction postponed until December. What should I do, Mama will not take the RM 31 for the ticket. Should I "sneak" it somewhere into her handbag or bring it to you?



Steffi and sport students, September 23, 1938

Have you already inquired about the flights from Stgt? I hope you are more diligent in writing than I, I am so happy with every bit of news. How will that be? I am leaving so reluctantly, even though I really know....

I will write you again on Tuesday if I am really coming on Friday, [November 11th] in any case, find a place for me to stay.—If I do not get the certificate (by Tuesday) then the whole plan will fall through.

Now I have to close, I have to do away with the chaos here. Papa will take the letter to the main post office. Everyone sends you heartfelt greetings.

I greet you and kiss you with all my heart and am already very, very sad. But I am happy about Stgt, that you know.

Your

Liesl

Liese's letter crossed Steffi's of the same date:

(Kurrent) Stgt. 5.XI. 1938

My dear Lieschen!

Unfortunately I still have no news from you today, therefore do not know when you are coming and if this postcard will still reach you. Am writing from the main post office, after just coming from the Federal Consulate. I received the information that the Vienna General Consulate is responsible, but the official told me without guarantee that if you have the Am[erican] and Fr[ench] visa, as well as the ship ticket and train ticket for Le Havre, you could possibly get a 2-day stay. Therefore you could fly to your Onkel. I hope that I will have further news from you this evening and kiss you affectionately.

Your Stephan

Many greetings to your dear parents, relatives. Write what else I should ask about here for you or what else I should take care of. The airplane flies on weekdays at 14:35 from Stuttgart-Lüblingen and arrives at 15:25, fare is 25 RM. This postcard will just arrive in Vienna at 6:44 a.m. and will hopefully be delivered then. The airplane to Vienna has unfortunately already left, otherwise I would have sent this with air mail. Once again, heartfelt kisses from your

Steffi

Steffi's friend Dr. Adolf Topf wrote once again, a bit annoyed that he was the only one in the Viennese group who stayed in touch with Steffi, and yet Steffi did not take the time to answer Topf's questions regarding the gym instruction that Steffi was receiving in Stuttgart. Since Topf was now teaching at the only Jewish middle school in Vienna, he wanted to learn ways to make the instruction "more Jewish." For instance, he asked if there were a Jewish way of saying what the Germans used: "*Gut Heil*" [Good health!],[54] such as "*Schalom Chaver*" [Hello, friend] or just "*Chaver*" [friend]. In closing he apologized for including a stamp for Steffi, but he was not certain if Steffi would have money for that.

On November 7, 1938, Lisbeth and her husband, Aryan, wrote from Sydney, Australia, to wish Steffi a happy birthday on his and Lisbeth's mutual birthday (in late November). Certainly they realized how long the letter would take to arrive!



Verification of Signature.

The following signature of

Herrn Dr. Stephan S c h i f f e r e s , Sport-teacher in Vienna 18, Neustift am Walde 45.

I verify.

Herr Dr. Schiffleres showed his flash photo from his driver's licence from the 13. Oct. 1938 to the Police President - Traffic Department - in Vienna. List No. 20 699/U.

Stuttgart, the 7th November 1938.

the Deputy

of the Notary H a f e l e :

Law Assessor :

E x p e n s e s :

MindGeb.gem.§§ 26,39 RKO ... 2.- RM.

UR No. 4488/1938.

Verification of Steffi's signature

[54] According to our cousin, Dr. Robert Beig, a Viennese athlete, this would have been a customary greeting.

Liese's continued frustration was expressed in a letter dated November 7, 1938:

7.XI.1938.

Dearest Steffi,

Your dear card came this morning and I thank you very much for all the things that you have taken care of. In the meantime you should have received my letter in which I complain about all my worries. Unfortunately nothing has changed yet, that is I am still not the proud owner of the certificate. Onkel Alfred, for whom you turned in the documents later, has had them for a long time. Today I was there again, they did not let me in, it would not have made any sense anyway because they did not deliver it to me. They assured me of another note of urgency, hopefully it will help. My suitcase is all set to go and should have already left. Hopefully it will come (and I) in time for the ship. I can do nothing to expedite and also do not know how long this can be drawn out. So the notification of my arrival on Thursday in Stgt is doubtful, I will tell you, if I am even able to reach the ship on the 19th, of my arrival in a timely fashion. I already have the ship ticket and if I then have to cancel it (if it is even possible), that would be quite bad. Well, I have not given up hope, but will have to do it tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. With that, I cannot even feel guilty for having turned it in too late. Urging Friedmann is of no use because I am a stranger and he has many and much more difficult cases.

I will have to stay here another 2 days after receiving the certificate, 1. because of the Rec. 30.—changing money 2. because of the supply.

Dr. Ransom has not answered either of my two letters, but that does not matter, I can announce my arrival with a letter telegraph.

Unfortunately I cannot occupy myself so much with your mother, she is so nice and often comes over. At night I am mostly dead tired and then my parents want to spend the last days with me. Everyone, especially Hede, helped me so much.

Mama already received the eviction. Hede put in for an extension for the apartment. Hopefully it will work out so that she can be successful at selling everything, e.g., Mayer's Lexikon (RM 9)!

I hope you are doing well and that you do not need to work harder than is necessary. I hope to see you as soon as possible, unfortunately for such a short time. It is really so sad. But before I continue in this tone, I should rather end the letter and send you sooo many

Intimate kisses

Liesl.

Bertha wrote Steffi [November 7, 1938] that Liese was very busy preparing for her upcoming departure and everyone was helping her, including Bertha. "...so you see that one can sometimes make good use of the *Schani*."[55] Apparently Liese was going to leave Vienna for a stop in Stuttgart on Thursday evening and would be bringing the things that Steffi had forgotten. Bertha continued:

> ...and if there are other things that you have forgotten, they can be sent later. After all, you will be in Stuttgart for quite some time. Tomorrow the advertisement that I put into the Times will appear, Liese had suggested the *Daily Telegraph*, but then thought I should inquire which would be better and the man at the bureau thought the *Times*.

As far as selling household items, she continued:

> Thanks to you, Stepsi, I just sold the radio for RM.7.—and the biggest miracle is that I sold the ancient lexicon for RM.7. Unfortunately until now the small things have sold and the large things are still standing. I asked Hede Strauss [sic] to request an extension for the date of eviction and she promised to do it.

Thus, she told him, "You do not have to worry about me, I am getting money almost daily [from selling things from the apartment]."

Bertha also wrote that Steffi should be pleased with the 400 Reichmarks that Dr. Strauss was able to get for him as severance pay, and also said that Steffi had received 14 Pf. from the city streetcar line in payment for a complaint he had made on June 2nd!

She told him that he should not keep the food they sent him for so long and said that Liese was going to be bringing things with her.

> If only I could go along so I could see Stepsi. Still, hopefully I will be going to England soon, then I will come to see my fine boy. How I will be able to stand the long separation, I still do not know, still I do not want to make you heavy-hearted. It is just very very much to be going through, one after the other, I think it is too much for me.
>
> Dear, good boy, do not be angry that I am complaining. One feels so bad. Liese's mother is, understandably, so very depressed, but what should I say? I am losing everything and am not even seeing Stepsi any time soon."

The report from Tante Gisi about Lisbeth and Aryan in Australia was that they were impressed with the people and the country. Bertha also wrote about the Allinas, saying that Tante Rosa was diligent and went to the store to actually prevent Fritz and his father from fighting.

> The other day they went at each other and poor Tante Rosa ended up crying a lot. She is just now seeing how Fritz is because before she always played ostrich. Mary[56] is still angry with Fritz, what sense does that make anyway [their sham of

---

[55] *Schani* is a word in Viennese dialect, meaning second-class servant. When I asked my mother's friend, Elizabeth [Billy] Ostermann Wechter about it, she laughed and remarked that she had not heard the word in fifty years!

[56] Marianne/Mary Kohn, born April 11, 1910, was married to Fritz Allina from August 15, 1938, until August 25, 1940.

> a marriage] and how will this story actually end, only God knows. The business seems to be doing very well, from what Tante Rosa tells me.

Then she asked about the possibility of getting a job for her through the Jewish Community Center there in Stuttgart. Little did she (or anyone else, for that matter) know what was to come.

> Are the big worries there finished? As I heard from Liese, things have quieted down there after your delay. Are you also having such nice warm weather there? Enjoy the last few hours of being together in Europe with Liese.

On November 9, 1938, Steffi wrote to Liese saying that he hoped she had the necessary certificate so she could depart. And in any case, he still did not have a place for her to stay, but would arrange that as soon as he knew when she was coming. Then he thanked everyone for their efforts on his behalf and for the suitcase he was going to be getting for his birthday. He wrote that he really did not need a new suitcase, just a larger one than hers because men's clothes took up more room than women's. He concluded:

> A ridiculous little thing comes to mind, bring the negative that you have from Onkel Alfred because you can have good copies made here for 9 Rpf and you can send everyone one. If you do not get the certificate, then do go to Fr. at the Jewish Community Center to ask for help, otherwise you will have to wait much longer.



Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung
Wien I., [illegible]
Tel. No. U 45-4-40 und U 45-4-45
(Aktenzeichen)

5883

11. Nov. 1938 x)
(Ort und Datum)

x) Zentralstelle Wien
xx) [illegible] 23. Feb. 1939
(Straße)

Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung
(Gültigkeitsdauer: ein Monat ab Ausstellung)

Gegen die Ausreise des(r) Dr. Schiffer Stefan
(Beruf oder Stand, Vor- und Zuname)
18. Wohnsch am Hallein 45 geboren am 21. 11. 1905 in Wien
(Wohnung)
und seiner Ehefrau _____, geborene _____, geboren am _____
in _____, und seiner Kinder _____, geboren am _____
_____, geboren am _____, _____, geboren am _____,
habe ich keine Bedenken.

Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung

Dienststempel

(Unterschrift)

Certificate dated November 11, 1938, that states that Steffi did not owe back taxes

Chapter 21: Everything Is Like a Thunderstorm[57]

The critical situation of Jews in the German Reich became evident after the infamous *Kristallnacht*:

> *Kristallnacht*—literally, "Night of Crystal," is often referred to as the "Night of Broken Glass." The name refers to the wave of violent anti-Jewish pogroms which took place on November 9 and 10, 1938, throughout Germany and annexed Austria, and in areas of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia recently occupied by German troops.
>
> Instigated primarily by Nazi Party officials and members of the SA (*Sturmabteilungen*: literally Assault Detachments, but commonly known as Storm Troopers) and Hitler Youth, *Kristallnacht* owes its name to the shards of shattered glass that lined German streets in the wake of the pogrom—broken glass from the windows of synagogues, homes, and Jewish-owned businesses plundered and destroyed during the violence.
>
> In its aftermath, German officials announced that *Kristallnacht* had erupted as a spontaneous outburst of public sentiment in response to the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, a German embassy official stationed in Paris. Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old Polish Jew, had shot the diplomat on November 7, 1938. A few days earlier, German authorities had expelled thousands of Jews of Polish citizenship living in Germany from the *Reich*; Grynszpan had received news that his parents, residents in Germany since 1911, were among them.[58]
>
> On the night of the pogrom in November [9] 1938 the synagogue on Hospitalstrasse [Stuttgart] was already set on fire at 3 o'clock in the morning of November 10th. One hour before that the SA—people dressed in civilian clothes—and other National Socialists broke down the synagogue door. On the inside, according to an eyewitness report, many pews were thrown one upon the other, covered with gasoline, and set on fire. The fire department was already present when the arson occurred. It is possible that firemen were participants in the arson activity. The fire department limited itself to guarding the neighboring buildings and could lift the fire alert at around 5 o'clock, after the burned down synagogue and the remnants were put out. A few days later the synagogue had to be torn down. Under the direction of the architect Ernst Guggenheimer, 15 Jews who were taken from concentration camps were used to do this dangerous and distressing job. The damaged stones of the synagogue were sold to winemakers from Remstal to create wine village walls. The income was usurped by the *Gestapo* [official secret state police, abbreviation of *Geheime Staatspolizei*]. The only remnant of the synagogue was the commandment plaque from the roof of the building and the fallen statue that was placed in the synagogue, which was constructed in 1952. [59]

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[57] *"Alles wie ein Gewitter,"* Lotte Landauer in an undated letter to Steffi.

[58] See www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005201.

[59] Translation from http://www.alemannia-judaica.de/stuttgart_synagoge_a.htm.



Synagogue on Hospitalstrasse in Stuttgart



Burning Stuttgart Synagogue, November 10, 1938

On November 12, 1938, my father was arrested and sent to a prison with other young Jewish men. The next day they were transported to what was, for them, an unknown destination, although when they arrived I am certain that they knew that it was Dachau, with its ridiculous sign, "*Arbeit Macht Frei*." The distance between Stuttgart and Dachau was approximately 128 miles. One hour after my father's arrest, my mother arrived in Stuttgart, only to find out the horrible news. She was actually making a stop in Stuttgart to see Steffi on her way to Zurich to see her Onkel Emil [Kurz], who was a first cousin of Liese's mother. Onkel Emil had left Vienna earlier and eventually made his way to the United States.

On November 14, 1938, Tante Stephy wrote to Liese at Onkel Emil's telling her to keep her head up.

> Steffi unfortunately became very ill[60] just like many others and one also does not know the cause of the sickness. We are all well. Everything is the same, just that we miss you very much, my dear Lieserl. If only we had you here with us and could console you.

She also mentioned that Steffi's mother was going to be working for her friend Käthe, helping care for her mother, and said that they would share her letter with Bertha. And they would certainly help her, "...of that you can be certain, my dear Lieserl. The local doctors also find no reason for this sickness, not just in Stuttgart."[61] Sophie, Liese's mother, also wrote and apologized for not having written more lovingly the previous day.

> I am very happy that you are with good Onkel Emil, who is watching out for you. I thank him with all my heart. Please, my dearest Lieschen, pull yourself together, otherwise you will get sick and that will make things worse. Be wise. Steffi will get well again, he always was. Keep your chin up; you are young and so capable. I would so love to have you here so I could hug you, so I am doing it in absentia. So be my dear, good child and do not worry me or the others. You have to stay well, Steffi will surely also get well.

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[60] The German word is *marod* (literally, "sick"), which was their way of referring to people who had been taken to concentration camps.

[61] Another coded way of saying that arrests were happening in many places, not just Stuttgart.

> Do write us often, dearest Lieserl, but in detail, stay well and distract yourself so that you think of other things. I am also working a lot. Steffi's mother was here yesterday and is taking the sickness better than you, my good child. So please heed my words...

Liese's dear friend Billy [Elizabeth Ostermann] had moved to Basel, Switzerland, with her father in July 1938. With the help of some people, they were able to smuggle out the list of names and addresses of their subscribers, thereby enabling them to continue producing their monthly medical journal. Billy stayed in Switzerland and was able to complete the second half of her medical studies. Because she was able to pick up the Swiss dialect, Billy was more easily accepted by her classmates at medical school. Otherwise, she said, the Swiss were not very tolerant of foreigners. Upon completion of her studies, Billy worked in a hospital and then, from 1945 to 1948, substituted for country physicians who were in the war. In February 1948, she was able to emigrate to the United States where she settled in New York and stayed with an aunt. She was able to pass the medical boards on her first attempt. Her first summer job was at a Jewish camp for wealthy children in the Catskills. Then she had a rotating internship. And finally, in 1950, she opened her own practice.

Liese was going to make a stop in Basel for one hour and meet Billy at the train station. Billy had written and illustrated the directions on a postcard, telling Liese she must go to the Swiss side because Billy was not allowed to cross the border into France. Who knows what state of mind my mother was in at that point?

In 1999 my father wrote an essay about his internment in Dachau:

> When Hitler marched into Austria with the German Army on March 12, 1938, he was greeted with great jubilation by the Austrian Nazis. Many of the Viennese who belonged to Schuschnigg's[62] "*Vaterländischer Front* [Fatherland Front]" quickly placed the swastika on their jackets and if he did not win their consent 99%, then he certainly had a significant part of the known Austrian anti-Semites behind him. The Nazi mob immediately began with the threats of *JUDENVERFOLGUNGEN* [chasing Jews]. Jews were barged into on the street [roughed up], hit, mocked, robbed, and arrested. The swastika and the political slogans had to be washed off of the sidewalk. Hede and Liese belonged to one such group [that was forced to wash off the sidewalk] and they got toothbrushes as cleaning implements. From the true damage which some received through thrashing and robbing of apartments, it was as with so many things in Vienna, an amusement for the people. The police naturally were ordered not to step in for the Jews.
>
> In Germany, where Hitler had already ruled since 1933, there were already concentration camps where rich and politically influential people were brought without any legal action taken against them and soon also the Austrian Jews were brought there. Hitler wanted to make Great Germany and the part of Europe that had been subdued under his rule and, if possible, the whole world, free of Jews. In the beginning people could get out of the concentration camps, if they could

[62] Kurt Schuschnigg was Chancellor of the First Austrian Republic, following the assassination of Engelbert Dollfuss in July 1934, until the *Anschluss*. After his efforts to keep Austria independent failed, he resigned. He was arrested by the Germans and eventually interned in various concentration camps. Liberated in 1945 by the U.S. Army, he spent most of the rest of his life in academia in the United States. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_Schuschnigg)

document immediate emigration. The large concentration camps had the well-known words: "*Arbeit macht frei*" over the entry gate. Senseless because no one (especially through work) was freed. Naturally one could not take one's own assets out of Germany. Incredible levies, taxes, *Reichsfluchtsteuer* [tax for fleeing the Reich] impeded this. But the rich people who had the opportunity to emigrate did not resent that because the ordinances that followed in dealing with the Jews became even worse, until (in 1942, the beginning of the Holocaust) finally at the gathering at Wannsee the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" was decided, to exterminate the Jews.

As was said, the Viennese were always anti-Semitic. After the *Anschluss* the Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* [*The People's Observer*] wrote: in Austria there was always a healthy anti-Semitism and the Viennese wanted to inform the *Führer* [the leader, Hitler] that they were in agreement with [his] hatred of the Jews. Now the concentration camps were naturally planned and more and more were being built.

My friend Fritz Weiniger (from the *Hakoah*) and his twin brother, Max, were arrested on the street shortly after the *Anschluss* and Fritz had to help with the building of the concentration camp Dachau and when it was prepared during the time of *Kristallnacht* (November 9, 1938), the masses of arrested Jews filled it up. Fritz Weiniger and others who built it were sent to Buchenwald. As I said, the big events and the delivery of many Jews to the various concentration camps were planned and Hitler used the shooting of vom Rath's third Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris by a young Polish Jew, Henryck Grienszpan as an excuse.

On November 9, 1938, the Jewish stores and Jewish homes in the whole Reich were plundered, the displays destroyed. Many synagogues and Jewish properties were set on fire. The insurance companies were forced to pay the damages not to the Jews, but rather to the Nazi state. The property owners and Jewish employees as well as doctors and lawyers were beaten, arrested, and sent to various camps. In 1938 these camps were not yet rigged with cyclon [sic] gas or with Topf's crematories for human extermination, whose starving corpses were first discovered in 1945 by the Americans, English, and Russians.

After this introduction, I would like to briefly speak of my 54 days in Nazi captivity. Elsewhere I have written that I was awakened from my sleep in my room on Gartenstrasse 30 in Stuttgart by a noise and saw S.A. men with civilian jackets over their brown shirts setting fire to the neighboring synagogue.

Afraid because the fire could have reached our house, I took what I believed to have been my portfolio with documents and ran to the sports students, Siegel and Philippson, who were renting [a room] at Frau Bechhöfer [a Jewish woman who lived on Johannesstrasse]. I saw fire engines, which, as I later learned, were instructed to prevent the fire from spreading to the neighboring houses, but not to put out the synagogue fire, which they eagerly did. The portfolio that I took along was the Piano Quintet by Dvorak and we all had a good laugh.

As the other places reported, I saw the Torah scroll lying in flames on the roof of the entrance. Since Liese, whose journey [to America] on the SS Normandie was scheduled for November 19 [Monday], wanted to say goodbye to me in Stuttgart

on November 12 [Saturday], I went back to Gartenstrasse where I saw my clothes and belongings untouched and walked behind an S.S. man at the House of the *Chaluzim*. This S.S. man and a partner had been instructed to arrest all Jewish men there and bring them to the police station. We were put with others in a little cell in the police building.

This cell had a hole in the ceiling through which we could see the sun, otherwise we had no air or seat or opportunity to go to the toilet and had to stand the whole time without knowing what would happen to us.

I can still remember that I thought, "When will we see the sun again?" To my surprise, at midnight we were taken in many police cars to Dachau.

In the car we were not allowed to look around and it was not very pleasant when the two *Gestapo* officials who accompanied us repeatedly clicked their revolvers. So it was already morning when we arrived at Dachau, the pioneers [Zionists] and I and a few other Jews from Stuttgart and environs. There for the first time I saw the senseless "*Arbeit macht frei*" above the gate of the camp. We got out of the car and saw the camp with a huge amount of Jewish prisoners, a sea of people in striped blue and white uniforms, an impression that despite its sadness was simply laughable. The minute we got out of the car an S.S. man ordered us to step into a truck. In hopes of being able to leave there, I and others jumped on and we drove out, but had to immediately return to the camp. It turns out that the truck had to be more loaded up in order to easily get out under the iron gate; a little disappointment.

Then we were led to the big *Appell* [roll-call] place and had to, as we later became accustomed to doing, stand and wait. An older man, a doctor from Ludwigsburg, as his son told us who also had to stand in our group, had a heart attack and fell to the ground. We had to let him lie there and the Nazi officer, it was probably the Camp Commander on his bicycle, got off of his bike, stepped on the fallen man and screamed at us, "You should all perish like this!" The old man had bloody foam coming out of his mouth; he died right in front of our eyes.

Actually we were taken into huts where there were neat beds and were ordered to leave our money there. I hid my change in one of the beds. I never saw this hut again; it was probably the home of an S.S. officer.

Before we got to our Block (20), we had to go into a big room, where the young S.S. guards sprayed the people with a fire hose. They had great fun [because] they could spray some men who had large bellies longer and harder. Then our dates (birth, arrival) were registered in a book, in addition the Jews were naturally put in completely separate blocks from the Aryan prisoners.

For uniforms we received: pants, jacket, cap, and shoes. My jacket was not blue and white and thin like the pants, it was a dark blue old military jacket on which a number had to be fastened. The S.S. guard had their field green uniforms with the insignia of their rank, the Aryan guards were also prisoners who had dark and apparently somewhat warmer uniforms.

Every Block had a "Block elder" and every barrack room had a "barrack elder." Our Block elder wore a green triangle, just as the Jews wore a *Mogen Dovid* [Star of David] on their jackets; it signified that he was a criminal. Our barrack elder, a

young *Sudeten* German [ethnic Germans living in the lands of the Bohemian crown], had a red triangle, which meant he was a Socialist.

[Other triangles meant that the prisoner was a gypsy (brown), a homosexual (pink), or a Jehovah's Witness (blue).] The criminal hit us with his stick as he saw the S.S. men do when he happened to be furious, and that was often. When one had the uncomfortable "honor" of being spoken to by an S.S. man, then they yelled "Caps off." Otherwise he would hit you in the head. The S.S. guards consisted of young boys who practiced hitting Jews. An S.S. man broke my glasses because he decided that I had laughed when he spoke to me. Others stood with guns even though there was barbed-wire which was electrified and could not be touched. Others had fun calling to you so that you would go to the fence.

Those of us who had been delivered there by car from Stuttgart had it relatively good. The poor Viennese Jews came by train where they were forced by the Nazi guards to beat one another in the face with their fists and when the S.S. man determined that he had not hit him hard enough, then he joined in [the hitting]. So we were immediately able to recognize the Viennese by their black and blue, swollen faces.

There I met Dr. Haas,[63] my cousin Fritz [Allina], Dr. Theodor Korolanyi, who also lived in Neustift am Walde, and Dr. Hitchman. But I did not see my Onkel Arthur [Schifferes], who died there, nor my cousin Heini [Pollak], nor Robert Weiss [husband of Tante Gisi's niece] and Ferri, who was a sports colleague from *Hakoah*, who were all certainly there at the same time [as I].

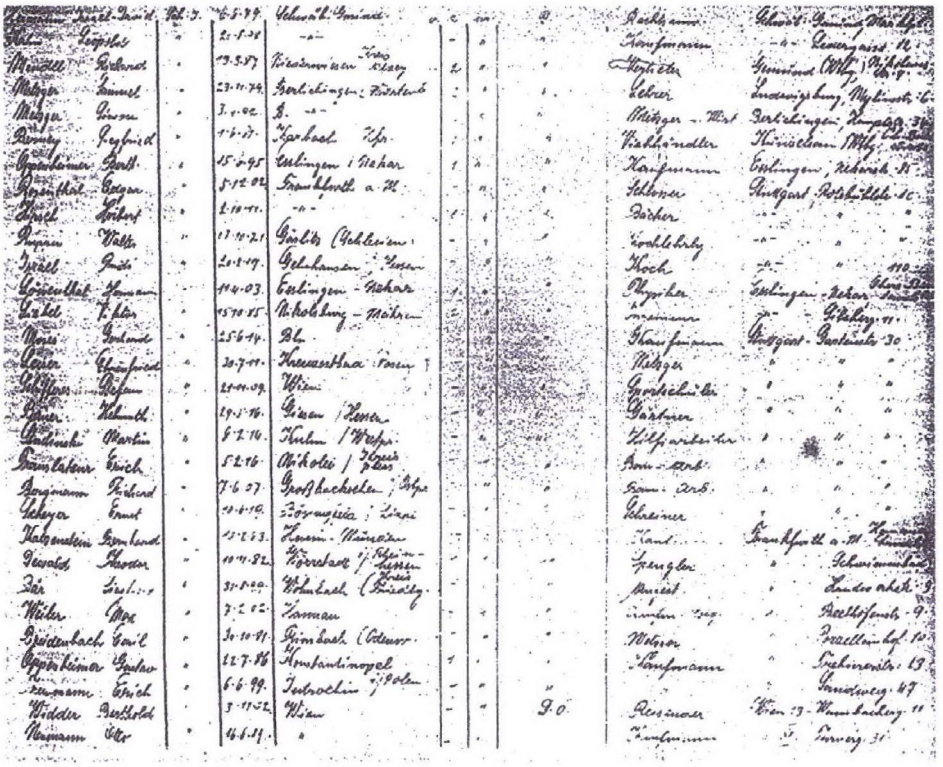
Many S.S. men were raw by nature and were always ready to beat someone; others had the obligation to beat up "members of the lower race." (I read a handwritten document of Himmler's that S.S. men had to learn to be "hard," when it came to that, to see blood). The History Channel reported that all S.S. guards from concentration camps had to see the worst anti-Semitic propaganda films of Dr. Goebbels: "*Jud Süss*" [Jew Süss, referring to the protagonist, Joseph Süss Oppenheimer] and "The Eternal Jew," [Der ewige Jude] where Jews were depicted as rats and vermin. These films were to inform the German masses (the *Herrenvolk*) that Jews were not human, but rather like rats and vermin who harmed the people and therefore should be treated like vile people who had to be destroyed.

We slept on wooden boards with a bit of straw, one layer on the floor, the other over it and [we] had a blanket. I picked the upper level. In the middle, between the Blocks, there was a spigot with cold water where we drank and could wash ourselves. The routine was to spend the day with *Appells*. Naturally we had no watches, had to wake up at dawn, stand in a row, and march in single file and were counted. Then we had to march around until noon, then after lunch another *Appell*, again counted, again march until evening *Appell,* and finally go to sleep in the Block at night in the darkness.

Here I would again like to emphasize that I was in Dachau in the year 1938, after the *Anschluss* of Austria in the "thousand year *Reich*," that is, long before the Holocaust (1942), before there was forced labor with Zyclon B gas installations

[63] Hugo Haas was Hans's uncle, who was married to Hans' aunt, Katherine Deutsch.

and crematoriums for the starved corpses. The camp was filled to the brim after the mass arrest after *Kristallnacht* so that the sole occupation was the senseless marching around, *Appell*, and again marching.



List of people arrested after Kristallnacht, including Schifferes Stefan, 21.11.09 Wien, Sport student Stuttgart Gartenstr 30 (Apparently there were seven other *Chaluzim* living at Gartenstrasse 30 who were arrested and interned at the same time as Steffi.)

The food, which was in two large containers, was fetched from the kitchen by four strong, young prisoners from our Block where they were chased away by two Nazi cooks with white aprons and revolvers who said "quickly." These "volunteers" were rewarded with double rations. When there was a search for a washer for the huge containers, I volunteered and I had to take the large containers to the food division and wash them out with cold water and a scouring brush. For that I also received double portions. For meals we either had beans or lentils or potatoes or soup. If we had beans or lentils, naturally a lot would stick to the container, and I not only had my double portion, but also so much beans and lentils that I could not eat it all. There was no opportunity to give any to others or to save some for later, I had to wash out the containers. Everything else was forbidden. On the other hand, if there were merely thin soup or unpeeled potatoes, then just the potato peels would be left in the containers that had to be cleaned. Yet despite some days of hunger during the fifty-four days of my imprisonment, I gained over 5 kilograms [11 pounds]. Despite my frequent abundance, I stuffed potato peels in my pants pockets since we never knew if we would be getting food. Sometimes we had to spend days on the *Appellplatz* [roll-call location] without eating; it was always "as punishment." We never knew why, the rumor was that a prisoner escaped, which was not really possible. I

remember the date November 22, 1938, not just because it was the day after my 29th birthday, but rather because we had to stand out in rank and file the whole day in the cold weather and constant rain. No wonder that my Onkel Arthur, who was 58 years old, became ill and shortly thereafter died. He was surely not the only one.

Then there were "punishment" exercises. On cold days we had to march and the older people had difficulties since no one could stop to go to the toilet. So I saw some old men marching with wet pants. I and some younger men stayed behind and when the S.S. man was not visible, we relieved ourselves and ran after the others who were marching. Naturally it stank horribly. The Block and the barracks elder soon gave up marching with us and sometimes an S.S. man stopped us for "punishment" exercises. He made us do push-ups and other exercises, which were often difficult for the older people and, depending on his mood, ordered us with cursing, kicking, or beatings. Since I came from the sports place and had experience with marching, I stepped out of the line and took up the position of group leader. Once an S.S. man stopped us and took over the command in order to annoy the older men. Even though such exercising was easy for me, I stood next to him and did not have to do the exercises. The young S.S. man apparently had a certain respect for the "leader" of the group.

We marched and marched and sang songs until the Nazi order came, that Jews must not sing. A group of musical inmates arranged a choir and sang Sunday on the main street. They sang nicely with a choir leader. Suddenly the commandant, the same one who kicked the dying doctor, when we arrived, appeared. He kicked the listeners who did not see him coming aside, walked through the circle and screamed his command to stop singing and never do it again. So we marched mostly silently only with commands interrupting [us] day in and day out in the cold Bavarian winter. I don't remember many details any more, except that we were called to a Block, where Gentile inmates as interrogators asked us all kinds of personal questions. The Nazis marked everything down in writing, as we now know. We were told that this particular "office" was from the Office for Race Research: *Amt für Rassenforschung*.

On Christmas the S.S. had off, there was no one to be seen. The news about their absence spread rapidly and many of us got together in a Block which had a podium and various young people who were well sang or spoke to the gathered prisoners. I stepped up and sang the following "stanza": You friends, listen up, we will soon go home, the word here is: "JEWS OUT!" [*Ihr Freunde nun höret, es geht bald nach Haus', die Parole hier lautet: "JUDEN HINAUS*!]

We had permission to write home and I could do this twice and Moma saved the postcards, one of which was lost. I wrote her that we sometimes see my clarinet teacher and she understood what I was reporting: his name was Franz Hunger. He was the third clarinetist of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. The Stuttgart Social Services sent me a few dollars, which I later received. People who had money could buy things for themselves at a canteen. So I happily recall Dr. Hugo Haas, a Viennese lawyer with whom Hans spent his apprentice years before he joined the practice of our father-in-law. Dr. Haas bought himself, as did others, a warm pair of underpants and a cleaning cloth. They cut a hole in the cloth and pulled it over their heads like an undershirt. It was announced over the loudspeaker that this cutting was strictly forbidden, but if one was not caught and for that they had

no time, one could also not be punished. Apparently the wearing of cleaning cloths "destroyed the economic value of items" and was, therefore, not allowed.

When Dr. Haas got his emigration—the only possible way of getting out of the camp—he gave me the cleaning cloth and underpants, which warmed me very well during the cold December days because the striped pants were very thin.

As has often been revealed in this description of the conditions in Dachau in the year 1938, shortly after the beginning of this camp, before the beginning of the second World War and before the Holocaust: At that time Hitler still wanted to impress the foreign press and so the decree that Jewish schools whose continuation was interrupted by the arrest of its teachers must continue. For this reason the teachers and students from the various camps were released. I was called on January 4, 1939, got my clothes, and heard from a prisoner who had been released from the neighboring Block (22) that someone named Schifferes had died there. It was my Onkel Arthur who, just like so many others, could not tolerate the exertion. I got a train ticket to Stuttgart where I again joined the sports students who did not go to Dachau, but rather were locked up in an old castle. Werner (Stern), the *Chaluz* who had many agricultural permits to enter the United Kingdom, gave me one to use, so I packed my things, and quickly went to Vienna. There my mother packed all my things, I made various farewell visits and traveled by train on March 22, 1939, via Holland and the Channel to London.

One of the postcards my father sent his mother from Dachau had been sent on November 17, 1938, and addressed to her at the home of her dear friend, Käthe Neumann, Vienna IX./1 Grünentorgasse 17.

On the front of the postcard (see next page), next to where the address was written, the heading says in large letters: Concentration Camp Dachau 3 K. The regulations, written in very small print, are as follows:

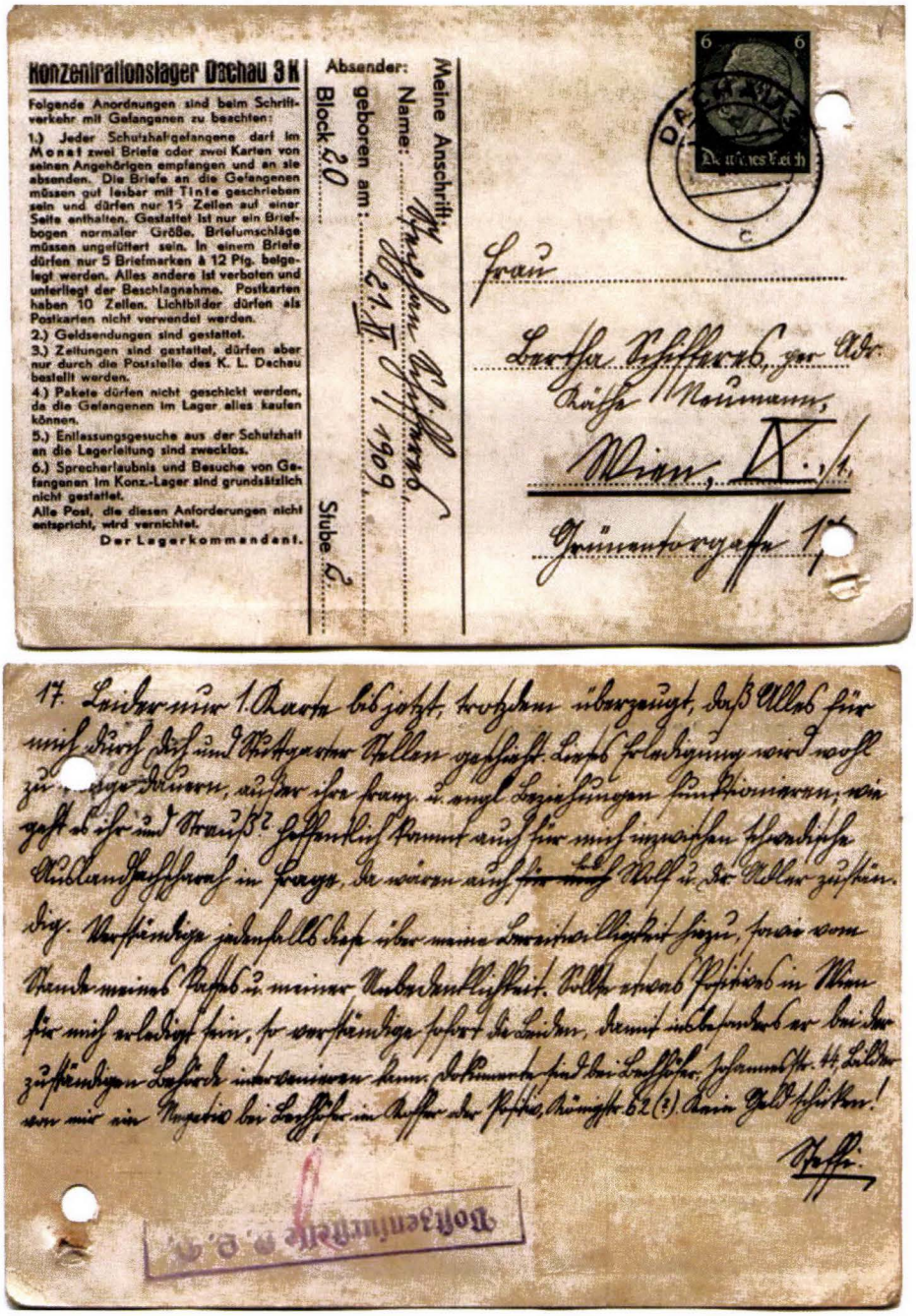
The following regulations are to be observed by the prisoners in [their] correspondence:

1) Everyone in protective custody is permitted to receive two letters or two postcards from their relatives and sent to them. The letters to the prisoners have to be very legible, written with ink and may have 15 lines on one side. A normal writing paper is allowed. Envelopes cannot be stuffed. Only 5 stamps of 12 Pfg. value can be included. Everything else is forbidden and will be confiscated. Postcards have 10 lines. Photographs are not permitted to be used as postcards.
2) Sending money is permitted.
3) Newspapers are permitted, but only if they are ordered from the Post Office of the K. L. Dachau.
4) Packages are not allowed to be sent since the prisoners can buy everything in the camp.
5) Efforts to have the protective custody removed are futile.
6) Speaking opportunities and visits to the prisoners in the conc.-camp are absolutely not permitted.

All mail which does not comply with these requirements will be destroyed.

The Camp Commandant.

The area on the card next to all the regulations has the following information:
My address:
Name: Stephan Schifferes
born on: 21. XI. 1909
Block 20 Barrack room 2



Steffi's postcard from Dachau

Steffi wrote this message on the postcard:

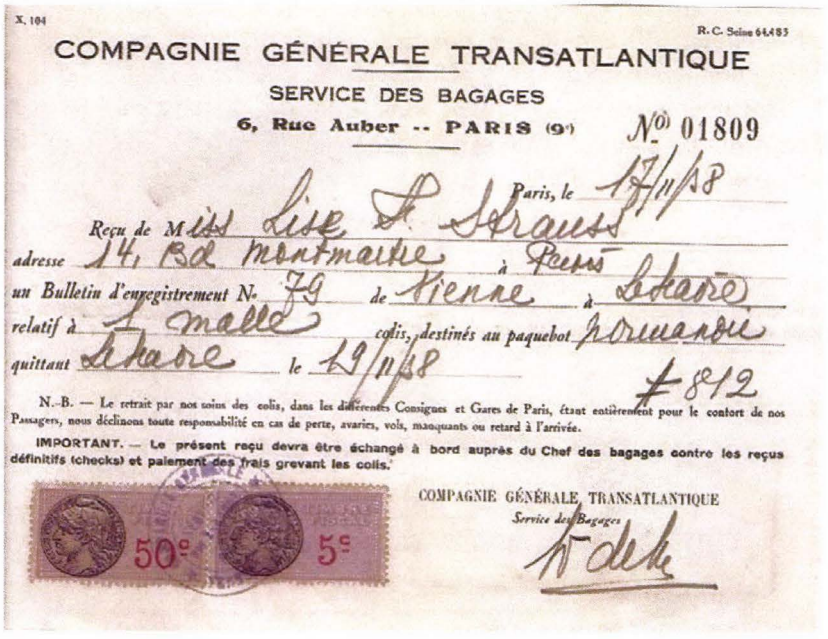
> Unfortunately just one d[ear] postcard until now, still, I am convinced that through you everything and the Stuttgart job will happen. Liese's efforts will just take too long, unless her Fren[ch] Engl[ish] opportunities work out, how is she and Strauss? Hopefully a Swedish foreign *Hachscharah* [emigration] will come in the meantime. Wolf [sic] and Dir. Adler were also trying. In any case, notify them about my willingness for that and about my St. passport and my certificate of good conduct. If something positive should take place for me, then immediately contact them both so that at least he could intervene with the local officials. Documents are at Bechhöfer, Johanesstr. 44, pictures of my negative at Bechhöfer's in the suitcase or positive, Königstr. 62 (?) Do not send money! Steffi

FAUST 3 Standard-Druck: 17.05.2001 13:27 Seite: 1
Dokumentation: Haeftlinge
Objektart: Gefangenenliste - laufende Numerierung: 177020

Personenangaben	
Name	SCHIFFERES
Vorname	STEFAN
Geburtsdatum	21.11.1909
Geburtsdatum alphanum	21. November 1909
Geburtsort	Wien
Nationalität	Deutsches Reich, Deutscher
letzter Wohnort	Stuttgart
Beruf	Sportschüler
Familienstand	I
Zahl der Kinder	0
Konfession	jüdisch
Haftdaten	
Gefangenennummer	24191
Haftart	Schutzhäftling Jude
Zugangsdatum	13.11.1938
Zugangsdatum alphanum	13. November 1938
Zwischenverbleib	
2. Haftzeit	
Weiteres Schicksal	
Haftangaben	
sonstiges	
Quellenangabe	Eingangsbuch, National Archives, Washington, RG 238/190/13/26/01

Stefan Schifferes, sports student, prison number 24191, Jew in protective custody, November 13, 1938 (Entry Book of National Archives, Washington, D.C., RG 238/190/13/26/01)

Liese's departure from Europe on November 19, 1938, was on the SS Normandie, which she boarded in Le Havre, France. Apparently the ship stopped in Southampton, where Ines Mandl and her husband, Hans, greeted Liese before she continued her journey across the Atlantic Ocean.



X. 104 R. C. Seine 64.483

COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRALE TRANSATLANTIQUE

SERVICE DES BAGAGES

6, Rue Auber -- PARIS (9e) N° 01809

Paris, le 17/11/38

Reçu de Miss Lise L. Strauss

adresse 14, Bd Montmartre à Paris

un Bulletin d'enregistrement N° 79 de Vienne à Le Havre

relatif à 1 malle colis, destinés au paquebot Normandie

quittant Le Havre le 19/11/38 #812

N.-B. — Le retrait par nos soins des colis, dans les différentes Consignes et Gares de Paris, étant entièrement pour le confort de nos Passagers, nous déclinons toute responsabilité en cas de perte, avaries, vols, manquants ou retard à l'arrivée.

IMPORTANT. — Le présent reçu devra être échangé à bord auprès du Chef des bagages contre les reçus définitifs (checks) et paiement des frais grevant les colis.

50c 5c

COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRALE TRANSATLANTIQUE

Service des Bagages

Baggage Service from Vienna to Le Havre, from where Liese's ship departed

On November 16, 1938, Hede wrote so that her sister Liese would have a letter when she boarded the ship. She said that they were going to send Pepi [Hans Deutsch's brother] a telegram so he could make sure things went smoothly upon Liese's arrival in the United States. In addition, she told Liese that she should not be sad that she did not complete her studies and get a diploma because "...in the last few days the courses have been closed for study and attending the colleges was forbidden" [for Jews, naturally]. She and Hans were alternating visits with his and her parents so that they would not feel so alone. She continued:

> Do not be sad that you had to leave Steffi here, hopefully he will soon follow. In any case, look around for an affidavit. On the side you can look for jobs for us. I am already curious about your reports. We will send Dr. Ransom a telegram to tell him you are coming if no letter arrives. Now you have to reassure me that the letters will be longer, in 2–3 days we will write to Washington, but it will take longer to arrive.
>
> Have a good trip and many, many kisses
>
> The international response coupon is from me for a reservation for a dear letter.



International Response Coupon



SS NORMANDIE

Liese's "Papa" wrote her saying:

> This is the last greeting to reach you in Europe. It should make the departure from your parents' house easier and should tell you that we wish you all the best. A good crossing and a nice reception over there. You were always a good, delicate child and for that we thank you. Find yourself a job you can keep over

there, be nice and diligent as always, and things will work out for you. And think about this, that it also depends on you if and when we see each other again! That would be the greatest joy which could still happen to us. Many heartfelt and delicate kisses

Your Papa

In Paris Liese had stayed with a colleague, Hans Liatscheff, 118 Boulevard Haussmann. Her father wrote again, sending greetings to Hans Liatscheff. Hugo also wrote that he was jealous of "*Mutti*" for having been able to hear Liese's voice on the telephone. "Take care of yourself and write us as often as you can. We will write to you again on the ship."

Hede added on that Steffi's postcard to her was completely torn and for that reason, she could not send it to Liese. "Dearest Flops, take care of yourself and do not get seasick. Too bad that we could not travel together... Flips." Liese had many nicknames: Lieschen, Lieserl, Lieserle, Liesl. When she came to the United States she changed her first name to Lisa to make it easier for the Americans unfamiliar with Liese (pronounced Leezeh). Hede called her "Flops" and, as the letter shows, Hede called herself "Flips". Sometimes they referred to Hede and Hans as HeHa or "Pintschis" [a meaningless word].

The letter Sophie wrote to her daughter who was about to board the Normandie was very moving:

Mll. Liese Strauss
S.S. Normandie
partant 19.XI. pour New York
Le Havre
France

Vienna, 17. November 1938.

My beloved, good Lieschen!

What I want to wish you, my dearest Lieschen, with all my huge motherly love for you, I include in these lines and hold you close to my heart in spirit. When you were a child, your parents' house was so important and you always honored me as your mother. Such a good, wonderful child who has such a good soul will be rewarded by her hard work. Just stay well and be careful in everything, then you will find your way, I am absolutely convinced.

Steffi's mother will also write to you, I am awaiting her this morning because she could not come last night. Yesterday Tante Ida [Skall, friends of the Strauss family] was here, Edith is doing very well. Tante Else also wrote you to the ship today. We are all well. I am working hard, but you can imagine that I miss you very much. But I am trying with all my strength and the thought and my dearest wish for us to see one another keeps me going.

My dearest, dearest Lieschen, I hug you tightly and affectionately, I wish you a good ocean crossing and all the very very best. Keep up your dear, friendly personality and especially now to the people in America who will treat you so well, be especially kind to them.

Many, many affectionate kisses from Your Mother.

And Liese's aunt wrote:

> My dear dear Lieserl, My affectionate wishes accompany you on your crossing of the big water and I do not need to tell you that my thoughts are always with you and I wish you an uneventful and nice life, just as you deserve. Such a good, wonderful person like you will be recognized and I am convinced that you will make your way. I received the package and I will take care of it. *Mutti* and your father are hoping for a quick reunion. We are all well and have a lot of work. Lieserle, do not forget me, I love you very very much and will live my life only for all of you. I hug you in true love,
>
> Your Steffi[64]
>
> The apartment matter is in order.

At the same time that Liese was sailing for the United States, others in the family were not so fortunate. On November 14, 1938, a cousin, Heinrich Pollak, was deported to Dachau where he had prisoner number 24,536, and was released on June 28, 1939.

"Heini" was born on May 17, 1909, in Langenzersdorf, Niederösterreich, eldest son of Carl Pollak and Malwine née Schifferes Pollak. Malwine was another of my grandfather Julius Schifferes'sisters. Heini's last address in Vienna was III., Am Modenapark 3. He was murdered by the Nazis in Sabac, Yugoslavia, on the 12th or 13th of October 1941 [Gisela Wibihail@doew.at, e-mail November 17, 2000], after attempting to reach Palestine with a clandestine transport. According to research done in the Letter to the Stars (a project for Austrian school children where a student can pick the name of a murdered Jew and do research on that particular person), a student named Stephanie researched Heini and wrote on the website that he was part of the Kladovo Transport.[65] According to Gisela Wibihail, who worked for the Austrian government,

> ....there were more than 920 people murdered there. They were part of the 1,200 Jews from Vienna, Berlin, Danzig and the former Czechoslovakia who tried in 1939 to get to Palestine via Bratislava. Their trip ended at the Danube port of Kladovo, Serbia, due to organizational difficulties in 1939/40. From there the refugees ended up in an internment camp in Sabac in July 1941. Beginning in August 1941 Sabac was used as a concentration camp for Jews from Serbia. On the 12th and 13th of October 1941 all Jewish men at Sabac and the Austrian men from the Kladovo Transport (approximately 400) were murdered as revenge for the "sin" of the partisan uprising. The remaining 750–800 Jewish women and children were dragged to the newly built camp of Sajmiste in a suburb of Belgrade in January 1942. The Jews of Belgrade were also interned in this camp. The commandant of this camp was *Untersturmführer* Herbert Andorfer under whose watch approximately 7,500 prisoners, mostly women, were gassed in a

---

[64] Tante Stephy [Kurz] was the youngest sister of Sophie Strauss. She never married, supposedly, according to my father, because the Kurz family's financial situation at the time did not allow them to provide her with a dowry. She devoted her whole life to her family. Presumably there had always been confusion between her, "Tante Steffi", and Liese's fiancé, Steffi. So somehow it was later decided that Tante Stephy would be written as STEPHY and my father's name would remain as it always had been, Steffi.

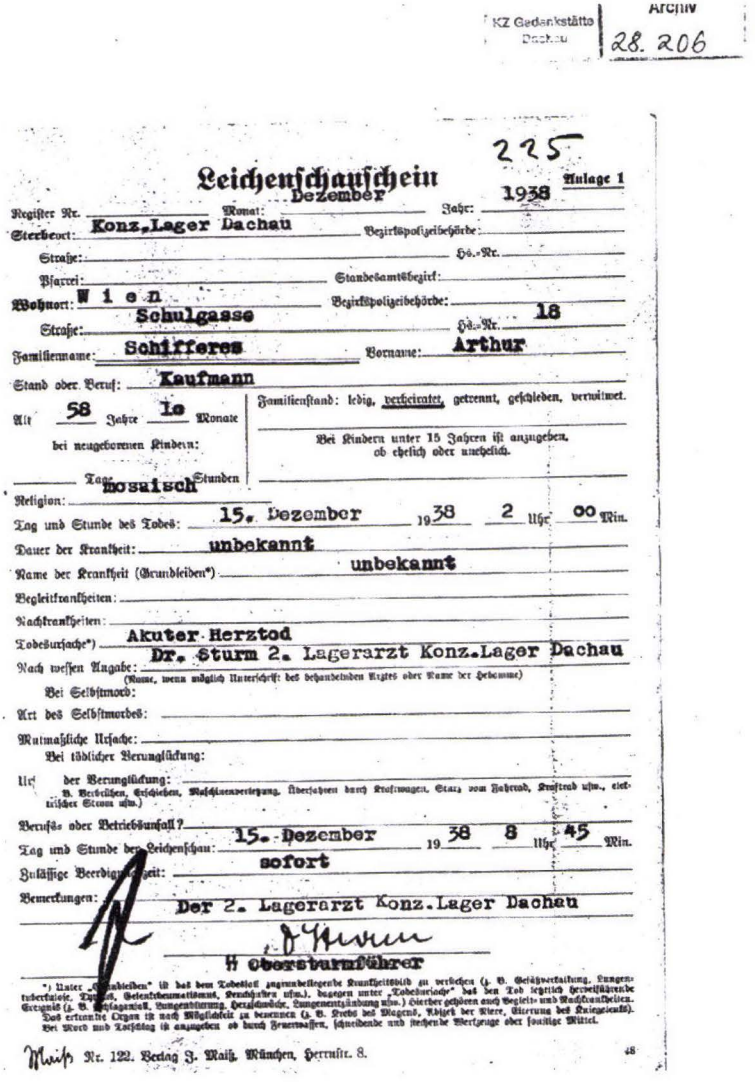
[65] See Appendix C, Kladovo Transport.

wagon [train car] at the beginning of May 1942. Andorfer was imprisoned in Germany in 1969 for two and a half years for this crime. [Gisela Wibihail e-mail]

The Yad Vashem website corroborates that Heini was at Sabac, Drinska, Srbija Severna, Yugoslavia, during the war and also died there. This information was provided to Yad Vashem by a "Witness," although we do not know who this witness was.

Heini's father, Carl, born on February 12, 1875, was an engineer who lived in Vienna on Frankgasse 9, 6/18. Apparently, after his eviction he resided in a *Sammelwohnung* [group home] on Malzgasse 2, 7. On June 28, 1942, he was deported from Vienna to Theresienstadt, where he was murdered on October 15, 1942.

Arthur Schifferes was one of Bertha's two older brothers. As my father mentioned in his essay about Dachau, his Onkel Arthur was also imprisoned in Dachau at the same time although he did not see him there. His number there was 29248. According to a correspondence from the Dachau Museum, Arthur Schifferes died on December 15, 1938, of an "acute heart attack".



KZ Gedenkstätte Dachau | Archiv 28. 206

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Leichenschauschein — Anlage 1

Register Nr. ____ Monat: Dezember Jahr: 1938

Sterbeort: Konz.Lager Dachau Bezirkspolizeibehörde: ____

Straße: ____ Hs.-Nr. ____

Pfarrei: ____ Standesamtsbezirk: ____

Wohnort: W i e n Bezirkspolizeibehörde: ____

Straße: Schulgasse Hs.-Nr. 18

Familienname: Schifferes Vorname: Arthur

Stand oder Beruf: Kaufmann

Alt 58 Jahre 10 Monate — Familienstand: ledig, verheiratet, getrennt, geschieden, verwitwet.

bei neugeborenen Kindern: Tage ____ Stunden — Bei Kindern unter 15 Jahren ist anzugeben, ob ehelich oder unehelich.

Religion: mosaisch

Tag und Stunde des Todes: 15. Dezember 1938 2 Uhr 00 Min.

Dauer der Krankheit: unbekannt

Name der Krankheit (Grundleiden*) unbekannt

Begleitkrankheiten: ____

Nachkrankheiten: ____

Todesursache*) Akuter Herztod

Nach wessen Angabe: Dr. Sturm 2. Lagerarzt Konz.Lager Dachau
(Name, wenn möglich Unterschrift des behandelnden Arztes oder Name der Hebamme)

Bei Selbstmord:

Art des Selbstmordes: ____

Mutmaßliche Ursache: ____

Bei tödlicher Verunglückung:

Art der Verunglückung: ____
(z. B. Ertrinken, Erschießen, Maschinenverletzung, Überfahren durch Kraftwagen, Sturz vom Fahrrad, Einsturz usw., elektrischer Strom usw.)

Berufs- oder Betriebsunfall? ____

Tag und Stunde der Leichenschau: 15. Dezember 1938 8 Uhr 45 Min.

Zulässige Beerdigungszeit: sofort

Bemerkungen: Der 2. Lagerarzt Konz.Lager Dachau

H Obersturmführer

*) Unter „Grundleiden" ist das dem Todesfall zugrundeliegende Krankheitsbild zu verstehen (z. B. Gefäßverkalkung, Lungentuberkulose, Typhus, Gelenkrheumatismus, Krebskrankheit usw.), dagegen unter „Todesursache" das den Tod letztlich herbeiführende Ereignis (z. B. Herzlähmung, Lungenentzündung, Herzschwäche, Lungenentzündung usw.) hierher gehören auch Begleit- und Nachkrankheiten. Das erkrankte Organ ist nach Möglichkeit zu bezeichnen (z. B. Krebs des Magens, Abszeß der Niere, Eiterung des Kniegelenks). Bei Mord und Totschlag ist anzugeben ob durch Feuerwaffen, schneidende und stechende Werkzeuge oder sonstige Mittel.

Mühlp Nr. 122. Verlag J. Mühlp, München, Herrnstr. 8. 48

Arthur Schifferes' death certificate from KZ Dachau, stating that he was a salesman from Vienna, had lived on Schulgasse 18, was Jewish, and died on December 15, 1938, of an acute heart attack

Chapter 23: Our Lives Ahead Of Us

On November 17, 1938, Bertha wrote Liese a letter addressed to her on board the SS Normandie. In it she assured Liese that her fears about Steffi were unfounded, that he was merely "*marod*" [very sick], but would soon "be well" again, which meant that he would be released from Dachau. Still, the tone of her letter belied her assuredness. Both Liese and Bertha were doing their best to find a way to get Steffi out of Dachau and find him a way out of Europe. Bertha wrote that Karl took up quarters at Tante Rosa's and that Tante Gisi was not reachable because she was no longer in her apartment.



Airmail letter to Liese

Furthermore, Bertha wrote that as Liese probably already knew, she was

> ...in low spirits, though all of that is unimportant, I would just like to have a note from Steffi. I do not want to write a lot, I want to get to the post office quickly so this letter reaches you. So far everything is in order with your parents.

And then she continued with the most touching words:

> Dear Liese, today I learned how to pray like a child who has only one wish and for that turns to God. I cannot really cry anymore; still, my child, do not be sad, I trust in Fate that still can only be gruesome for me. I have to see Steffi again, God will not let me die like this and to you He will give you Steffi again so that you can hold on to your happiness, just as you both deserve because you are both such good children. As soon as anyone learns anything, we will let you know in some manner.
>
> All the best for the long trip, in the next letter I will certainly be able to tell you that Steffi is once again well.
>
> Affectionately, Steffi Mamma

Liese wrote to as many people as she could think of to help in her efforts. Her good friend Trude Löwinger wrote Liese in Paris in a letter dated November 17, 1938:

> Your letter from yesterday shook me up. I certainly will do my utmost to help you. If I have any success I do not know because the guarantees are now exceptionally difficult. I will immediately get in touch with Ines and ask her to come to Southampton. Above all, be courageous, something will work out and one cannot despair. All of us want to be of help and there should be no doubt in your mind how much I understand you and empathize with you. Dear Liese, I will close now and as soon as possible you will be hearing from me. Please stay in touch and let us hear from you. I wish you with all my heart all possible good and above all 'courage'!
>
> Greetings, Trude

Trude's husband, Fritz, wrote:

> I also read your letter even though it was not specifically meant for me and am convinced that in the end everything will work out. —Just think about the fact that you are now going to a new, nice future and everything else will work out. Something will also work out for your people and once one person is out, then it will be much easier. Liesel, do not even think about Stgt., but rather imagine how nice the greeting in the New World will be. Unfortunately Trudl left me too little space, but the amount of words does not matter and you will know what I wish for you. So, hold your head high! Your Fritz

On November 21, 1938, while my father was spending his birthday in Dachau, Sophie Strauss, my maternal grandmother, wrote her first letter to Liese in the United States. In it she asked if Liese had gotten seasick and if she had met nice people, and tried to reassure her:

> ...because a voyage on a ship can pass very nicely. Liese, my good child, I am sad and concerned about you because I know that you have such worries. If I had you here with me, then I could console you and now I imagine how sad you are. Now my hope is that you are greeted nicely and that people are so good to you just as you deserve, my good child. Just stay well, that is my big worry; your sadness can affect your health. Heed my words, my child and pull yourself together. Steffi will surely be cautious and sensible, today on the birthday I am continually with both of you. Yesterday the mother [Bertha] was here, she was, amazingly calm and rational and showed us your birthday letter. It is better if I do not enclose Steffi's letters, trust your mother. I am already so curious about your next letter. Hopefully you are looking at the future with more hope. Tell me exactly everything about Herbert [Muller].
>
> Everything is the same here, the only thing that is new is that Papa received a notice that he was recommended to be a consultant, there are only a few of them and he should let them know what he decides. Tomorrow I will write to everyone who was so nice to you. You were always that to me and I only wish that everyone in your new homeland surrounds you with much love because I know how much you need that now. My love for you should make your new life more bearable. Right, my good child? I hold you close to my heart and kiss you intimately and many, many times.
>
> Your Mother

In the same moving letter, Tante Stephy wrote:

> Your apparent tears in-between the lines hurt me. Your suffering is our suffering. Now Mama Sch.[ifferes] is much calmer than you, and all the others who are sharing the same fate also. Pull yourself together, dearest Lieserl! Some of our acquaintances whom we have not seen have already come back to see us and Steffi will surely also visit us soon.

And because the others had written so much, Liese's father had to limit his writing to her to the margins of the letter:

> You are now working, my dearest Lieserle, a whole new week of your life for strangers. As you correctly wrote, you must, above all, show a friendly face, you have to honor the American principle: "Keep smiling." Just be very friendly to Dr. Ransom and the children, your current existence depends on it and in a way ours as well. But I am convinced that you will do the right thing, I can rely on your ability and your tact.
>
> Tomorrow we await your report from Southampton. We will have to wait longer for your next letter, but then our correspondence will become more regular.
>
> I send you many heartfelt greetings and kisses, if only God would grant that I would not have to send them, but rather give them to you myself.
>
> Your Paps

Liese's sister, Hede, also sent a moving first letter:

> Dearest Flops in America!
>
> Today your dear, sad letter from Paris arrived. I can just imagine that you are very unhappy, but above all you should be happy that you are that far along, the rest will work itself out and Steffi will soon be following you. Unfortunately from here there is nothing to be done to expedite his emigration; that only you can do when you get a suitable affidavit, the sooner the better, although I cannot really say that that will take care of it. Steffi's friends from Klosterneuburg also cannot leave, also Hugo, Stella's husband, and Max [Hitchman] are unable to make progress with their emigration. You see that it is not just happening to Steffi....
>
> Onkel Alfred is also not having much luck, namely in order to get to his brother's [who by then was already out of Vienna] he must have a ship ticket, but only a few lines take Marks and are very booked, so he is still not that far along, but hopes everyday to have everything he needs because in the next few days his certificate of paid taxes expires and he does not want to renew it. By the way, the current ones are valid for only two months, but are not renewable so that one must be certain to emigrate during that time. The same holds true for passports which are issued on Prinz Eugenstrasse, that is, one should have emigrated within two months. Steffi does not have to hurry too much regarding his passport unless he has an emigration. Today I went to the Americ. Consulate regarding our thing

> where they were handing out questionnaires for complaints—otherwise it is closed—but I arrived too late.... You can imagine how we are longing for the summons. Your worries about us and the parents are thankfully unfounded, since your departure nothing has changed, your fears about us having enough to eat are unfounded, yesterday I myself made a *Sachertorte*[66] with icing and cooked *Pariserspitzel,*[67] the Sunday and also weekday menu has not changed, in fact everything continues in the same manner. Hans' course should begin again tomorrow, when the place is unlocked where he works.

Then Hede wrote that they could not send the postcards from Steffi because they were ripped up. It was unclear why that happened, but Hede said her mother threw them out because they were ruined and she did not want to have them. Perhaps she was fearful that the Nazis would know that Steffi was in Dachau and the relatives who were receiving his letters, even if they were written before his arrest, could be at risk. "So do not be sad, I would have not thrown them away, but now that they are ruined, one cannot put them back together again."

Hede ended the letter by saying:

> I can just tell you that you should not only look like a courageous *Floh* [another nickname, which meant flea], but also have inner strength and be happy that you are doing as well as I hope. For you also do not have more worries than all of us and we are all very good. Even Mutti, as far as I could see, did not shed a single tear for you (at best, when she reads this her eyes will overflow), otherwise she is happy to be rid of you, if one can say that about her. So do not write so sadly anymore, that is, do not be that way because we are all still young and have our whole lives ahead of us.

Liese's friend Trude [Willheim], who had left Vienna for London, wrote [November 23, 1938]: "Hopefully things went well and you can now recover a bit from the exertion of the last months. Your boss will surely be satisfied with you because there has rarely been someone who has as much capability as you." Trude said she was doing her utmost to get a paid job at the Woburn House after having taken a stenography class. Then she asked: "How does the world seem from over there? Also so complicated, I am already curious about what the governments of the world will do for the Jews." Little did she know....

Tante Else wrote to Liese in English, which she said she had learned thirty years before. Everyone was trying to cheer up Liese while her fiancé was in Dachau.

Liese's father wrote [November 24, 1938] how they were always imagining

> ...now she is sleeping, now she is waking up, and today we even said: now she is arriving and is already seeing the Sky-line [of New York City]. Yes, my child, you are seeing a lot in your young years, but the dearest thing that you could still see are your parents and always think of that! And naturally also Steffi...

Sophie said that no one had heard anything from Steffi and that Fritz was still "sick." She also said that Steffi's mother would call them daily; in the morning Bertha was at the Neumann's, in the afternoon and evenings she was packing. Sophie added that she was reduced to tears when she received a letter from Ines from Southampton, where she had gone to see Liese. "I call that

---

[66] Famous Austrian cake, named after Hotel Sacher.

[67] Pointed chocolate cookie, filled with chocolate mousse.

friendship and will never forget her and her husband, that they came to the ship in order to wish you all the best."

On November 25, 1938, Bertha wrote Liese:

> I just received a postcard from Steffi from Dachau. He is well and arrived there on the 13th (once again the 13th).[68] Dear child, just be courageous, it cannot always continue in this tone. Have you heard anything from Herbert M., Steffi asked about that. Today I am going for the 4th time to Frau Friedmann, without having accomplished anything. One has to wait there from 7 [in the morning] until 10 o'clock at night. But what does that matter. All of that is trivial. It could be worse. Hopefully this letter will reach you quickly so that you at least have this news from Steffi. Fritz is close to Steffi. What do you say about that? I think that anything else would not interest you; at least that is how it is with me. I have only one thought and that is, what is Steffi doing now, where is he sleeping, what is he eating, otherwise I do not know anything else to relate.

In Hede's letter, dated November 28, 1938, she wrote that:

> Onkel Alfred already has his ship ticket for Bolivia for December 13, but can only go to Switzerland 10 days before the ship's departure. Hopefully his stay will be lengthened there. If everything goes as planned—he is just missing the Swiss Visa, he will leave on December 2. Perhaps you can do something for him.... If you have an affidavit for Steffi, send it to Vienna to the Consulate and a copy to his mother or us.

Hede said that Steffi applied at the end of May and would not have a chance to leave very soon, so Liese should not waste money on that. When his quota number came up, she said, then he would be able to leave and she would inform Liese about that. Their seamstress, Frau Gerstenfeld, and her husband obtained a Domestic Permit for England, but they do not want to travel alone, so are waiting for America. Hede said that there was no one who could deliver the altered garments to her, so she had to go to pick them up herself. Then Hede wrote that Frau Gerstenfeld could only continue working until December and was working on her own things so that everything would be ready for her trip.

> Nothing has gone any further with our visas. There are now sheets of paper at the Consulate, which need to be filled out and which one gets back when they have been filled out. We also inquired if our verification is now in order, but got back the sheet of paper with a stamp.

Considering the time of her registration, her attempt to obtain a visa had not been approved.

> Expediting is impossible, further inquiries useless. Dr. Fellner, who turned in a sheet of paper with completely different questions, also got the same answer with a stamp. We were very angry with the Consulate and sent another sheet of paper with a note saying that there must have been a mistake because April was called a long time ago, but have not received an answer yet. Now at the Consulate they are not receiving people so that we cannot get any answers. If there is a place in Washington, then complain there, but I find, in all seriousness, that the empty American talk accomplishes nothing if one cannot even get any information

[68] Bertha was born on June 13, 1885, and her husband, Julius, died on May 8, 1913; thus the aversion to thirteen because that was the year of her husband's death.

about something that we want to know. Otherwise everything here is the same, the excited days of your departure are behind us, but everything stayed the same, just as you left it. We are happy if nothing changes. Also concerning the apartment question of our parents, nothing has changed, there have not been any arrangements made. Since the description of the apartment on Porzellangasse was refused, our parents requested Langegasse, there are cheaper little houses. Of course, the apartment procurement will be "Aryanized" and no longer goes through the Party, but rather reviewed. During the next two months there will be no new assignments so that it is not to be assumed that our parents' apartment will be given to anyone else. Because of the Asset registry, life began in the office and we have a lot to do, souvenir of May, June, so that we are very happy. And aside from that, I have much to do and also have things to take care of for our emigration since I do not like to send Hans out too much....

In general I hope that you have calmed down and are happy, just as a *Floh* should be. You are young and have everything ahead of you, these few weeks that one is apart are insignificant, the main thing is that everyone is doing well and as far as I have heard, it is so. You have to think that you are not alone with your problems, on the contrary, there is hardly anyone who is protected from this, as you can see for yourself. Now I have written so terribly much and we must go home already, because *Keifel* and *Teifel*,[69] as Hans calls the two sisters,[70] are already scolding and fussing.

Please write me how your accompanying baggage arrived. The crates will land in Baltimore on the 8th and should get to you at your house a few days later. You have to pay for the transportation from Baltimore-Washington. It will be good if you inspect the crates and note the possible damage because of the insurance that Pepi took out. Dr. Fellner received the missing affidavit confirmation from Dr. Allen, you should still go there; perhaps he can be helpful to you. Good night Flopsi; if you get the letter in the morning, do not fall asleep.

In the same envelope there was a letter from Tante Stephy:

I am diligently studying English at Susi's and hope that you will not forget me. I will take any job. What else should I study? Please, Lieserle, write me about what would be good to know in Am. My 2 houses are also leaving soon so that I will not be earning anything. Susi also lost a lot of houses because the people are unable to concentrate on learning. Her father and Fritz and the children often get together with our heart specialist. Steffi's mother was here Sunday, she is very calm and sensible, much more capable than you would believe. She has a job at her friend's in Grüner Torg. I am going to begin to dissolve my household, you are our hope, my dear Lieserl. Mutti told me to tell you that you should write what HeHa should bring along for you. How is it with gloves, belts, and flowers? A business for A? Mutti is no longer sorry about the dishes that she gave you. I am very afraid that you did not find Herbert. Did you call Hans? Just be as dear as you are naturally. Write me often.

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[69] *Keifel* and *Teifel* come from the Viennese words, *keifeln und teifeln*, which mean nagging and fussing.
[70] Sophie and Tante Stephy.

Liese's friend Trude Löwinger wrote from London [November 29, 1938] telling Liese how lucky she was to be safe in the States and to have a job and a roof over her head. Trude also wanted her to know that she was not so alone:

> ...there are other people who think of you. I know that waiting does not help much, but I also think that it will give you a certain feeling of strength if you know that someone is thinking of you. I know how hard all of that is and you can imagine that I can understand very well how it feels to be separated from one's love. Still you have the great hope of seeing your siblings and Stephan in the not too distant future. And then, when you are all reunited, then you should be able to get your parents over pretty soon. Naturally it is a poor comfort and one must have patience, but the hope is still great.

Later in the letter Trude wrote that she presumed that the first people who were arrested would soon be released, especially if they that person had an emigration affidavit.

On December 3, 1938, Onkel Emil wrote Liese thanking her for the two postcards she sent, one from the trip from Paris to Le Havre, and the other from the passage on the ship. He then informed Liese that his brother, Alfred Kurz, had arrived in Zurich on November 30 with a Viennese Consular visa and permission for an eight-day stay. Then he would be going "to another Canton. Hopefully he will get an extension of his stay. Maybe then I will follow him."

Onkel Emil had given Liese some cameras to sell in the United States. One must not forget that my mother was a mere twenty-two years old. It was as if she had the burdens of the world on her shoulders. Her father instilled guilt in her by saying that if she could not procure affidavits for her parents, then who knew what would happen to them. Liese's fiancé was still in a concentration camp. Onkel Emil wanted her to sell cameras. Everyone was asking for her to get affidavits—and she was in a new country, living in a strange household. So many demands were put on her. What strength my mother had.

Onkel Emil also wrote:

> Pull yourself together, dear Lieschen, really together, do not let the external situation bring you down. The more resolute you are, the better the possibilities are for you being able to accomplish something for your relatives. At the moment, the local Boliv. Consul is not giving visas, but may resume doing so in the not too distant future. I will ask your family if an assurance of a Bolivian or other visa would enable your bridegroom to be freed.... So, once again, Lieschen, [keep your] head up! To have it hanging down does not help anyone, on the contrary.

On December 5, 1938, the Strauss family received the first letter from Liese since she boarded the ship in Le Havre. It was written in the form of a diary, up until the final supper on the SS Normandie. Naturally her mother was anxious to hear about Liese's arrival in New York. Sophie wrote that she would not be posting the letter until the next day because perhaps the next day's mail would bring the first letter written in America! Every day in the newspaper the schedule of ships was written so that one could plan when letters would be sent off on a particular ship. Often the actual name of the ship that was transporting the letter would be included near the return address.

Sophie wrote that everything had remained the same. "Hopefully the stormy weather did not take too much out of you. How did you feel when you were once again on land?" Then she related that

"...Steffi's mother was here Sunday afternoon. She is calmer and more reasonable than you think and naturally wants to do everything for Steffi." Then Sophie continued:

> Hopefully you are doing very, very, well and everyone is nice to you so that you feel very comfortable. I am already so curious what your job is. Do you like the food, do you always sleep well? I do not even know the simplest things about you. I am so worried about you! If we just had some news, that is good news, perhaps I would be calmer. We have not heard anything since Le Havre. Were you seasick? Did you have nice company on the ship? I am racking my brain about everything. Who picked you up in New York, probably Frau Hilton. I am certain that you wrote diligently, but the huge ocean does not allow the mail to come so quickly.

Hans Deutsch had a younger brother who had left Vienna with his wife in August 1938, after the birth of their only daughter, Ruth. Joseph (or Pepi, as he was called) and his wife, Lilly [(née Bing], were already living in Newark, New Jersey. On December 5, 1938, Pepi wrote Liese that Hans and Hede had written a detailed letter which was dated November 21, 1938, "...in which we were able to see that he is still free [meaning that Hans had not been arrested]. On the contrary, in addition we read that Hugo Haas, both Fischls and Paul's father are waiting [to get out of KZ]." Pepi also said that someone had promised him "...support for three people, which I hope to obtain. Then I would feel better."

Chapter 24: That Is Called Philosophy

During this time, Jews in Vienna were desperately trying to get out, and to somehow pay the various harsh taxes that had been imposed by the Nazis. Rules and regulations were constantly changing. My father had always told me that Dr. Hugo Strauss, my grandfather, was able to earn a lot of money during this period. But this is not quite the picture we see when Grandfather Hugo wrote to his daughter on December 7, 1938. He wrote about getting home from the office at 9 o'clock at night

> ...and that is day after day. But the efforts are not paying off. Partially it is private clients, partially very impoverished clients, for example, the large furniture factory from whom we bought our dining room set, etc. People have nothing to eat, and I should earn a living from such people!

In the same letter Tante Stephy wrote:

> You should not be so upset, though it is no consolation for you, but you are not the only one. Are Dr. R.'s children nice? What is your job? See if the children's friends need a governess or a cook. You would be surprised how many colleagues Steffi has [meaning, how many others were in Dachau with Steffi]. I sold my piano, today it will be picked up. A piece of my life is gone, but I have gotten over these things. I received 350 M for it, with cover. On Sunday I am putting in an ad for bedroom and dining room.... Write me, Lieserl, what else I should study. If only Hede could already travel to be with you!
>
> ...I will be happy when my household has been liquidated, but then where should I rest my head.... Just be reasonable and do not worry. Things will change. [To this Hede added: "That is called philosophy."]

In her letter of December 8, 1938, Hede told Liese that Bertha had phoned with news. Bertha said that a social worker in Stuttgart had written to her that someone was trying to get Steffi freed: "So they are also trying there." Hede also made various suggestions as to whom Liese should contact in the States in order to obtain an affidavit for Steffi. "Take care, you have to be brave and strong as always for me, then everything will be fine."

Tante Else wrote [December 11, 1938]:

> You have to be brave and during the next period, when you are feeling the separation from your parents the most, be energized, otherwise your health will suffer, which you should absolutely avoid. The separation will hopefully not be that long and with God's help, HeHa [Hede and Hans] will be near you soon and also Steffi will soon follow. I am certain that you will reach everything for which you are striving. I thought your father looked well, Mutti misses you the most!

Pepi and my mother were in constant touch by mail. Both of them were trying desperately to get their family members out. They were not the only ones. Liese's friend, Margit Littman, wrote her from New York:

> The greatest part of my time is sent on running around, but I still have not been able to do anything for my parents. What will become of me, I do not even know. I am inquiring at all the committees and many schools, but there are difficulties

> at all of them. Other than odd jobs with minimum wage I have not really worked. Even though my relatives are very friendly, they are still complete strangers to me.

My mother was doing her absolute utmost by contacting people who might be willing to give her relatives affidavits. A Mr. John A. Hecht from the B'nai B'rith in New York sent a letter of introduction to Mr. M. F. Baer, 1003 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., saying about my mother that "...she was introduced to me through a very prominent member of the Vienna organization. Thank you very kindly for any courtesy extended to her."

The American National Bank and Trust Company of Chicago sent the American Consul a notarized letter stating that "...Mr. William A. Leeb is interested in bringing certain persons into the United States." The letter goes on to say that Mr. Leeb "...is a gentleman of the highest character and integrity. He is President of the Illinois-Rockford Corporation, a concern of substantial worth, which concern maintains satisfactory relations with this institution." The Illinois-Rockford Corporation "...had on deposit with us for the year 1937, average balances of $33,000.00 and thus far during 1938, average balances of $47,788.00." It is unclear how my mother knew Mr. Leeb, or whether she even knew him at all.

In her letter dated December 12, 1938, Hede asked Liese to tell them how she was finally able to locate their cousin, Herbert Muller, and if she also spoke with Millie.[71] And, of course, she wanted to know what the possibilities were for obtaining affidavits for their parents and Steffi. The Strauss parents had registered for a Quota Number on August 20, 1938, so, she said, they would have to wait at least until the summer, unless something were to change. Hede suggested that if Liese were uncertain about the strength of the affidavit, then she should have it looked at by HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) in New York. "In any case, send the affidavit to Vienna, naturally registered, perhaps to us in the office because we will send it on to the Consulate and will get a confirmation that it has arrived and with that we can begin." Then she told Liese that it would not be advisable for her to write to Steffi from the U.S. His mother, Bertha, was informing him about Liese. According to Fritz, he and Steffi "got together" often at Dachau, although Bertha found that hard to believe.

Hede and Hans' efforts to get out were helped by a telegram from Herr Held, which said "mailed papers today." Hede continued:

> So we should be arriving right before Christmas, if that is true, hopefully. In the meantime today we got a notice from Prinz Eugenstr. that we can pick up our certificate. I am curious how long it will be valid, supposedly 2 months and will not be extended. We shall see. Steffi's mother went to Friedmann about his passport, a little something with the old passport was not in order, but we think we have repaired it so that she will be able to get it soon. The most important thing though is the emigration, but that is very difficult from here, not even to Shanghai where many want to go.... Today Steffimama went, upon your suggestion, to the French Consulate, got in very quickly and received some forms to be filled out. She did not get to see the Consul. Onkel Alfred, who is now in Chur (he exchanged his ship ticket for a later one) wrote that at this time Bolivia (this is how he underlined it) will not work. One possibility which some are using is Cuba, but one needs invitational money.... The best would be an affidavit...

[71] Herbert Muller's sister, Emilie "Millie" Muller Goldberg, who was born on November 29, 1891, and died on July 15, 1969, in Miami, Florida.

> Yesterday I spoke with Hugo H.,[72] he has an emigration to Shanghai. He spoke with Steffi every day because he took gym instruction with him daily. Rudi Siegl[73] told Steffi that you went to see him. The red Max[74] called me yesterday, he is also leaving soon. Korolanyi[75] is studying English with Steffi. As I heard from Hugo, the people from the *Beth* [where the Zionists whom Steffi knew in Stuttgart were living] who were with Steffi [Dachau], if they were *Chaluzim*, have left, but the re-education course is still going on. Furthermore Frau Wolf, I do not know if you met her in Stuttg., is doing a lot. So, as I said, everyone is hoping for a quick emigration because that is all that is left to do. Mutti is snoring, almost so loudly that I cannot write anymore, it is almost 11 o'clock. I have been writing the letter for almost 2 hours, touching, right?
>
> ...I can only tell you that you should absolutely not worry, we will hopefully soon all be together. If Steffi has an affidavit, that is a summons for examination, then he can, as things now stand, immediately emigrate. Please, write how things look over there and everything else in great detail because I am very curious, also about the furniture, lamps, clothes, dishes... etc. Hopefully you are doing very well.

In the same letter Tante Stephy wrote how happy she was to hear that Herbert was found.

> Hopefully Herbert will keep his promise and will not do what he did with you.... I am actually not so surprised that Herbert was so cool to you. He is thinking, you are over there and Steffi is a stranger to him. Herbert is probably like all the Müllers, a good person, ready to help relatives when it is necessary and with a raw, cold side. That is how all of them are here. Can you not check if he really handed it in? But be careful. Perhaps you can find out at the place where it was to be handed in. The annoying thing is that we cannot write him and Millie because we have no address.... You are really a capable person, Lieserl, you found out the address and had success. Hopefully it is certain. Did other relatives approach him?

Liese's father added on that he had never been so busy in his whole life. His request to Liese was that she should use a typewriter and also number the letters.

Pepi wrote from Newark, New Jersey, that Liese should send Hede's birthdate for the completion of the affidavit that Herr Held was giving them. He asked Liese for her exact address and telephone number, as "...one never knows where there might be a fire."

On December 15, 1938, Hede wrote to Liese:

> I hope that you are doing very well and wish you a merry xmas [sic]. This year there will be no presents, also not by us, but that does not matter. Now that the affidavit is gone you should not be sad anymore because now we will hopefully all be together soon. I am already very curious about your report. I assume that

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[72] Dr. Hugo Haas, Hans' cousin who was in Dachau with Steffi and was referring to Steffi leading the incessant marching around and exercises in the concentration camp.

[73] One of Steffi's classmates at the Sports School in Stuttgart who must have been arrested after Steffi.

[74] Max Hitchman, a friend of Hede and Hans, who was also in Dachau at the same time as Steffi.

[75] Dr. Theodor Korolanyi was Steffi's neighbor in Neustift am Walde, who was also in Dachau at the same time as Steffi.

> you will be writing us more about the affidavits; perhaps you will send us a copy. The parents will write to Herbert directly, now that they know the address, but such a letter first has to be born, especially if it is supposed to be in English.
>
> Unfortunately I do not have any more time, otherwise I would be writing a lot more even though I do not know anything else, please do not be angry, but otherwise the letter would not go off and there is no ship this week. So, Flops, do not write us such unhappy letters again, there is really no reason for it, it is a pure question of time until we all are together again.

On December 17, 1938, my grandfather Hugo wrote Liese:

> You were always a good, delicate child, were diligent, conscientious and of strong character, but since you were the youngest, and because of that a bit spoiled, we never had the opportunity to see what capabilities were hiding in you and how ambitious you were. Now I do not miss you anymore, you will be able to make your own way, help Steffi and you two and HeHa will help us a lot.

Then he wrote how their situation would change for the better because of Herbert (Sophie's cousin who was the owner of the Claridge Hotel in Manhattan).

> It will be decided in two or three weeks if I will become a consultant.[76] If so, then I could support us amply for another half a year.

Then Grandpa Strauss expressed another big concern:

> ...if everything goes smoothly and we arrive in time over there, from what will we live over there? ...My feet have to get better, I cannot arrive there like this....You have the advantage of knowing the language very well and soon will know the slang and the melody of the word.

My grandfather apparently had quite a sense of humor. In the same letter he told Liese that "...in the evening, my young love Berta [meaning Steffi's mother!] will come to read your letter." He closed:

> I send you just one wish: the year 1938 separated us, the year 1939 should, with God's help, reunite all of us. Then everything will be good again! I send you a thousand delicate kisses with love. Your Paps

According to various letters, my mother was writing here and there, to anyone who might possibly provide her with an affidavit for her fiancé and her parents. Gerhart Loewenbaum, a cousin of Liese's mother, wrote to Liese from Buenos Aires, Argentina, saying that even a very influential person he knew in Washington had just written him about it. He told her, however: "I am unable to find a way to obtain permission for the immigration of your father and mother into the U.S. at this time." Then Gerhart added, "Still one must not give up hope and all of us have to remain dogged and continue to search and search unflinchingly." And that is exactly how my mother continued her search for affidavits.

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[76] Jewish lawyers could no longer be called lawyers, and gone was the regulation that Jewish lawyers could only have Jewish clients. The next decree that was implemented was that some Jewish lawyers could be consultants, if the Nazis permitted them to do so.

It seemed that everyone was helping everyone else as much as possible. Ines Mandl, my mother's friend, wrote from England that in the previous two weeks she had had two inquiries from women who wanted to hire Bertha as a cook and Ines had given her excellent recommendations. Nothing ever came of that, but it certainly showed what friendly willingness there was to help. Ines asked my mother to provide her with names of manufacturers of dresses, blouses, knitwear, bathing suits, and beachwear in New York. Ines and her husband, who was a designer, wanted to emigrate to the United States, although the war delayed their plans and they ended up moving to Cork, Ireland, which was neutral and therefore they would be safe.

On December 18, 1938, Bertha wrote Liese that she was being kept up to date with Liese's life in America through Liese's parents:

> ...and I know that, thank God, you are doing well except for the worries that, unfortunately, we both share.
>
> I immediately sent a copy of the affidavit to Frl. Wolf, a social worker in Stuttgart. This woman and a few other places there are trying to help Steffi, whom they are praising there, as well as anywhere he is. What and how he is we two know best of all, right, Liese?
>
> Today Fritz came back and gave me greetings from Steffi. Unfortunately this will all still take a pretty long time and we must be patient. How I will make it through this horrible time I myself do not know. Work is helping me a lot because, as you probably suspect, I am working for Käthe Neumann since I had to leave my apartment on November 30. There is also nothing good to report about Tante Rosa; the same thing is happening with the business that had already happened to others. Still, getting Steffi freed is the most important [thing] for me and only the hope of seeing him well again keeps me going. I will really be going to England and probably to an older woman, just that I hope I can delay it until Steffi's thing is taken care of. Things have become completely meaningless to me because of all the difficulties I have had to face, and this is almost the most difficult. But perhaps everything will take a turn for the better, it cannot remain like this, Steffi has to get well. The only thing that I have learned during this horrible time is that I could take the separation from Steffi if I only knew he were well again.
>
> But dear Liese, I am only complaining to you, I do not want to make your heart ache. You are both young and will overcome everything and have to have a nice future, just as you both have earned.

Bertha went on to say that her writing to Liese made no sense, but as soon as there was good news about Steffi's well-being, she would immediately send an urgent telegram. "Hopefully you will not be as frightened as I was when I received your telegram." At the end of the letter, she said: "You are a substitute for Steffi, as I have already so often gladly called you." Bertha's friend, Käthe Neumann, added: "I have already heard so many nice things about you and am happy that Steffi chose such a clever, courageous girl. Keep your head up, everything will be good and lots of luck!"

Bertha wrote Liese [December 20, 1938] that she had received a letter from New York that said:

> My dear Dr. Stefan Schifferes, Your request for an affidavit has been received. It was sent from Vienna and was dated July 9th, 1938. As this was some time ago, I would like to know if you still want me to go ahead and furnish the affidavit for you.
>
> Cordially yours.
>
> Nellie L. Berg
> 25 Central Park West
> New York City

Apparently Liese had sent the letter there in July, requesting an affidavit for Steffi. The reply was a form letter and only the underlined words were handwritten. Bertha said she sent, upon the advice of Hede, a Radiotelegram: "Send immediately affidavit." Bertha also wrote a letter to explain the telegram.

Fritz reported to Bertha that Steffi was an exercise leader there and because of that, received double rations. Bertha wrote:

> I only spoke with Fritz on the telephone. Unfortunately one cannot take everything he says for its word. I will go to the French Embassy with the affidavit you sent and try my luck, since I spent a few hours there last week, but through the slip of paper from your acquaintance I could at least get into the heated waiting room, whereas the other people had to stand out in the cold....
>
> Everyone sends you many greetings, everyone asks about you and admires your energy and ability.

Pepi's letter of December 20, 1938, assured Liese that everything was in order with Hede, Hans, and Grete's affidavits: "Let us hope." Then Pepi wrote that an acquaintance of his friend Alt might contact her in Washington regarding an affidavit for Steffi. Dr. Alt also said that "one can often get people out..." of Dachau if there is an affidavit and the mother makes efforts to get the son out. Then Pepi also wrote:

> Please do not ask any more or anything else since people do not want to be pestered—I do not even know the name. I think you should say nothing about the affidavit that you have already sent and otherwise, give all the usual explanations. And then again, you do not have to be so downtrodden. You should absolutely not go to a German Consul.

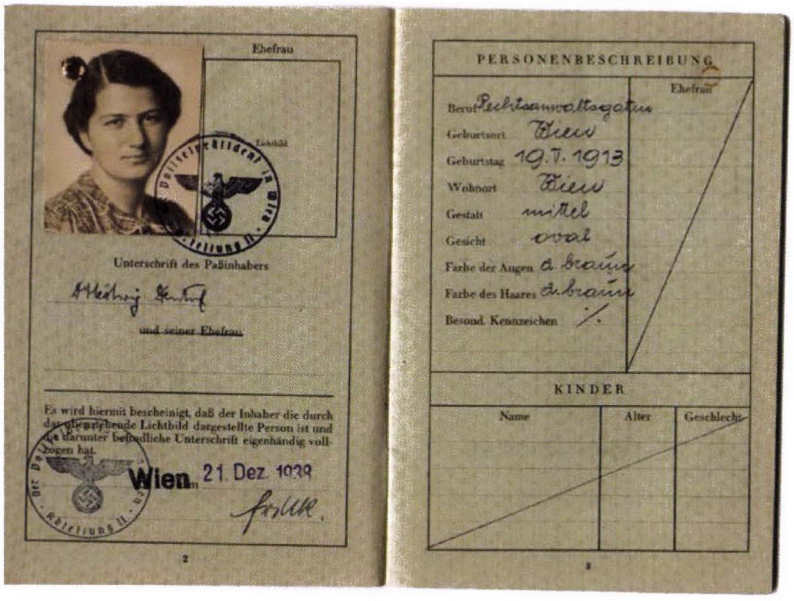
Then Pepi gave my mother advice about her health: If she needed to see a doctor, it would cost two dollars, at the most. If she said she was a refugee, then perhaps she would not have to pay.

> Regarding your heart, it could just be the result of all the upsetting events; see that you sleep well! Do you have a good room? What is with the children you are caring for, what do you understand about character weakness in such a small child?[77]

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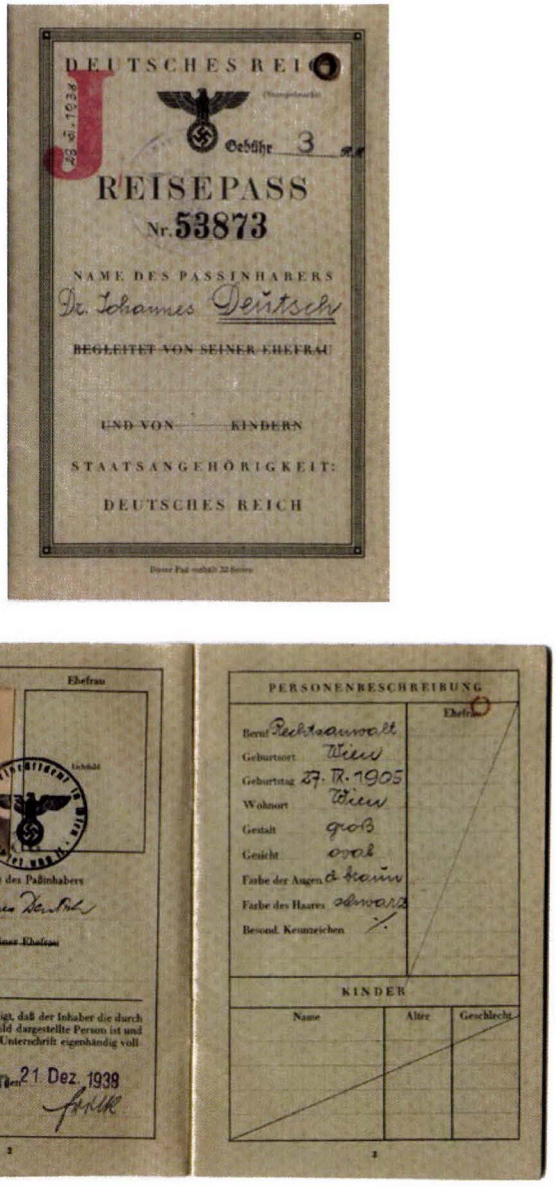
[77] Liese had complained to Pepi about the dishonest Ransom daughter, who had actually stolen things from Liese.





Hede's German Reich Passport, issued in Vienna, December 21, 1938

Hede wrote that with any luck the second affidavit for Steffi would be sufficient. The social worker in Stuttgart, Frl. Wolf, had been notified about it. Hede and Hans would soon be getting their passports, but unfortunately the visa would not yet be ready. Hans added on to the letter, with the encouragement of the in-laws, writing Liese that he had gotten a guide for Northeast America "...and now know more about Washington than you." He also mentioned how busy Hede was in the office and that he was occupying himself more with the private correspondence with Onkel Alfred. "Hopefully next year I will not have to write you so often because we will also be there. That is more of a wish for us, but it does not matter. So, the main thing: Hopefully the next year will bring you much happiness."



Hans' German Reich Passport, issued in Vienna, December 21, 1938

Aside from all the duties I imagine my mother had in the Ransom household, plus the running around in search of affidavits, and the endless letter writing, I cannot imagine such a young person being so burdened with so many things. I suppose she would not have had any time to just relax and be with her thoughts, but was overwhelmed by all of these obligations. In addition, Liese's mother was writing letters in which she would say things like: "Write to Ernst for New Year, but do not forget because he has been so good to us.... Alfred wrote from Chur.... Also send him a letter, he deserves it. Please also do not forget Else and Stefan for their birthdays...." Then she would also write how much she missed her youngest daughter. "If only you are doing well, that is my sole wish. I knew ahead of time how much your leaving would hurt me."

In addition, fatherly advice would be sent over the ocean:

> Lieschen, you have to allow time to go out in the fresh air, otherwise you will be completely pale. Now I am wondering when I will see you again….

* * *

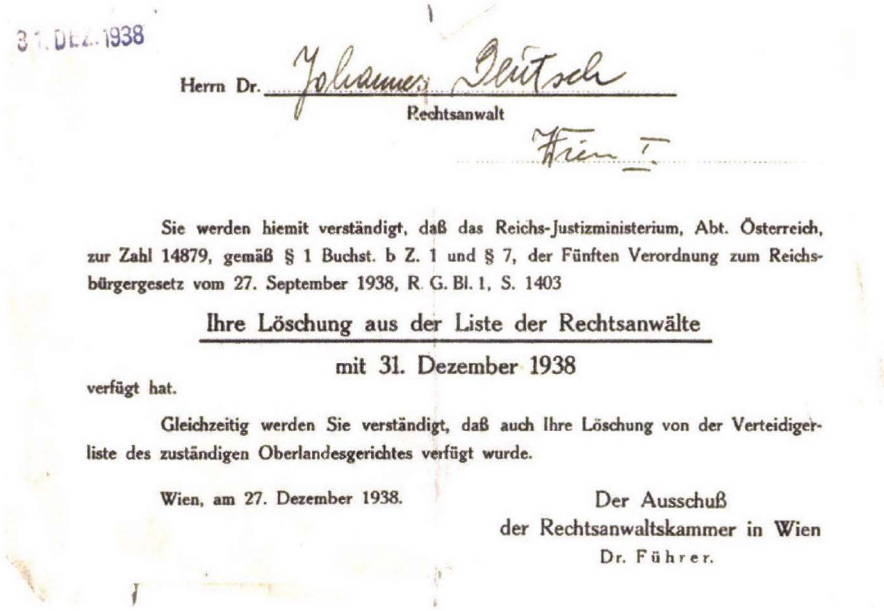
> Take care of yourself, for that you have to find time, brush your teeth well in the morning and at night, otherwise you will get cavities.

The letters took about two weeks to arrive, depending on the ship that carried them.

Liese's father wrote [December 27, 1938]:

> Herbert is our next hope. If he does not keep his word, then you will have to, Lieserle, look around for someone else because we must be with you. If I will be a consultant, I still do not know, that will be decided towards the first of the year. But even if I do become one, that would not be a lasting existence. You, dearest Lieschen are our hope and our future. You are doing well now because you are in a typical American household. You are participating in the local customs without any pain, whereas others have to fight for that. And even if you do not get the payment for the first month and the Christmas present is not what you expected, do not forget, Lieserle, that your business value in six months will be double!

Then he wrote that he could no longer send her the 10 RM because the exchange was no longer permitted. "If there is a special rate at the *Reichsbank* [state bank], we do not know."



31. DEZ. 1938

Herrn Dr. Johannes Deutsch
Rechtsanwalt

Sie werden hiemit verständigt, daß das Reichs-Justizministerium, Abt. Österreich, zur Zahl 14879, gemäß § 1 Buchst. b Z. 1 und § 7, der Fünften Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 27. September 1938, R. G. Bl. 1, S. 1403

Ihre Löschung aus der Liste der Rechtsanwälte

mit 31. Dezember 1938

verfügt hat.

Gleichzeitig werden Sie verständigt, daß auch Ihre Löschung von der Verteidigerliste des zuständigen Oberlandesgerichtes verfügt wurde.

Wien, am 27. Dezember 1938.

Der Ausschuß
der Rechtsanwaltskammer in Wien
Dr. Führer.

Document showing that Johannes Deutsch was "deregistered" (expunged) from list of lawyers in Vienna

[You are hereby informed that the *Reichs* Department (Ministry) of Justice, Austrian Branch, to number 14879, according to § 1 letter b) line 1 and § 7, of the fifth enactment to the *Reichs* Civil Act of September 27, 1938, *Reichsgesetzblatt* [78] has enacted your deregistration from the list of attorneys of law on December 31, 1938. At the same time, you are notified that your deregistration from the list of defense lawyers has also been enacted.]

Vienna, December 27, 1938 Board of Bar Association in Vienna, Dr. Führer]

[78] *National Law Gazette*, official organ in which all acts of the old Parliament (*Reichstag*) had to be published.

Hede wrote [December 27, 1938] that Steffi and friends would soon be able to leave Dachau.

> Steffi's thing is not quite arranged at Prinz Eugenstrasse, but is almost finished, just a question of days. All of us are waiting with longing for your second affidavit. As I have heard, the Consulate is now up to May 24, so we will have our turn around January 31. But we will begin the preparations when the affidavit arrives.

During this period, Hede was taking a pastry and cooking class and even included recipes for her sister: authentic American salad and fruit salad, and puddings and Badner coffee bonbons. "By the time you receive this letter you will also be as perfect a cook of American things as I." She wrote that they were going to have guests at their "horribly cold" apartment so they could sample her cooking, adding: "In the evening we once again went on vacation to seek warmth at lovely Gersthof."[79] The news about friends included Max Hitchman going by ship Genoa-Shanghai-Genoa-New York "...because he would just be called for examination in February and will not wait for that here, but rather be examined in Shanghai. Rena [his wife] went with him."

As mentioned earlier, Max Hitchman was one of Hede and Hans' friends who was in Dachau at the same time as Steffi. Hede concluded: "There is not so much to do now in the office, but we can be happy that it was as good as it was until now. You need not have any worries about all of us because Papa once again made a profit."

On December 28, 1938, Liese received a letter from HIAS saying that they had received $5.00 from her "...to cover cost of cablegrams to and from Vienna by State Department in re Dr. Johannes Deutsch, Dr. Hedwig Deutsch (his wife, sister of Miss Strauss), Dr. Margarethe Deutsch (sister of Dr. J. Deutsch), all residing at Währingerstr. 15, Wien IX."

Onkel Emil was still in Switzerland and visited with his brother, Alfred, in Chur over the Christmas holiday. Onkel Emil wrote to Liese, telling her that Alfred "...recovered nicely in the few weeks and looks fresher than when he first arrived in Switzerland." He wrote about their visit to Arosa [a resort in the canton of Graubunden], saying that "...[we] thanked heaven for the beautiful day; but did not forget relatives and friends and others in the only homeland [they know] who are deprived of much more than a trip to a world-famous winter spa location." Then there were suggestions as to how best to get Steffi out of the concentration camp, and how he and Onkel Alfred still needed to wait before they could leave. At least, he said, they were in neutral Switzerland.

He told Liese: "You are truly a good, capable girl. It is really praiseworthy how quickly you were able to obtain affidavits for your parents, and aunt and Stefan [sic]!" Onkel Emil also thanked Liese for offering to try to obtain an affidavit for Onkel Alfred, though he thought it probably would not be necessary. "But since a supplementary affidavit could not hurt, then you could get one..." Then he decided that it would perhaps complicate matters too much: "I am optimistic enough to assume that the present documents will be sufficient."

Onkel Emil said that he was aware of people going to the United States on tourist visas with the intention of staying. He warned:

> Pres. Roosevelt requested a law so that such people could obtain an extension of their stay. That people with tourist visas are immediately able to obtain a permanent visa, as you suggested, is, according to my information, wrong.

---

[79] Gersthof was the name of the area in Vienna where the Strauss parents lived.

> Furthermore, the "tourist" who is put on a waiting-list for an emigration visa would be crossed off the list. I also heard that a tourist who applied for a permanent visa for the USA would first have to leave the States and apply from outside. As it is: we would not know to which other country we should go to make our efforts for a tourist visa or an emigration visa easier than from here. (The last possibility would be, e.g., from Cuba.....but for us it is an Archimedian problem: how and where do I find an exact point to lift my fishing rod?) So, from a practical standpoint, there remains nothing better than to wait here...

Onkel Alfred wrote in the same letter that in Chur there were, "...at the moment 23 emigrants (all from Vienna), whereas in Zurich there are supposed to be 2–3,000. Therefore it would be easier to obtain an extension." He continued: "Since I have a ship ticket for Bolivia (departure 7. April 39 from Genoa or Marseille, the earlier departures are sold out), I hope to get permission to stay until about the end of March. Until then, God will help somehow." He told Liese that if she could get a supplementary affidavit for him, "...I would naturally be thankful."

Then he wrote of news from Vienna; he said that Liese's family was fine but informed her that the regulations were getting stricter and that beginning January 1 there would be greater restrictions on sending or shipping baggage. He assured her: "I have written, as you requested, the absolute truth about everything about your family and believe that at the moment you need not worry."

The letter added details about life in Switzerland:

> Regarding me, I am well cared for here. (Central heating, running water cold and hot, a public reading room with about 20 foreign newspapers in this house.) We even had a nice Hanukkah celebration for the emigrants on Wednesday, organized by the two Jewish families who live here. Most of the emigrants came here illegally across the border. Graubunden seems to be the only Canton that such poor devils were not sent back, but rather sent on to Chur, although the Jewish Community Center in Zurich promised to care for them. They receive 22 fr per week.... I am noble and live off of my own money.
>
> ...Compared to Zurich, it is very quiet here. The surroundings are very pretty and I can go out for hours every day. I received permission to use the Kantmaller library (100,000 volumes). The village is like the typical, neat Swiss places.

Alfred Kurz's return address in Switzerland was: "bei Leppig, Chur, Oberalpstrasse 35."

Much later in his life, in order to obtain restitution and a pension from Austria, Onkel Alfred wrote:

> My address [in Vienna] at the time was; IX., Türkengasse 8. As a Jew, I found myself in danger in my apartment at night and on the street during the day, I tried to leave the country as soon as possible since I received "advice" on the telephone as well as personally to emigrate as quickly as possible to avoid danger of being arrested and sent to concentration camp.
>
> My first attempt to leave the country was in September 1938, when a Viennese lawyer who made business trips to Zürich, Switzerland, was able to obtain an emigration visa to Bolivia for me from the Zürich General Consulate. Because of that I was able to procure a ship ticket to Bolivia via Marseille, and with this ship ticket and my German passport from the Swiss General Consulate in Vienna, I

got a transit visa for an eight day stay in Switzerland. So I was able to (with having to leave everything I owned behind), on 30.XI.1938, travel to Switzerland via Feldkirch with the maximum $12.00.

In Zürich I found out at the Bolivian General Consulate that the government in Bolivia had enacted a quota system and consequently it would be impossible to approximate when my number would come up. In Zürich they were threatening to send me back over the German border if within eight days (because of the transit visa) I did not leave Switzerland.

Consequently I had to leave Switzerland immediately and got a temporary transit permit in Chur (Canton Graubunden), which would have to be renewed every six weeks (under constant threat of being thrown out). Since my $12.00 were already gone long ago, I was able to live thanks to the hospitality of a group of townspeople of various religions, who put cca ten other refugees up in a communal house and took care of us. After a nerve-racking waiting period of cca ten months, I received an entry visa to the United States from the American Consulate in Zürich, thanks to the help of an American "organization for helping refugees." The $200.00 for the ship passage from Genoa to New York was lent to me and later I was thankfully able, with great effort, to repay this amount.

So I sailed on 6 October 1939 on the Italian Steamer "R E X" from Genoa to New York. From there I was sent on to Chicago, where I stayed with distant relatives from Vienna, who had arrived before me, and who themselves had no means of income in the USA, and struggled to exist until after approximately one year and many evening classes in English and commerce (the classes were free), [I] got a modest position in a real estate agency. It took practically eight years and much study to obtain a somewhat better position at an import company.

When Onkel Alfred retired, he moved to Arlington, Virginia, to be near his cousin, Sophie Strauss, and the rest of our family. He died on June 7, 1980.

Chapter 26: A New, Happy Life

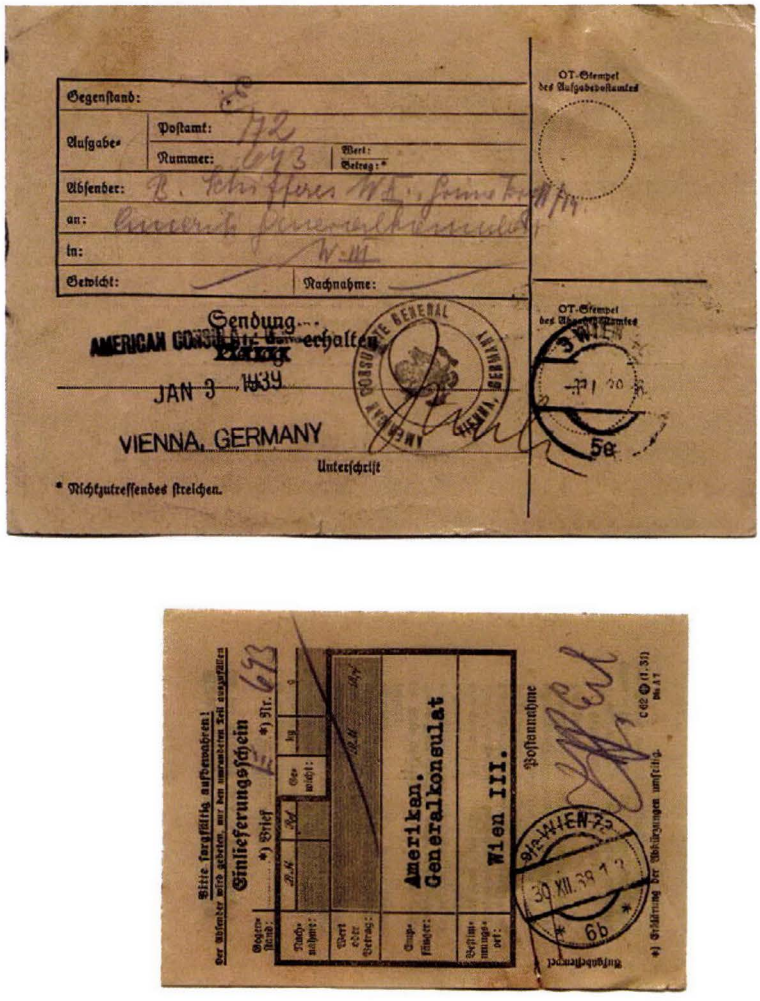
On December 28, 1938, the *Jüdische Zentralstelle* [Central Office for Jewish Emigration], Gartenstrasse 15 in Stuttgart, sent my father a letter announcing the re-opening of the Sports Course. "We hope to begin as soon as possible. Please inform us if you would like to participate in the Sports Course and which preparations you have made for emigration after the conclusion of the course." This letter was sent to Vienna because my father was still in Dachau. The next day, Steffi's mother sent a reply to Frau Wolf, saying that she hoped Frau Wolf had received her last letter in which she sent a photocopy of an affidavit that Liese Strauss had gotten for her son.

> Yesterday I received a second affidavit for my son from the Washington Rabbi Abram Simon. Since he has a yearly income of $9,000, which is also confirmed in another correspondence, this affidavit should suffice. Since my son registered for the quota at the Viennese Consulate, hopefully the summons to be examined will come soon and I will notify you immediately.
>
> But I must ask you to notify the appropriate place of the arrival of the affidavit, perhaps something can be done. I am enclosing a notarized copy of the second affidavit. Do you think that I, as the mother, should try (either in Vienna or Stuttgart) to give notice that my son will emigrate immediately, as soon as he is able, and that he should be receiving his passport and certificate of paid taxes, which he handed in earlier?
>
> Yesterday I received a postcard from my son in which he wrote that there might be a possibility of an intermediary Swedish journey. I would like to inform you and Herr Dir. Adler[80] of his readiness.
>
> I thank you for your efforts and ask for a quick reply.

Bertha also sent a letter to the American Consulate General in Vienna, Lustig Preangasse 9, informing them that her son had registered for the quota on May 31, 1938, and that she was enclosing the affidavits he had received. "Since November 12, 1938, he has been in protective custody in Dachau. Therefore I am requesting that you issue his visa as urgently as possible because his being released depends on it...." Bertha included two copies of the affidavit provided by Liese Strauss with verification by Dr. C.A. Ransom, as well as two copies of the affidavit provided by Rabbi Abram Simon with the verification of Julius I. Peyser.

Nazi rules and regulations became increasingly stringent. On New Year's Day 1939, Hugo, Hans, Hede, and many other Jews could no longer be referred to as lawyers in Vienna. On January 2, 1939, my grandfather Hugo Strauss' name was added to the list of consultants of which, according to the letters, there were merely eighty.

[80] See Appendix A, *Stuttgart Sportschule*.



Validation of Bertha's correspondence from and to the American Consulate General in Vienna

In addition, Hede commented on the "nice" income that Rabbi Simon had and wondered why he did not include a list of his assets on the affidavit that he sent for Steffi. The Jewish Community Center in Vienna[81] said that Steffi would be receiving the confirmation soon. A letter also arrived from Dr. Adler, the director of the Sports School, saying that "...Steffi would be released in the next days, one should not try to do anything here; he will surely come soon." He also mentioned the possibility that the sports course would continue. Hede also wrote: "From our experience we calculate 10–14 days, so the latest would be mid-January. We are all very happy about that, that he will be coming soon. In the meantime other acquaintances have also returned. Steffi's mother has an English Permit on the way, but can only turn it in to Prinz Eugenstr. when it has arrived."

According to Hede's letter, the departure dates of the various ships were listed in the newspaper, "...but they are infrequent and always take a long time. Others apparently do not take mail."

[81] *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde.*

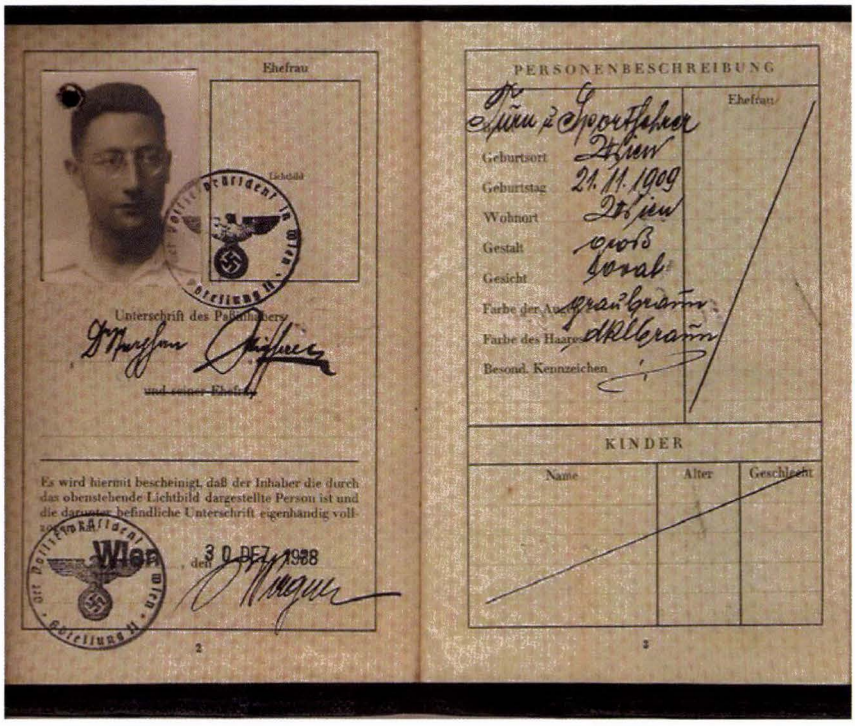
Abschrift.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

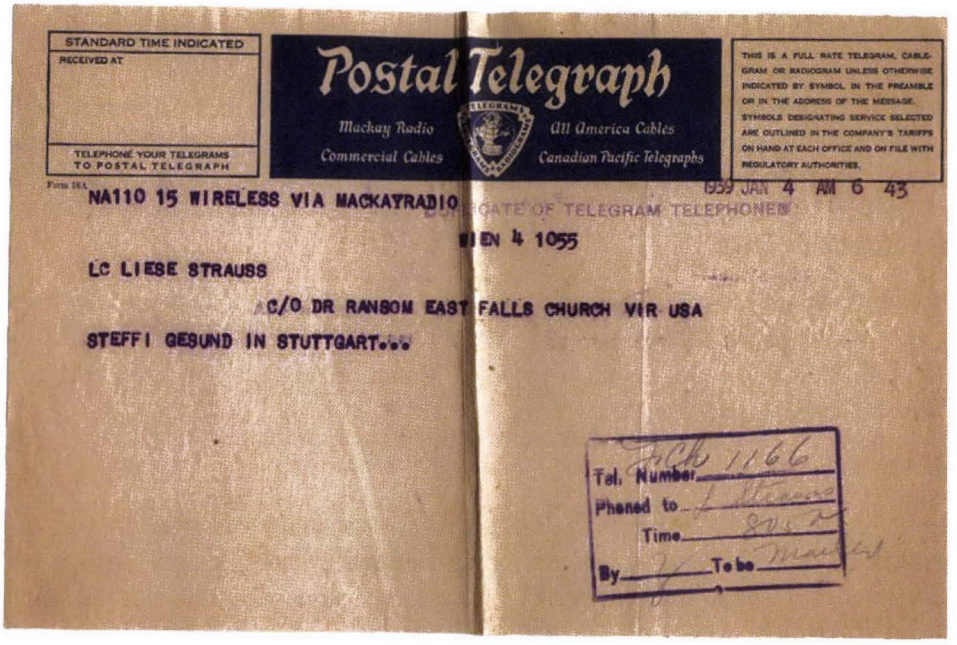
District of Columbia)
City of Washington) SS:
County of - - - - - - - -)

I, ABRAM SIMON, age 66 being duly sworn, deposes and says: - - - - - - -





Steffi's Passport, issued December 30, 1938, identifying him as a gymnastics and sport teacher



STANDARD TIME INDICATED
RECEIVED AT
TELEPHONE YOUR TELEGRAMS TO POSTAL TELEGRAPH

Postal Telegraph
Mackay Radio Commercial Cables
All America Cables Canadian Pacific Telegraphs

THIS IS A FULL RATE TELEGRAM, CABLEGRAM OR RADIOGRAM UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED BY SYMBOL IN THE PREAMBLE OR IN THE ADDRESS OF THE MESSAGE. SYMBOLS DESIGNATING SERVICE SELECTED ARE OUTLINED IN THE COMPANY'S TARIFFS ON HAND AT EACH OFFICE AND ON FILE WITH REGULATORY AUTHORITIES.

Form 16A

1939 JAN 4 AM 6 43

NA110 15 WIRELESS VIA MACKAYRADIO

DATE OF TELEGRAM TELEPHONED

WIEN 4 1055

LC LIESE STRAUSS

C/O DR RANSOM EAST FALLS CHURCH VIR USA

STEFFI GESUND IN STUTTGART...

Tel. Number 1166
Phoned to
Time
By To be

The postal telegraph sent on January 4, 1939: Steffi well in Stuttgart

At 6:43 AM on January 4, 1939, the long-awaited Postal Telegraph was sent by Bertha to Liese, c/o DR RANSOM EAST FALLS CHURCH VIR USA, which simply stated: "STEFFI WELL IN STUTTGART." Surely music to my mother's ears!

On the same day, January 4, 1939, the *Gestapo*, *Staatspolizeileitstelle Stuttgart*, issued a certificate to my father, which stated:

> The holder of this certificate, the Jew Stephan Schifferes Stuttgt. was released today from protective custody; he willingly declared that he would seek immediate emigration. Within one month he must present the appropriate papers to the *Staatspolizeileitstelle Stuttgart* [State Police Post Office Stuttgart] in order to demonstrate how he has attempted to emigrate. Every Monday and Friday at 5 o'clock he must report to the *Staatspolizeileitstelle Stuttgart*.

According to Sophie's January 4, 1939, letter to Liese, Steffi sent his mother a telegram from Munich and then went on to Stuttgart.

> You can imagine our joy about that. We wanted to immediately send you a telegram, dearest Lieschen, but Steffimama said that she had already done so. What a pity, Lieschen, that I cannot hug you and hold you close to me, I cried tears of joy. Finally I will consume my New Year piglet made of chocolate, I had said that I would only eat it when Steffi came back and had put it next to the piglet I bought for Steffi. Perhaps he will come here and I will then give him his golden good luck piglet, maybe you have already gotten yours, it should bring both of you much much happiness.... Now you will once again be a completely different person, Lieschen, and will be completely different at your work, joyful and happy, as you always are. Just keep your sunny ways and look happily and confidently to the future. Now you can write one another and hopefully see one another soon. That I wish you, my dearest Lieschen, my good child, with all my heart.

Then she wrote that Onkel Stefan, who had been a lawyer, was not allowed to become a consultant.

Liese's first letter to Steffi after his release was dated January 4, 1938, rather than 1939—an understandable early January error. She began the letter by numbering it with the Roman numeral one. It was as if their correspondence and life were beginning anew even though the actual "first" letter was written on June 15, 1938, when Steffi began the Sports School, which must have seemed like a lifetime before.

Liese included photos in the letter and on the back of each photo, she wrote a little commentary, and she also wrote a single, capitalized word on each: *ICH HAB' DICH SO LIEB!* [I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!]. On the final photo, she said that she was pretending to run towards him, when he arrived. "Paper is patient—but I am not."

In the letter she wrote:

> If you only knew how happy I am! I was so worried about you, as you can imagine. I can hardly grasp the notion and hopefully soon all my wishes will come true and I hope that the horrible time of our separation will not last much longer. Hopefully you are well and will now see that you basically recover. Please, please take care of yourself, eat decently, sleep a lot and see that you look well and are well. That is now my most sincere wish which I beg you to follow. I want to be able to wait for you soon in N. York and find you looking well. We do want to begin a new, happy life here (for me it will just begin when you are here), for that purpose you should be strong and well. For I love you so deeply and also for that reason you have to be well. I will not let you work if you need to recover, I already have plans. Drink a lot of milk, eat a lot of fruit so that you ingest a lot of vitamins, which you have been lacking in the food.



Photos taken in Dr. Ransom's garden, in East Falls Church, Virginia, 1939

I am so looking forward to your letter that you will be writing me immediately. I cannot really understand why you are in Stgt., will also write to Vienna because I do not know any address and assume and hope that in the meantime you are at Etnatasor[82] and will slowly begin to pack. I have such an uneasy feeling in certain matters about you. I will see from your first, hopefully soon to arrive, letter if I am correct or not. Namely that if you continue the course, which seems to be the only inducement for you to be in Stgt., until the completion, that means a longer separation, as you know, in addition to all the other worries about all of you.... Perhaps now you are thinking that I am weak and soft, I have to pull myself together and persist. I do not believe that that is the case. But I do see that one does not need a diploma here, that one can get by not only in one's field, but also that one must take what comes—until one has perfectly mastered the language. I do believe that the Chicago affidavit-giver can and will accommodate you, in fact, you need not worry yourself about being here, if one lives simply, as we both do, one finds jobs which are adequate in the beginning. One advantage lies in the fact that I am settled, with that we are ahead of HeHa. My earnest request (it seems I cannot stop my requests in this letter) is that as soon as you have the visa, you should come here immediately. Believe me, my Steffi, it is not out of egotism, I have the feeling that the thing cannot be fast enough. I am doing everything I can here to expedite it. I presume that your mother informed you about my letters and therefore you know that I had the Ste. Department write to the Consulate [with pre-paid telegram reply], in order to resolve your case quickly. I am awaiting a response in about 14 days. I did the same for HeHa, but still no answer. Both things are worrying me because of the [expiration] date. Pepi assured me and is convinced that it will work. Both were and are so wonderfully kind to me, you just cannot imagine. I was their guest for 5 days because they said they wanted to facilitate my first steps in this foreign land. They already have established themselves nicely and I wish we were so far along. But they themselves are naturally not satisfied, especially Pepi because he earns less than Lilly.

I actually do not know what all I should write you and where I should begin. Since November 8 we have been out of touch. Externally because I have been in constant contact with you internally, that you surely know. On New Year's Day I was all alone and then I thought I could write to you. Then I gave up that idea and now I am happy because it would have been as sad a letter as all the previous ones, which I had sent home. I have already been in Falls Church 1 month and quickly got used to things. The landscape here is very pretty although it is only hilly and does not have mountains as do the middle states. Falls Church is in the middle of the woods, is a true little city where one person knows the other. Even though it is not large, it certainly does not have the character of a village as we know, but rather is more like a suburb of villas. The advantage is that it is near (20 minutes by car, 1 hour with the bus, 20 cts) from the real gorgeous city of Washington. I myself have seen very little of Washington because I have very little free time, that is, take [very little free time], and when I was there, I was occupied with other things rather than sightseeing. I am proud of my *First papers*, I know of no one who has obtained them in 4 days. I am doing really well here in Dr. Ransom's house. Everyone is very nice to me; unfortunately the Dr. is in the hospital and will just come back at the end of January.

[82] Backwards German for Tante Rosa.

Unfortunately, because my position has not yet been determined, I presume that he will keep the housekeeper. What he will do with me, I do not know yet, probably in his office or something. Because to manage the house 2 people are too much, although there is a lot to do, with cleaning 10 rooms daily and cooking. But things are fine and I am not even tired anymore and have quite a bit of time for myself (which does not necessarily mean I can go out because someone has to be here all the time and mostly that someone is I). During my free time I read, mostly I write letters. Mrs. Hilton is so nice and helps me and mothers me. She sees that I go out for walks, takes me out to be with people, movies, concerts, invites me, etc. She has enormous amounts of energy and does whatever she wants. Also she helped me so much with you.

As for Dr. R.'s children, the boy is very nice. Boy is not the correct term for this 16-year-old. The girl is less nice, very unfriendly, domineering, and fresh and even with great patience on my part, difficult to get along with. If she happens to be nice, one can be certain that she is only doing it because she wants something. But I do not see her very much, that is an advantage. She is a real movie nut... which I take as medicine for [learning] English. I encourage everyone to do it intensively because that is the most important foundation for here. But after 2–3 months practice in the country, the difficulties regarding this are over. I should really do much more in order to advance, I should learn stenography, go to an evening school, which is impossible because of the distance. I am alone a lot and therefore do not have much opportunity to speak. Just in the evening, that is night, when the sleepless housekeeper with whom I share a room wants to gossip until 1 a.m. (she can sleep until 10 a.m., whereas I must get up at 7). But otherwise she is very nice and I can learn a lot from her diligence and am actually doing so. I have actually gotten used to the life here. Actually, I have gotten accustomed to things quickly and effortlessly; since I have other worries than about myself, then I can be satisfied with everything (but I can also be objective).

I will send this letter to Vienna because I do not know an address and want you to receive this. I am so looking forward to receiving a letter from you. If you only knew how I am longing for you, sometimes I do not even know what I should do. I constantly think of you. Now it seems that we will be reunited soon and that was and is my consolation. And then there will be no more separation, then I will hold on to you very tightly! And our love will make our lives worthwhile. Hopefully you will come soon!

Put everything together that you will say at the Consulate. I do not know if they know that R. Simon, your 2nd affidavit-giver (I am No. 1!) died, in any case, do not say anything other than if you are asked if you know about it. To the question, where will you live, say Chicago, I think that is the smartest. Say that you have been invited there. What you will do here? For the time being you have been invited. How do you know Mr. Leeb? Concerning my affidavit, you can see everything on the copy. —Hopefully it is not premature to write you this: If you are having things made, then I would suggest a linen (raw silk?) suit, furthermore, as strange as it may sound, in the summer one needs a straw hat (Panama) because of the heat and sun. Here there has been constant wonderful Spring weather, just like April over there. One could even go naked. The houses are over-heated so that up until now I have not needed heavy dresses or pullovers. I mostly wear summer clothes.

And come as soon as possible, do not let anything keep you there. The sooner you are here, the sooner our goals will be attained and from over there you can do nothing to make this happen. Take a good ship, a big one and not 3rd class, so that the trip is a pleasure. It can be very nice, one gets to know people and gets a rest. Do not skimp and do allow yourself to get tourist class on a big ship, I myself was seasick enough on the Normandie (and not more than all the others, on the contrary: that is my excuse). Do not worry about the future, my precious, we will make it.

My parents are writing me so nicely and from here I can see how thankful I am for them. I can imagine how happy everyone is for you, especially your mother. In every letter I was told about her courage....

I will close for today even though I have sooo much more to write.

Chapter 27: Capable and Courageous

Bertha's first letter to her son after his release [January 5, 1939] told him that she had gotten his telegram and postcard from Munich and that she immediately wrote to Liese and sent Fr[au] Wolf a telegram to inform her of Steffi's return to Stuttgart. Because, she said, "I cannot describe to you how happy I was and always thought to whom else I could tell the news." Then she described a problem with the signature on Steffi's passport:

> ...an official determined that the signature of the notarized picture should not be on, but rather under the picture. Now you will have to have another picture notarized and make certain that your signature is under the picture. Send it to me quickly.... What do you say about Liese, a capable and courageous girl, one can really say that.

Then she gave him Liese's address and asked Steffi if he had money. When Liese had arrived in Stuttgart shortly after Steffi's arrest, she apparently took his camera and clarinet and mailed them back to Vienna. Bertha added:

> I am writing you in a big rush because I am going to an English serving course at 7 o'clock. Karl is visiting me and will add on. Tomorrow I will write to everyone who was so nice and wrote to me and did not just use words, but actually did things.

Karl wrote how happy he was that Steffi was once again well.

> Hope to see you before my trip to Bizerte, Tunisia, and Kapelle Silving [the Viennese musician who wanted to take a whole orchestra to Tunisia] should actually already be playing there, but our visas will be arranged in Paris and so we have been waiting for 3 weeks. I have been living at Etnatasor [Tante Rosa] since the middle of November because since the 8th of December I have been divorced. Unfortunately otherwise my wife would not have gotten a job. Little Mandy will be going to Berlin in the summer and is again trying, through a hearing, to lengthen her permission to act.

Even Bertha's friend, Käthe Neumann, and her mother added a few words, saying how happy they were for Steffi and how much they would miss Bertha when she left. But, they added, "We are not that far along!"

On January 6, 1939, Bertha wrote to Steffi:

> I am so happy that you are again well in Stuttgart, I can hardly express myself. What I did for you was hardly anything, I just always wrote to various places and complained. The fact that you have become such a dear, good boy only assures me that you have inherited most of your Papa's characteristics, who was such a true and good person, just like Stepsi. Unfortunately, I have very little to do with that.

Later in the letter she said that she had to leave[83] their apartment on November 30 and since then had been at Käthe's house, where she got paid RM 40 per month, plus room and board. "As you know," she said,

> ...I put an announcement in the *Times* on November 8 and after many exchanges of letters, have a position with a Mrs. Mason. (Campden House, Burley, Hants is the address.) It is supposed to be not so far from Southampton, so said Dr. Hans Deutsch.

Bertha was to receive her Permit, provided nothing unforeseen happened.

Around this time my father decided not to take a chance by waiting around for the "America thing" to materialize and accepted an agricultural permit for England. Bertha was hoping that they could travel to England together.

In his letter to his mother, Steffi must have mentioned the death of his uncle in Dachau, which he had learned about as he himself was being released. Bertha wrote: "The news of Arthur's death really frightened me; now of the four brothers, there is only one left and all of them actually died young." She wanted to know what Steffi was doing in Stuttgart, whether he really had enough money, whether he had warm things.

> Now I am going to write to all the various places so that I can really thank them from the bottom of my heart for giving me my Steffi again, who must have a lot of happiness and should always stay well, which such a fine, good boy deserves. I could write more, but perhaps I will see you again before you leave, don't you think?

Naturally the whole family was overjoyed about Steffi's release from Dachau. Yet their lives and individual concerns went on. The Nazis were still there. Jews were being evicted, including my family. And yet, when Tante Stephy wrote to Liese, she told her: "You should not be such a big pessimist. We promised to write you honestly and you can see that from our mail." Then she wrote that she no longer had work in Vienna and absolutely wanted to leave. And Liese's parents also. Tante Stephy added:

> Despite all the work with the apartment, I am taking a pastry course, Hede also, and we are learning a lot. I am dissolving my household, except for the bedroom, I have sold almost everything. But do not ask how much I got. But that is the least of my worries.

Hede added on to the same letter, telling Liese why Steffi returned to Stuttgart after his release. She wrote:

> ...the answer is that Dr. Adler,[84] who got him out, absolutely wants to continue the course. But Steffi will only stay until the next possible certification. Yesterday I sent the questionnaire from the Consulate. I hope that the examination will be soon. He still does not have his passport because they are not giving it to his mother and therefore he will have to come here himself.... We are handing in a new certificate because now they are extended for only 5 days."

In short, there was a lot of running around needed just to keep the various documents current.

---

[83] Bertha was evicted from their apartment in Neustift am Walde.

[84] Karl Adler; see Appendix A, *Stuttgart Sportschule*.

Hede wrote that Onkel Alfred had invited her and Hans to spend eight days with him in Chur on their way out of Europe. She also wrote that she wished they had someone they could visit in Paris.

According to Hede's letter, her father was extremely busy and earning a lot during this time. "He is working very hard, but he prefers that to not having anything to do." Hugo Strauss also wrote that he was working from 8 a.m. until late at night and did not even have a chance to dictate letters.

Apparently Liese was sending her father medical advice, so he thanked her for that and asked: "Can one get diet bread in East Falls Church? This is a serious question because there is no place I would rather be than near you." He ended the letter by telling her that the text of their telegram was so long because he sent one of the holiday texts. There were eighteen different ones to choose from, and he chose the most appropriate and longest one. The only original thing on it was the signature: "Consultant Strauss." That way Liese would know that her father could continue to work.

When my father wrote to my mother on January 7, 1939, he told her about how he actually had gained weight while in Dachau "...and I am feeling relatively well." He would be getting his passport soon and furthermore, should be getting the English Permit the following week "...unfortunately through the *Chaverim*, whom I will have to deceive when I take it. I thank you very much for both the affidavits...." Then my father explained how it came about that he was released from the concentration camp. Director Adler

> ...wants to re-open my school and that is the sole reason that we (all) students could return. You were here on Saturday, Herr Goss and my colleagues were first picked up on Tuesday. Herr Goss followed me; the others remained in Wtbg. [Württemberg]. I did sign my name saying that I did want to once again attend the course, but I do know from various experiences that I should leave more quickly. So if what I wrote above is true, then I will next be traveling to England, since I do not want to await my summons to the A.C. here and in any case, want to have a good preparation for America there. I was well the whole time, just now because of the over-heated train, the (now it seems) over-heated room, I have a bad throat inflammation so that I cannot write you very well; although I am still not writing with my throat.

Then my father gave the explanation of why the two poems he wrote for my mother were just being sent to her now: "Why I am just sending both poems, the 2nd was just finished at midnight on that fearful night, as you know and also that I love you also." Then he wrote how he hoped that all her wishes would be fulfilled in the New Year, "...just as things began for me on January 3...."

These are the poems (the second is an acrostic that spells out Liese's name):

Meiner Allerliebsten!

Ach Liese weisst Du welches Sehnen
in meinem Herzen brennt für Dich?
Und weinen könnt' ich heisse Tränen
so stark und innig liebe ich.

Wenn Du in meiner Nähe bist,
Wenn ich die zarten Lippen küsse,
Du liebe Braut wohl kaum ermisst,
was Du mir bist, Du reine Süsse.

Und immer hab' ich Dich so gerne,
und meine Liebe wächst wohl noch,
denn ob Du nah bist oder ferne,
mein Liebchen hör', ich lieb Dich doch.

Ich weiss, dass Du mich jetzt sehr liebst;
doch wenn wir uns nun lang nicht sehen,
und lang' Du keine Nachricht kriegst,
wird Deiner Liebe dann bestehen?

Ich glaube ja und freue mich
auf baldiges Zusammenleben
mit Dir. Ach es wird wonniglich
und nie mehr eine Trennung geben!

Stuttgart, 8. November 1938 Stephan

My Dearest

Oh Liese, do you know how much
Longing for you is burning in my heart?
And I could cry warm tears,
That is how strongly and deeply I love you.

When you are near me,
When I kiss your delicate lips,
You, my dear bride, hardly know
What you mean to me, sheer sweetness.

And I always care for you so much,
And my love is growing still,
For whether you are near or far,
I love you still, my dearest.

I know that you love me so much now;
Still when we are apart,
And you have no news,
Will your love remain?

I do believe and am overjoyed
To soon share my life with you. Oh
It is wonderful that there
Will never be another separation.

Stuttgart, 8 November 1938 Stephan

Stuttgart, 9. November 1938.
***L**eise auf der alten Bank*
***I**n der Richterwarte Grün*
***E**hrlich er ihr eingestand*
***S**einer Liebe starkes Glühn.*
***E**ilig muss sie von dem Herzen, --*

***S**chnell für sie es nur mehr schlägt, --*
***T**rotzt der Trennung Weh und Schmerzen*
***R**uhig stark und unbewegt.*
***A**ch sei Du mir immer nahe!*
***U**nd behalte mich doch gerne,*
***S**o wie ich Dich in der Ferne,*
***S**elbst in Nordamerika.*

Stephan.

Stuttgart, 9 November 1938
Quietly on the old bench,
On Richterwarte Grün,
Truly is it understood,
His love beams brightly,
In haste I just part from the heart,--

Because it now beats only for her,--
Despite the ache and pain of separation
Quietly strong and unmoved.
Oh always stay near me!
And keep loving me as I love you
From the distance,
even in North America.

Stephan.

Chapter 28: Somehow It Will Work Out

In Karl's letter to Steffi, dated January 7, 1939, he wrote that everyone had passports, "...with the exception of Silving, who should be getting it any day now." They had work permits for Bizerte, Tunisia. Everything seemed to be in order, but various people in Paris, including a lawyer and the HIAS, were asked to intervene on their behalf.

> And still no result. The local French Consulate only fills out visas for Aryans, everything else has to go through Paris. That is how things stand. Now I am asking you if I could go to England with you in order to await things there because I am losing my nerves. As I said, I would only stay in England a short time. Passport, certificate of no owed taxes are in order. Please write me about this immediately.

Bertha wrote [January 8, 1939] that Karl was afraid that he could not go to Africa. "The main thing is that he is divorced, at least for her." Bertha also wondered if Steffi would be coming to Vienna and if he would be taking all of his belongings along to England.

In Liese's next letter [January 8, 1939] she wrote how she had learned that "...one needs to approach things from 10 different angles in order to really be able to accomplish what one wants." Although Rabbi Abram Simon, who provided my mother with an affidavit for my father, had passed away, my mother wrote:

> Still it was good to have security from such a personality, even if he died. If you only knew what a charming person he was. And even today I cannot fathom how he gave [it to] a total stranger (namely me), without posing any further questions, and said after 3 minutes: "I'll sign your papers." And on the next day I could send your mother a telegram.

(A front page article in the *Washington Post*, dated December 25, 1938, announced that Rabbi Abram Simon had died just after giving a prayer for peace: "Jewish Leader Succumbs to Heart Attack After Plea That 'Dark Clouds Over Catholics and Protestants Be Lifted.'")

Liese encouraged Steffi to request transportation to Chicago because she wanted to be near her sister and brother-in-law and, by being there, Mr. William Leeb, the man who gave the third affidavit for Steffi, could perhaps help Steffi find a job. In any case, she said, having a foreign diploma or choosing another profession would not be necessary. As soon as they both spoke perfect English and were used to the new country, they would find something to do. Liese wanted to study something, perhaps take a stenography class, but for that, she would have to ask Dr. Ransom for some free evenings even though she was actually only supposed to work until 8:00 p.m. But, she said,

> ...I am so thankful to be here, already I have learned a tremendous amount from the especially capable and nice housekeeper. And also because I only speak English, that is a tremendous advantage. The only unpleasant thing is that I am really uncertain what job I have in the house and also that I know nothing about the payment. But that will take care of itself when Dr. R. returns. That is a sampling of the very small worries I have.

The letter goes on to express uncertainty about whether they would ever achieve their goal and whether Steffi still loved her.

> You do know me and realize that even though I hope with certainty that you love me as before, I always fear that somehow our plans will not materialize and until I know with certainty that these worries are unfounded, I will find no rest. I am so afraid that you will stay in Stuttgart and will make other plans or find other possibilities. Then I talk myself out of this again, then I think of it again and everything goes through my mind. Then I look at the telegram again and once again do not understand, but enough about that, I will continue to be patient and will be able to stand it. Hopefully you are well and have recovered. Maybe you can already travel with HeHa. I am also worried about them, if they will be finished in time. I am happy that I am busy, otherwise I would have absolutely no diversion. Mrs. Hilton watches out for me, she would like me to get together with her often (at best I see her once a week), but I do not want to be out so often and furthermore the trip costs 50 cents.

Then Liese said she felt uncomfortable being in company and would not do it except that she knew that making contacts would help them both. She wrote about the neighborhood in East Falls Church, how one could walk for hours through the woods, see squirrels, "...which are grey here, and rabbits. And we are having gorgeous Spring-like weather, I cannot even imagine a real winter. I hear the birds singing very early in the morning here."

Liese also wrote about the huge snowstorm with thunder that greeted her in New York upon her arrival on Thanksgiving Day. And she also wrote how worried she was that the skyscrapers would fall down. "N York makes a huge impression, although I practically saw nothing because I ran around the whole day. She went on:

> Your mother was always held up as an example of being braver than I, but I find that I was very brave. I am still wondering how I lived through the 12th.[85] I also only cried in Switzerland because then I realized that I had to be strong. Just that I felt sorry for Onkel Emil, he did not know what to do with me, aside from the fact that he had to wait for me at the train [station] at midnight. But enough about that.

Liese wrote that Mrs. Hilton asked her if she had

> ...a sweetheart and the rest you can imagine. She told me that I should not tell Dr. Ransom yet and promised her help. I only told him when I needed his letters for my affidavit. He took it in stride and that is fine with me for I do not want to obligate him anymore and he also does not want to take on any more responsibility, because as soon as I have a (better) possibility, to get an independent job, I can make use of it. At least, that is how I imagine it. That should happen soon. Just stay strong and well because at first you will need to utilize a lot of strength. I have not yet been able to establish this thing with the American tempo, on the other hand, I do notice that the people here complain a lot about the amount of work that they have although it is not so bad.

Liese also wrote about bumping into various acquaintances from Europe and also by chance meeting a cousin of her father's "...from Kassel whom I did not know [Hugo's mother,

[85] The twelfth of November, when Liese arrived in Stuttgart to visit Steffi, who had been arrested and then sent to Dachau.

Selma/Sara Plaut, was from Kassel, Germany] and whose name I heard called at an office." She also asked Steffi to write about her parents, if they were well, because even though they were writing her such long letters, she honestly could not tell how they were doing. She wrote that she had so many people to write to and thought it would be best to send "family letters," which she could type, "...but why should the people not have to work a little to decipher my scrawl, and I know you would rather have a sloppy letter than a typed one."

On January 8, 1939, Tante Rosa wrote Steffi how glad they all were that he was in Stuttgart again and thanked him for having helped Fritz while he was in Dachau, although she could not and did not mention that name. Then she wrote how much better Bertha was doing, now that she knew where and how he was.

> We all had a hard time, that you can imagine, and are now filled with worries, both business and privately. Karl, who is divorced from his wife, has been living with us for a few weeks because he no longer has a home. We are all impressed by Liese's capability; she has accomplished really a lot in the short amount of time. Send her many greetings, and we wish both of you much happiness, you surely know.... I knew about Arthur [Schifferes] from Roserl Huber, still I did not want to tell Mama; did I do the right thing? His wife left for England.[86]

Pepi wrote [January 9, 1939] saying that Hede and Hans would soon be summoned and perhaps actually be able to leave in January. He told Liese that contacting HIAS or similar organizations would not expedite things and that they would be taken as part of the "Quota." The only reason that would cause the matter to move more quickly was if they had been in concentration camp. Thankfully they were not. He added:

> Forget about Cuba because since approximately 2 months this country has been asking for 5,000 Dollars guarantee and the Quota would be reduced 18 months. Unfortunately Trinidad is impossible for similar reasons and my friend, Dr. Alt, is just now looking for some refugee countries for his parents.

Imre Temesvary, an acquaintance whose wife knew Steffi, wrote my mother the following [January 9, 1939] on stationery of the "Hotel Paramount, Forty-Sixth Street, West of Broadway":

> *I have interviewed a young man from Graz who arrived a week ago almost straight from the Dachau concentration camp. He was seized in Graz on Nov. 10 together with all male Jews and was released after 30 days from Dachau when the American Consul General in Vienna sent in the notice calling for his appearance for medical examination for the immigration visa to the U.S.*
>
> *The young man is about 27 years of age and also a member of the "Hakoah" sports club; he did not meet your fiance [sic] but his own personal experiences in Dachau will give you some indication of the life your fiancé leads there.*
>
> *The young man says that on the train during the first 24 hours all victims of the pogrom were being badly beaten but the young S.A. guards, mostly 20-year-old hooligans, however, dealt rather leniently with the younger men and particularly delighted in beating up helpless elderly men. My informant reported having personally witnessed the killing of an old man of about 60 years of age during*

[86] Marie Mizzi Kojzar Schifferes was born in Vienna on March 23, 1891, and died in Henly-on-Thames, England, in 1990.

the first 24 hours. But thereafter as soon as they had been placed into blocks and cells, the atrocities seized [sic]. The food, which consists entirely of "Eintopfgerichte"[87] *or stews, tastes good but the portions for Jewish prisoners are not very large. They are not required to do any work because they are not considered "worthy" of work, but are kept marching for hours each day, had their heads shaved, their clothes taken away and put in prison garb resembling coarse pyjamas [sic]. Except for the first 24 hours the prisoners do not come in contact with the camp commanders and guards but are entirely run by the room commanders and cell commanders.*

Room and block commanders are all ex-communists who have been in Dachau since the inception of the Nazi regime and will probably never be released because the Nazi fear that they would start immediately communistic uprisings. These rooms and block commanders act very decently towards the Jewish prisoners.

To sum up, since your fiancée [sic] has reported to his mother his name and address from Dachau, he must be all right since all atrocities cease once they are assigned to block and cells. The food is palatable though insufficient, but the 15 Marks remittances allowed per week are promptly paid out and can be spent for additional food at the canteen where same prices prevail as all over Germany.

I therefore believe that you have good reason to expect that your young man will be released the same as this young man and thousands of others have been, as soon as his turn comes for the American immigration visa, and that you will soon see him here in the United States, and united with him, will gradually forget your terrible experiences in that godless country.

Wishing you a happy and successful New Year and an early reunion with your fiancee [sic] and your sister I remain with my kindest regards

Sincerely

Imre Temesvary

Letters from Vienna to the United States took, at the most, two weeks; nine days if they were lucky enough to be on a fast ship. Hede wrote that the weekly schedule of ships to the USA had not been posted in the newspaper the previous day so she found out with a telephone call that there would be a ship on that same day and two days later [January 9, 1939]. She was writing immediately so that "...God forbid there is a ship that leaves without a letter from the '*Floh.*'" At last, their summons to the American Consulate was to take place on February 16. She wrote: "You can well imagine how happy we are to finally be this far along. Grete still has not gotten anything, but that should be coming in the next few days." But, as usual, there were bureaucratic obstacles in Nazi Germany. Hede was concerned that their certificate of good conduct, which would expire on February 9, might not be extended or that they would have to do it all over again: "...so, you see, lots of problems have arisen." Then she wrote of selling the various household items and said that Liese knew all too well from her own experience how much there was to do before a departure, "...but yours was much simpler because now the baggage has to be listed, etc. But I will gladly run my legs to exhaustion." All in all, Hede felt that "somehow it will work out."

[87] One-pot dishes.

She told Liese that Steffi was only planning to stay at the sports course until the next possible emigration opportunity arose. Hede also said that Bertha had received a notification from the Viennese Consulate that Liese's and Rabbi Abram Simon's affidavits had arrived. Apparently the telegram that Bertha sent Liese announcing Steffi's release from Dachau was mistakenly sent to Washington instead of East Falls Church, but Hede said that merely meant a delay of a few hours. "Now you are free of your two biggest worries, Steffi and our summons and now you can be happy...." Hede also wrote about their parents and how busy their father was with various clients. "Naturally he can only work with Jews, but lately he has actually hardly had other clients. On the other hand, Aryan lawyers are no longer permitted to work for Jews, which is an advantage for the few consultants." December, according to Hede, "...was very good for Papa, and since he is one of the very few consultants (80 in Vienna, no Jewish lawyers anymore), he will certainly have a lot to do."

Bertha wrote Steffi [January 10, 1939], who was still at the sports course in Stuttgart, that Lisbeth, who was already in Australia, was able to obtain a guarantee for Tante Gisi for 5 years from a prominent woman and that Lisbeth was almost as capable as Liese! Frau Strauss and Tante Gisi were buying a large suitcase for Steffi. "It is a birthday present for you from the latter." Bertha also explained that she herself had been evicted, and since the extension that Hede had requested had been denied, she (Bertha) stayed with neighbors in their dining room. "It was not really very comfortable, but since I knew you were no longer in Stuttgart, nothing really mattered."

Bertha had sold the furniture and had brought things to store at Tante Rosa's house. "It is quiet here and I really do not know why you are afraid to go out on the street. Hede and other people believe that you will soon be summoned to the Consulate." The following day she added on that she had just been to Prinz Eugenstrasse where, despite all the notarized documents, she had no success obtaining Steffi's passport.

> You will have to get it yourself on the 20th.... I hope you can already be in Vienna on that day. You have to come here anyway, perhaps by then you will already have your summons to the Consulate. Do not be angry, there is nothing you can change. I will explain everything to you in person. I am simply beside myself. I already had the certificate of paid taxes in my hands, they took it away from me.

The many letters from our family that were sent to Liese in the United States reflect varying things: reports of their well-being and their daily activities, updates as to the newly implemented Nazi regulations, the activities of various friends and acquaintances, and also encouragement for Liese, who was all alone in a new country. Her father wrote [January 11, 1939] praising what a clever girl she was for having settled in so nicely to the new life and assuring her that the position at Dr. Ransom's would not be her last,

> ...but as the first it is very favorable. You are learning things so easily, whereas others would have great effort, and in a half a year you will no longer be a beginner, but rather will be worth twice as much!

Hugo also wrote that she should absolutely talk Steffi out of going to Palestine because the "...USA would offer him completely different possibilities." He added: "My consulting business is going very well. Since 1.I. [1939] lawyers can no longer have Jewish clients." Then he mentioned how a few Jewish lawyers[88] were sending him clients. "I will not earn a fortune, but

[88] Probably the Jewish lawyers who were not among the 80 consultants allowed by the Nazis.

will be able to live comfortably, especially since the house will become smaller [other people would move in with them] at the end of February."

He said that Grete D[eutsch] had her examination on February 17, and that Hede and Hans had their summons for the 16th.

> They will then travel together to Holland where they have been invited by friends, and will come over in March. I can imagine how happy you are, Lieserl—and now another good piece of news. Today I spoke with the manager, I will be getting the Perolla apartment.... We will move there in February, so continue to write to the office! I will have a huge burden with this big apartment, will naturally have to sublet a great part of it. I would never have consented to this if I did not think that it would only last a few months. Hopefully Herbert[89] will keep his promise, we wrote him in the middle of December. If not, then I will rely on your love and ability.[90]

In Sophie's first letter to Steffi since his being freed from Dachau, she wrote how she would have loved to have seen her daughter's face when she received the telegram announcing Steffi's release. "The poor child was so worried. When you come to see us, then you can read all of her letters. I have been saving a chocolate piglet for you since New Year's." Then she proceeded to tell her future son-in-law that Dr. Ransom was having an operation on his stomach and was recovering in a sanatorium. She also told Steffi how capable Liese was because she was able to procure a promise for three affidavits from Sophie's cousin, Herbert Muller. "Hopefully he will keep his promise. I hope to see you soon; in the meantime I hug you and kiss you from Liese's mother because mother-in-law does not sound nice."

In the same letter [dated January 11, 1939], Hugo wrote to Steffi: "I should actually call you 'Florestan' because Liese, through her courageous and cautious restraint has earned the proud title of 'Fidelio.'[91] But in order to not have the laundry monogram changed, we will keep the beginning letter of L and call her Leonore No. IV. Luckily she can also keep the beginning letter of S."[92] He looked forward to seeing him again soon "...and to be able to take you in my arms! Many heartfelt greetings, Your Papa Strauss."

The following is a rough draft of a letter written in English by Liese. It is unclear if it was written to Mr. Leeb, who gave Steffi an affidavit, or someone else:

> *Dear Sir,*
>
> *I am Liese F. Strauss but I know that this does not mean anything to you and therefor [sic] I must give you some details about my person. I am a German immigrant newly arrived in New Y on Thanksgiving day. Dr. Ransom, a highly estimated* [sic] *doctor here in Falls Church, Va* [sic] *sent me, without knowing me, the affidavit and I am now working in his office.*

---

[89] Herbert Muller, who was Sophie's first cousin.

[90] Hugo also mentioned a relative, Gerhart (Loewenbaum), who was married to his cousin Ella/Elfriede Plaut. Gerhart was living in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

[91] In Beethoven's only opera, "Fidelio," Florestan is imprisoned. His wife, Leonore, attempts to rescue him by disguising herself as a man and calls herself "Fidelio". When Pizzaro proclaims the desire to kill Florestan, Fidelio steps in and proclaims: "Kill the wife instead." In the context of what Hugo Strauss wrote, Liese was manifesting her determination and strength in attempting to get Steffi out of Nazi Germany, just as Fidelio did when trying to free her husband.

[92] Strauss married to Schifferes.

The reason I write to you, is to thank you for everything you have done for Dr. Stephan S., my future husband. Your affidavit effected his prompt release from the most terrible concentration camp: from Dachau. He already has been informed of the arrival of your affidavit at the American Consulate in Vienna and is waiting now until his quota number gets due, which I hope will be the case within a month. I was looking so long time for somebody else besides you whose name is known in this country just to send a letter over to the Am. Consul in Vienna, asking to give Dr. Schifferes the visa at the earliest convenience. Because according to the German regulations he has to leave the country within February or is put in the camp again. But as I don't know a soul in this country besides Dr. Ransom and his family, I have not been successful at all. And I know positively that this is the only way to promote the issue of a visa.

Dr. S. asked me to thank you in his name but as soon as he will be out of this terrible country he certainly will tell you himself, he ows [sic] you lots of thanks and even more—his life.

And in helping him so much you helped me too. You can imagine in what shape I was, when I arrived here, without any friends or relatives, knowing that my fiancee [sic] is in this terrible camp. But later on I realized that the brothers & sisters of the B'nai B'rith Lodge are unknown but reliable friends who prove their friendship and help wherever they can.

I sincerely hope that I can inform you in a short time, that Dr. Schifferes has got his visa.

Hede wrote Steffi [January 12, 1939] that she and Hans were notified of their summons for the medical examination at the American Consulate, which was to take place on February 16, 1939. If their relatives had responded faster, they would have actually been able to leave with Liese, because she had registered after them. As far as Steffi's emigration was concerned, she wrote that he should be summoned in the next few days and then in two weeks be summoned for the examination, not in the year 1940, as he had assumed. Apparently Steffi's third affidavit was from Mr. William A. Leeb from Chicago, most likely a member of the *B'nai B'rith*. For some reason, the third affidavit arrived at the Aid Society[93] in Stuttgart "...which is incomprehensible." According to Hede, if one filled out a questionnaire and sent it in, it seemed to expedite matters.

> Yesterday Liese wrote that Dr. Simon, your affidavit-giver, died suddenly, but that does not matter because here they do not know anything about that and luckily you still have the third affidavit, which is supposed to be marvelous, as Liese wrote. Liese also wrote that she was intervening on your behalf in Washington at the State Department, which should result in a telegram inquiry as to when you will be summoned.

Hede hoped that he would soon have a chance to go to England. "That would be very fine, but if you really get the Amer. visa here, then it would perhaps be better for you to wait for it here." Then Hede wrote how much running around Steffi's mother had done in order to get his passport. In the end it was for naught because Steffi would have to get it himself in Vienna.

On January 13, 1939, Liese received a postcard from The Council of Jewish Women, inviting her to the second evening of the "German Newcomers' Club," which would take place on

[93] *Hilfsverein* in Stuttgart.

Wednesday evening, January 18th, at 8:30 in the Little Auditorium of the Jewish Community Center in Washington, D.C.

Liese wrote to Steffi on January 14, 1939, saying that she still had not had a letter from him, "...but I do know that you will write immediately and that the stupid mail takes so long." Pepi had written her that Steffi was at Liese's parents for dinner on Christmas Eve, "...that was, unfortunately a mix-up..."[94] It was apparently not Stephan Schifferes, who was actually still in Stuttgart.

> I am now hoping that you will be coming very, very soon and have written your mother a long newsy letter where I just imagine the future and that until you are here, will not have a restful minute. —We often spoke about this in our Stuttgt.-Vienna correspondence, but now that I am here it becomes patently obvious that you should not delay your coming for even 1 hour because of the course.

Furthermore, she wrote, her reasons for urging him not to delay were not egoistic, but rather because

> ...no one asks about a diploma and the main thing is that you have the visa and are here. If you were planning otherwise and thought that you should wait the few months, I ask you if it is worth giving me up. I beg of you with my whole heart for this! Perhaps all of this is not necessary, perhaps I should, or I am wishing that I did not even write this. But I am worried about you, I have known nothing about you for so long now, it is possible that you have come to the same conclusion yourself....

In this letter Liese wrote over and over again how important it would be for Steffi to leave immediately. At the end of this very long paragraph, she wrote: "Every night I say goodnight to you and pray that God watches out for you."

She even thought it would be best to not send the letter because

> ...you might think when reading this letter: this girl does not know what she is talking about. I tell myself (self-discipline!) what was often said to me as a child: first think, then speak, but sometimes my heart speaks louder and does not allow the understanding to be verbalized. And do not hold it against me, that is what happened now.

Liese wrote about her trip out of Europe, saying that Ines had come to see her at the ship in the pouring rain because

> ...she said that she could see from my letter that that would make me happy and she wanted to talk to me about it. I was really so happy that she came. On the trip I had enough acquaintances, e.g., Margit Littmann, with whom I spent 2 nights talking about everything. Then there was a young man from Stgt on board.... He spoke only 5 words in English, which he would say at every opportunity: *Just a minute (tshust a minit)* (said with the nicest Stgterisch accent) and perhaps landed at Ellis Island because of that.
>
> I think of Dr. Simon so much and really wanted him to marry us.

---

[94] Pepi was mistaken. The Steffi who was there was Stefan Schwarz, who was a friend of Hede and Hans.

She asked if Steffi thought that the people at the Consulate already knew that Rabbi Simon had passed away. Then she wrote how Bertha's friend for whom she was working, Käthe Neumann, had written Liese such a nice letter: "...how lucky that Mama at least had something to do. I thought of her so often and her sad letters made me even more desperate. But I decided to await the end here."

Liese also wrote about having been called for a meeting in Washington, but felt that it would cost her 60 cents and she would get back too late. She wrote that she had been there once for Chanukah and that there had been a nice celebration. Liese was hoping to have a lot of office work to do, not boring cooking, cleaning, and washing dishes. "Saturday there is a baby-clinic here, babies come and I undress them, weigh them, and dress them. They are sweet. Today another one was born. People here have many children...."

Liese's letter ends: "Write me a lot, please, please, my beloved Steffi (how do you like that?), write me in detail...."

In a passionate letter [January 14, 1939] to "Steffimama," Liese poured her heart out, giving various reasons that Steffi should not complete the sports course: (1) she was against him postponing his emigration, (2) it was not even certain that the course would run until the end, (3) Liese did not want to remain at the doctor's any longer. For her it was unbearable. The young daughter was spoiled rotten, and was tyrannical with everyone. Liese said that

> ...Dr. R. takes advantage of everyone, his wife, despite her wealth, washed the laundry and died young of a heart attack, his current housekeeper worked herself sick and had to be hospitalized. I cannot say that there is too much work for me, but I do know that I can find something better. I also do not want to complain; the only reason that I am writing you everything is so that you see what my future plans are, so you realize why I am persuading Steffi so much to come here. And with that, reason number 3. is so very minor compared to the others. Less significant is number 2. "egotistical" reason, that I am longing for Steffi so much and cannot wait any longer for him to come. Everything that happens until the beginning of our living together is lost time for me. And if I only had a letter from Steffi already in which he speaks of his exact plans, I would be the happiest person. Hopefully!

On January 14, 1939, Bertha wrote to Steffi that "...it is also Tante Gisi's opinion that you should limit the amount of time of your vacation in order to take care of the business matters, which should only take 2–3 days. One cannot say that the weather in Vienna is terrible, but that can change very quickly."[95] She went on to say that no one was being summoned to the American Consulate, "...one even has to send everything by mail." Bertha ended the letter by saying: "...In no case should you stay here longer than necessary. Do not always think about the money! The main thing is that you stay well."

During the same week [January 14, 1939] Liese received an odd letter from a man she had met on the passage to America. He wrote on Hollywood Plaza Hotel stationery, which had as return address c/o Carl Laemmle,[96] 1051 Benedict Canyon Drive, Beverly Hills. Leo Katz wrote that he

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[95] Code language, which reflects how fearful and on-edge everyone in Vienna was.

[96] Carl Laemmle is the most famous son of Laupheim, Germany. He was born in 1867 and emigrated in 1884, spending about 20 years as a bookkeeper and office manager in Chicago. As a young entrepreneur, after buying a chain of nickelodeons, he soon had his own film distribution business (Laemmle Film Service), which in 1915 he named Universal Pictures. With his new firm he moved to California's San

had arrived in California and had gotten an extension until April "...and hoped, in the meantime, to obtain a permanent stay." Mr. Katz included a newspaper article, which discussed Carl Laemmle's invention. The headline of the article was: "Self-Heating Hot Dogs New Laemmle Venture, Can Which Heats Itself Invented." Included in the article was a photo of Carl Laemmle and Leo Katz! The Editor's Note spoke about "...a new type of self-heating can which is one of the most, if not the most decided innovations ever introduced in the entire canning industry." Apparently Carl Laemmle was the founder of Universal Pictures studio as well as hotel owner, dynamite factory owner, etc. Actually, according to Carl Laemmle, the inventor was Leo Katz, a German refugee [and who was on the same ship as Liese] whom he had met the previous year in Zurich and with whom he had then made a deal.

On the outside of an envelope from Dr. S. Ringer, my mother began a letter in English to her cousin Herbert Muller, which said:

> *Dear Herbert:*
>
> *I suppose that my letter has not reached his [sic] destination therefore I write you again and as I am very much worried about my parents and Steffi, I ask you once more to inform me, what papers you have sent to the Viennese Consulate and when you dispatched them. I am afraid they have been lost, because my parents and Steffi did not get the usual letter from the consul that their papers have arrived. As it really is our heartiest wish to have our parents with us (my sister will arrive here in about 3 weeks) and as I already now would be able to offer them a very modest life. We all are worried only about the affidavit and I should be glad to hear from you, that even this question is settled. Being a member of the family Müller, who always kept very close together, you certainly will understand that my poor parents have, apart from the fact that life in Germany now is impossible to stand, that neither my parents nor Steffi have a way to earn, their only desire is to see their children again, for whom they lived and worked for so many years.*
>
> *I therefore beg you instantly to consider the matter as very urgent and if necessary to communicate with the HIAS,*[97] *who [sic] certainly is able to give you any information about the documents.*
>
> *And please, give me a note because I am really and truly worried.*
>
> *I hope you and your family are getting along fine.*
>
> *With my [sic] and remain, dear H, yours very thankfully*
>
> *Cousin Liese*

Fernando Valley, later to be called Hollywood. During the '30s, he produced over two hundred films, starring Erich von Strohheim, Lon Chaney, and Boris Karloff as the Monster in "Frankenstein," and as "The Mummy" in that film. For "All Quiet on the Western Front" in 1930, his son Carl Laemmle, Jr., won an Oscar. Due to his son's budget excesses Laemmle had to sell Universal in 1936.

In Laupheim Carl Laemmle is remembered not only for his generosity to the community of Laupheim, which he often visited and supported with gifts of money, but also for his engagement for Jewish immigrants to the United States during the mid '30s. Laemmle paid the exit and immigration fees for hundreds of people, not only from Laupheim, but from the whole of Wuerttemberg, thus saving their lives by his generosity (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Laemmle)

[97] Hebrew Immigrants Aid Society.

Tante Else wrote a letter practicing her English[98] [January 15, 1939]:

> *Uncle and I had a great joy with your dear letter and I hasten to announce to day [sic], that you receive my letter with the next steamer. I have not to assure, that uncle and I, your parents, aunt Steffi and last not least Hede spoke the whole time from you [sic] and we all had pity, that you were not there. We drink for your health and happiness and success and hope, that we all will be together still in this year. For this reason I write you again in English, because I must exercise this language, what I do not can [sic], because I have always much to do. I am glad, that you received my both cards (one English and the other German); your mother relates always the contents of your letters and occasionally we red [sic] this weselfs [sic]. You wrote, that I have written the English card without mistakes; that enjoyed me very much, but I cannot believe this, because I write what I think in German and if I am not sure that the translation is good, then I convince me in the dictionary.*

She continued in German:

> By now, dear Lieschen, the departure from your old homeland should be a bit easier, and HeHa will soon be coming, which will give you the possibility to share your pain and unfamiliarity with part of your family. Hopefully the reunion with Hede will not be delayed! For us who remain, there will be an even greater gap when HeHa are gone. Hopefully not forever!!!

Onkel Stefan wrote just a few lines, but said:

> May you continue to have things go well and may the dear Lord protect you. You are a courageous child and deserve having a rosy future.
>
> Your magical *Punschkrapfen*[99] with chocolate sauce really impressed me, and surely the rest of your life will find the same. Write very soon and heartfelt greetings and kisses from your well-meaning Onkel Stefan.

[98] Tante Else wanted to improve her English because she still hoped to be able to leave Vienna.

[99] *Punschkrapfen* is a classical Austrian pastry. It is a cake filled with cake crumbs, chocolate nougat, and apricot jam and then soaked in rum.

Chapter 29: We Did Not Travel Far

Steffi, who was living on Azenbergstrasse 51 in Stuttgart after his release from Dachau, wrote to the Secret State Police (*Gestapo*) in Stuttgart on January 17, 1939, explaining that he was in Stuttgart solely for the completion "...of education as a gymnastics and sports teacher, during the time of his protective custody his family in the Austrian home community began the immigration procedure with power of attorney and various required documents" and requesting permission to go to Vienna to obtain his passport and various other documents.

In a letter addressed to: "SIR! VERY HONORABLE HERR DIREKTOR!" dated January 14, 1939, Steffi wrote to Director Karl Adler, head of the Sports School in Stuttgart, requesting a leave in order to go to Vienna, to attend to matters in Stuttgart beforehand, and be "ready to travel" before his return to Vienna. On the same day Steffi wrote "To the SECRET CITY POLICE, City Police Central Command Stuttgart" and said that his immigration would take place from Vienna. "For this reason the undersigned requests permission for a one-month vacation from the 20th of January 1939 because there are many things to take care of with the various officials." The letter was signed "With expression of greatest respect, Dr. Stephan Schifferes."

In his letter to Liese dated January 17, 1939, Steffi praised her for being "indefatigable and industrious." Then he wrote: "6 affidavits—I really have to mention that again—in just 3 weeks is more than a notable accomplishment even for the record-seeking Americans!" He also gave a brief description of his "trip," which was a way of informing Liese of the arrest in Stuttgart and subsequent transport to Dachau:

> Now sweet Liese, I would like to, as best as I can, inform you of my trip.... We did not travel far in the car and we sat in the tourist hotel, all 15 of us, though we only stayed there 1 night [in prison], the care there was good and in the night 6 of us slept together. First thing in the morning we traveled—we always stayed together—in a nice bus on the highway 42 to Karlsruhe [Dachau!]. When we arrived at this place, we were greeted in a friendly manner and the rest you know.
>
> ...If you had bad luck with your departure, so I would like my arrival and my hopefully soon to be living together with you to be even more happy and—perhaps that was an indication from God—that such a departure between us should not happen and such a separation as we now have should never happen again; is that all right with you and are you in accord with me?
>
> Now to my daily activities here: all the *Chaverim*, aside from Jehuda and I, have the Permits and we 2 will get them, aside from that, as I have said, Bernd Hanauer, who took a vacation from the 16.–19. before his England trip, tried to get the 3 (Rudi, Peter, [?]) onto a Farm and the most important—the Vie. summons should be, please cross your fingers, should be arriving within 14 days. Aside from waiting, writing, eating, sleeping, I did nothing—that is since yesterday, when the sport school began. I already have muscle pains; we train, but without apparatus, without a sports field, and soon without students, we are now 7. 2 massage clients were recommended to me by the Jewish Community: starting Saturday I will be getting RM 2.—per day—to massage the legs of an old woman—do not worry, she is 57. And yesterday morning and Saturday, an older gentleman, for RM 4.—Pretty good, but unfortunately one cannot continue forever to fake it with 7 students. What do you think of doing massage over

there? I have already heard here that it is very varied, e.g., in N. York a plethora and in Los Angeles very sought after.

On January 19, 1939, Steffi wrote:

My dearest, sweetest Lieschen!

Your dear, dear letter arrived today with a few lines from your mother and Hede. I can hardly tell you what that means to me! My calm has not left me, but since 13.XI. I have been feeling listless and that is bad. This is helpful in many ways, but it also makes life meaningless and still in this pointlessness of what I am doing here, though I have to remain here, to continue the course. For me, you, Liese, your love and our marriage are the only things worth striving for and you will not even have to put much effort into it, to "wake me up." Everything here is the same, so much the same that your letter did not even mention that, so that I could motivate myself to have an immediate ocean crossing. But unfortunately I will not be that far along for a long time; still no summons has come! Still no passport has arrived! After running around so much, Mama could only get me a passenger certificate for tomorrow at Pr. Eugenstr. Now I have to register here 2x a week and Director Adler, who freed me, is so interested in keeping the sport course going that he is against the trip to Vienna, which would be with the hopes of a quick summons, stretched out to 1 month. Now he is trying to have the passport transferred here. Yes the summons! [?] ...story you already know. Actually, I am hoping that I will have a turn in Vienna and before I wrote to you, I wrote to Hede to ask if she did not mean for me to come over with them in order to surprise you. But in order to prevent me from being disappointed—I mean that I have to wait for the Stgt. No. in the year 1940—I am consoling myself with the fact that I can first "anglicize" myself in England, etc. But dearest, be assured that nothing is holding me here, not even the course, and if I could travel on the day before the examination—it will be that you promised yourself something from the certificate. Dearest Lieschen, I have money, should I enclose postal response coupons and even if I am avaricious, you still do not need to write so small, otherwise you will ruin your eyes—I can read it perfectly. You, I love you so much, Liese, you know that and deserve it in abundance, but that is simply not possible. Now about sleeping, eating, health, I asked you the same thing, especially concerning your nerves, which will first be taken care of later. So about sleeping—there [Dachau], I went to sleep with the others at 8 o'clock, as we were forced to do, and that is surely healthy (the long before-midnight sleep). Here I go to sleep at c. 10:30. Nowadays I weigh 76 1/2 kg, whereas in the summer I weighed, at the examination 73 1/2–75 kg, so according to that, I really did gain weight—even if it was not 5 kg, so then at least 1-1/2. My hardened and healthy constitution, for which I cannot thank Mama and sports enough, kept me completely well. Unfortunately I encountered the nonsense, despite temperatures above 10° here, to go around in winter coat with closed shirt collar, hat, and shawl, still caught a cold and do not have the usual hoarseness, but rather a cough that hurts my chest. Now I am still in a bad mood because I do not feel well, but today I received your letter and anyway, I am writing to you even though I felt like going to bed. That is, it does matter, I want to get well so that I can travel there soon. Oh, how happy I am about you. Everything seems so different to me, since I read your letter, I was not bored with life, just apathetic—but I have now said yes to life and am happy for life. It is nice to have

someone whom one loves so much and who loves me. My dear mother and you—and all 3 of us will be together! But I will not be able to be complacent about my life over there, despite my rosy dreams, but it will be somewhat difficult, will it be hard for dear people to work hard? Now at the moment it has been backwards and I am left behind so that I will still have to make it up to you. I love you so much, endlessly, as you do me, with these words, I will go to sleep. So now you have my first news and are perhaps even at this moment in my thoughts, just as I am with you, dearest precious one!

On January 20, 1939, Steffi wrote:

Now you have to write me so much, I do not even know about your winter voyage and your adventures after you departed from here. You only write that others became seasick and Mama seems to have too much to do so that she really can barely write about you and her, so I know very well that you have a lot to do and all the suffering you had, that you sent a telegram, but what is happening with Mama's England thing, I do not know; she wrote that she is awaiting a Permit for the Southampton region. I lived a few days gratis with the brother-in-law of Dr. Sander and now by Stern, Azenbergstr, 51, RM 20 each month, that is with [?] Herdeweg. We have "instruction" in the morning and the afternoon; I am writing now during the orthopaedic "lesson," since I am taking care of myself and am not participating. I have had enough of this here, it is exactly as nice as before, but before, we knew that it all had a purpose, state certificate and position, but now I see the uselessness and because of the break, the agility of my body, and my current cold [it now seems] more unrealistic. I have to begin again from the beginning, same with playing clarinet. Just that I do not know, should I even be unpacking here, should I—no, where could I practice clarinet, if I only knew if I would have my turn in Vienna. Otherwise I would have to count on the *Chaverim*, all of whom have gotten the Permits for England, except for me and Jehuda. I will also get it, but I would really like to be able to tell them the truth. Bernd has been told, he is also trying, but his thing is newer and will take some time.

The trip preparation is not imminent, and you see that I do not really know anything, if it would, perhaps be better to get permission to pack from here, and I will need luggage. As always, the thing is thanks to you because I now know to get summer clothes, so thank you for your advice and you will have certainly written to Hede what she should bring for herself and for you. If you have forgotten something, write me, I will be leaving later. You are, after all, at a doctor's; a doctor here supposedly said that one should bring along medications from here. I do not want to bring unnecessary things from here. Are clothes, shirts, suits cheap compared to here? I certainly do need shirts. —Are you completely well, no headaches, no dizziness, do you look well or are you still worn out?

The limping Vera from the *Beth* got married yesterday, Rudi Siegel will also marry soon, he also hopes to be able emigrate before the examination. What are your plans for me? Will I really be in Chicago and you in Falls Church? That is surely closer than here, but still too far away. Now these are secondary questions, I will surely not be able to find a job in Falls Church and if I could only start earning right away, I will be in the position to come to you, so that we will be together, but we belong together, that is already clear. How do you know Mr.

Leeb, was that through Mrs. Hilton? How was it at first with English, how is American? I am reading something here, naturally everything I do is too little, but English is really the only thing I wish to do because it makes sense and has a purpose, as opposed to the methods of gymnastics, etc. Do you absolutely want to settle in America, one hears so much about the crisis there and about the good prospects in Australia, should and could one not be able to get over there more easily from there?

Can you learn how to drive, is it really assumed over there that one needs to use a car? How do you find the strength? —So I am asking more than you can answer at one time, just write me first about my preparations and give me advice from your experience, concerning emigration because I will only be able to be in Vienna a short time. If only it were that far along! But this stupid waiting, now, since nothing here is worthwhile and is bleak and awful. Sunday I went collecting for the Jewish Winter Help [organization] in the nice neighborhood of Kräherwald and then I especially thought of you and our nice time in Stgt. and that is how it mostly is for me, if I just see the Bismark Tower, when I pass the old castle and the time that I am without news from you, then the whole city seems so sad for me, as if you had died. Now you will see what your letters mean to me, despite the affidavit copies. I love you, Liese, you know it and if I repeat it too often so then you will not believe it more or less, it is the only way I can reciprocate your love; if only I could hold you close to me!

Now I will ask at the main post office if I should mail the letter or if I still have time, so that I can send it to you with the very next ship. In the meantime, many intimate kisses, dearest, from the one who loves you more than anything

Steffi.

According to a form that was filled out by Hede for the American General Consulate, Visa Division, Steffi's three affidavits were from: (1) Dr. Abram Simon, Washington, D.C., (2) Liese Strauss, East Falls Church, Va., and (3) William A. Leeb, Chicago. Steffi's current address was given as Vienna, IX., Grüne Torgasse 17/14, which was Käthe Neumann's apartment, where Bertha was living at that time. Under the typed heading "Requests and Reasons," was written: "As former inmate of protective custody I must urgently leave and therefore am requesting the fastest summons for the medical examination."

On January 17, 1939, Sophie wrote Liese about the death of their closest friend, Dr. Samuel Skall, whose daughter, Edith, was already in Sao Paolo, Brazil. Ida Skall, wife of Samuel, soon left Vienna to join her daughter there.

Apparently Mrs. Hilton took Liese to hear the National Symphony Orchestra on January 18, 1939. Hans Kindler was the conductor in a Gala Concert for Members of the National Symphony Orchestra Association. The soloist was Ruggiero Ricci, playing Brahms Violin Concerto, followed by Brahms Symphony No. 1. Howard Mitchell, who later became conductor of the National Symphony, was principal cello.

In Liese's fourth letter [January 19, 1939] to Steffi since his release from Dachau, addressed to him c/o Bechhöfer, Johannestrasse 44 in Stuttgart, she wrote about the various bureaucratic things, including the summons to the Consulate, which would take another three months. She wondered if he would spend the time waiting in London.

I myself am of the opinion that you should take the first opportunity to go overseas, that is, come here and I hope that this will not take much longer, [and I] will continue, in any case, to do everything to expedite it. This also is not clear in your letter. Now, I believe in the next letter you will tell me more, as before.

Furthermore, you seem to not make any illusions about the people here. You write that you are either halfway satisfied or completely disappointed. I am very satisfied, in every aspect and am happier each day to be here. That does not especially stem from my job, even though I am doing well here, also not so much from Falls Church, which, as I already wrote you, is beautiful (especially now, where there is gorgeous snow and a beautiful sunny day). I also like N York and Washington very much. But I do not mean that, I am really happy here in this country, I know one can find something here, I will find another job, something that is comforting. One has company here without effort, which is, for example, as Trude W.[illheim] writes me, not possible in England. Here it is like it once was over there, opportunities are very important and if one makes an effort, one will also find. I wrote you about the strange man who was so nice to me on the ship: yesterday I received an airmail letter from him from Hollywood. He came here with an invention and is practically a wealthy man today. It is a pleasure to hear something like that. I had to laugh so much when I remembered that his whole knowledge of Engl. vocabulary during that week was: *"just a minute."*

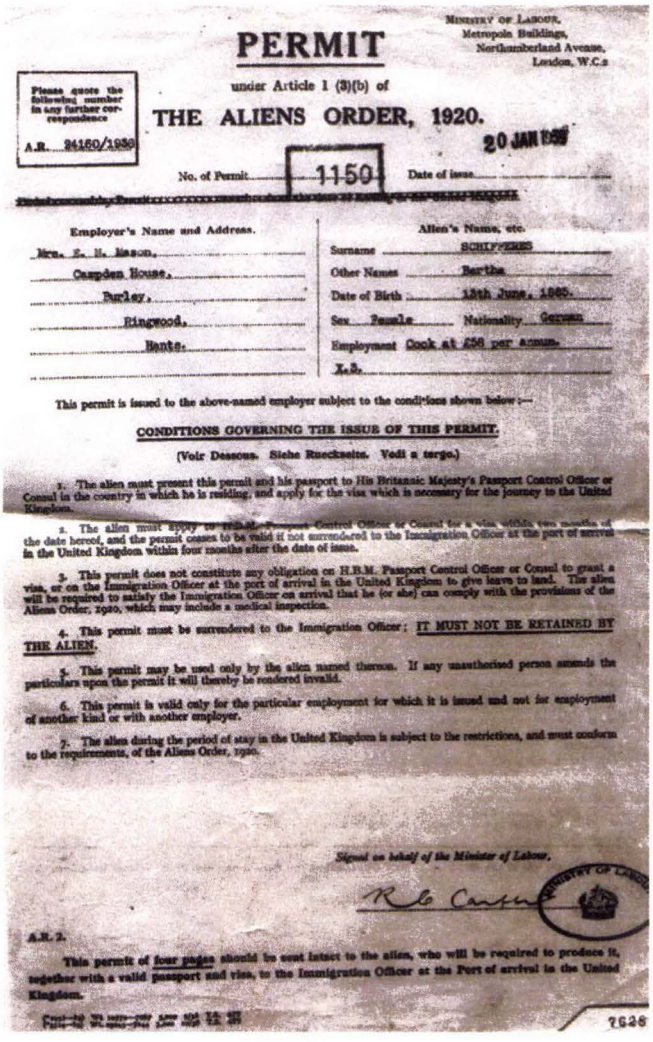
I do not think much of the serving course that Mama is taking, but it certainly will not hurt. I am writing Ines that Mama and also you may turn to her, she will help you. But, as I said, I think the in-between station of England is unnecessary. And I do not have such respect for the *Chaluzim*; you are actually not obligated to them. I do understand that you want to accompany Mama. Hopefully things will go well for her, until we have the possibility to bring her over here. In my opinion, if things are uncertain, then you should try to get the trip from Vienna and actually as soon as the summons is there, then go to Vienna. I am happy that you gained weight. I was so worried about you and actually still am—and will be until you are on the ship that will bring you here to me.

After signing her name, Liese wrote how sorry she was to have heard about the death of Steffi's Onkel Arthur, but added: "Still, I feel worse for Karl."

Chapter 30: Much More Luck

As mentioned earlier, during this period, everyone was writing everyone else in the hope of obtaining affidavits for relatives or friends. And if not an actual affidavit, then at least an idea of what to do. In this vein, Leo Newbower,[100] a friend of Hede and Hans' from Vienna who was living in Gloversville, New York, wrote to Liese saying: "...I hear how much more luck you are having than we in procuring affidavits." He explained that they had been trying for two months to help Robert Klein, who was, at the moment, in Prague, "...in a hopeless situation...." And, furthermore, Leo Newbower wrote, he actually went to Albany to obtain affidavits for his in-laws, but it was in vain. He ended his letter by saying: "So please, do whatever is in your power to do, if you have something, then telegraph us at our expense."

On January 20, 1939, Bertha received a Permit from London, in accordance with the Aliens Order, 1920, listing Mrs. E. M. Mason, Campden House, Burley, Ringwood, Hants, as the employer and Bertha Schifferes as the Alien.



PERMIT

MINISTRY OF LABOUR, Metropole Buildings, Northumberland Avenue, London, W.C.2

under Article 1 (3)(b) of

THE ALIENS ORDER, 1920.

Please quote the following number in any further correspondence

A.R. 94160/1939

20 JAN 1939

No. of Permit 1150 Date of issue

Employer's Name and Address.

Mrs. E. M. Mason,
Campden House,
Burley,
Ringwood,
Hants.

Alien's Name, etc.

Surname SCHIFFERES
Other Names Bertha
Date of Birth 13th June, 1885.
Sex Female Nationality German
Employment Cook at £56 per annum.
N.S.

This permit is issued to the above-named employer subject to the conditions shown below :—

CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE ISSUE OF THIS PERMIT.

(Voir Dessous. Siehe Rueckseite. Vedi a tergo.)

1. The alien must present this permit and his passport to His Britannic Majesty's Passport Control Officer or Consul in the country in which he is residing, and apply for the visa which is necessary for the journey to the United Kingdom.

2. The alien must apply to H.B.M. Passport Control Officer or Consul for a visa within two months of the date hereof, and the permit ceases to be valid if not surrendered to the Immigration Officer at the port of arrival in the United Kingdom within four months after the date of issue.

3. This permit does not constitute any obligation on H.B.M. Passport Control Officer or Consul to grant a visa, or on the Immigration Officer at the port of arrival in the United Kingdom to give leave to land. The alien will be required to satisfy the Immigration Officer on arrival that he (or she) can comply with the provisions of the Aliens Order, 1920, which may include a medical inspection.

4. This permit must be surrendered to the Immigration Officer; IT MUST NOT BE RETAINED BY THE ALIEN.

5. This permit may be used only by the alien named thereon. If any unauthorised person amends the particulars upon the permit it will thereby be rendered invalid.

6. This permit is valid only for the particular employment for which it is issued and not for employment of another kind or with another employer.

7. The alien during the period of stay in the United Kingdom is subject to the restrictions, and must conform to the requirements, of the Aliens Order, 1920.

Signed on behalf of the Minister of Labour.

R. L. Carter

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

A.R. 2.

This permit of four pages should be sent intact to the alien, who will be required to produce it, together with a valid passport and visa, to the Immigration Officer at the Port of arrival in the United Kingdom.

7626

Bertha's Permit

[100] Formerly Neubauer.

In her letter of January 20, 1939, Bertha wrote to Steffi that Mrs. Mason had asked her

> ...for the permit number (I should receive the passport only after I have gotten the permit number and actually show the permit)... she feels that I do not want to go to live with her because she lives in the country. I reassured her that that is not true, and that I would in fact prefer to be in the country rather than the city. It is a big town, approximately three hours from Southampton.

Bertha also wrote that Karl "...was still waiting for his departure date. He visits me occasionally. Perhaps I will go again to Tante Rosa's on Sunday, provided my dear sister-in-law [Mandy Sr.] is not there."

At long last, on January 21, 1939, the American Consulate General issued Steffi a summons, which was addressed to him at Grüne Torgasse in Vienna and told him to request Vice Consul Brewster H. Morris. On that same date Liese wrote that she was annoyed that both their families had not kept him apprised of the affidavits and other such information. She said: "That is why I will try to repeat it and so you will learn about it in 4 weeks rather than in 2 days. Too bad, I am angry."

This meant that Liese would have to write the explanation and it would take time before Steffi would actually receive the letter.

811.11
BHM/

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Vienna, Janner 21,1939

Herrn Dr. Stephan Schifferes,
Wien IX., Gruene Torgasse 17/14

Im Zusammenhang mit Ihrer beabsichtigten Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten Staaten werden Sie ersucht das Generalkonsulat anzurufen und Herrn
Vice Consul Brewster H.Morris
zu verlangen.

Hochachtungsvoll:
Fuer den Generalkonsul

Brewster H.Morris
Amerikanischer Vicekonsul

Steffi's summons to the American Consulate, January 21, 1939

She assured him that his things were in order,

> ...otherwise you would have been notified to submit the missing items.... In order to "protect" you, they kept the news about R.[abbi] Simon's death from you. I specifically asked that you be informed about everything. Do not let anyone know about this at the Consulate, only if they say something about it, then say that you know.

Liese also wrote that there was a possible affidavit for her parents. "And we can also request another one ourselves for your mother, as soon as you have earned enough, in case we have not found a sponsor." She also advised Steffi to have the affidavit transferred in Vienna, "...that will expedite the matter greatly." Liese thought that the passage to the States would only be paid for from Vienna, not London: "But that should not really matter because the trip from L'n can be arranged. Only we could use the money for other things, i.e., to be able to live here."

Liese also felt that it was important for Steffi to bring as much of his personal items as possible "...because we will not be able to afford anything for a long time, because things get ruined here and we need clothes." As to Steffi's question about what he would be able to do in America, Liese replied:

> Your only worry should be to come here to me.... What should you study? English, English, Anglais, etc.!! But do not worry about that because you will have opportunity and time here to get used to things; that I will help you with.

Steffi wrote on January 21, 1939:

> Feel free to type your letters so that you can practice, if you have time and desire, write in English, hopefully it will soon be the language which "will only mean love" for us. For the moment, since I am thinking in German, it does not flow easily from my hand as from you, you sweet angel.

He continued:

> Dear Liese, I would also like so much to be able to give you a kiss! How dear and sweet you are, you want to protect and spoil me, now I see how much easier women really can earn over there, but in the end we do want, despite your abilities, to strive to have a "European" ideal situation, you, dearest wife at home taking care of the house. At first, that is just big talk, but we want and must hope and will try to fulfill our dreams. You should just be assured that I will try to make all your wishes come true and when Mama is taken care of, then I will rush to you so that both of us can be happy.
>
> So I am just now thinking, do we need a special document from here in order to get married, I would also like to take care of getting wedding bands, or is it easier there, you will be able to tell me your ring size, how will the ring affair end. These are all things that I can ask about in Vienna, but I do not want to—especially considering that Hede is emigrating—burden others, after all, I should not be writing so much.

The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America, which was located in Washington, D.C., in the American Building at 1317 F Street, N.W., sent Liese a letter, dated January 23, 1939, stating that they were sending her the approval card "...of Form 575 on behalf of Dr. Stephan Schifferes. We sincerely hope that Dr. Schifferes will receive his visa without undue delay or difficulty."

Steffi's longing for Liese and his frustration with the situation continued:

> Stuttgart, 24. I. 1938 [101]
>
> My dear Liese!
>
> If you only knew how much I do not want to continue the course, then you would feel sorry for me. But I do not want that for, first of all, my situation is no longer worthy of pity and secondly, you need not have any worries about me. Namely, I am still hoping to get the permit through the *Chaverim* or to be summoned by the Vie. Am. Cons., that is even before you have this letter in your hands, then I would send you a telegram "permit received" or "Summons received for the 2. March" and you will then see that I had this horrible waiting time. I am sitting here by the sports students Hans, Peter, Rudi, (who is going to get married in Magdeburg on the 7.II.) in a comfortable warm room, but... it would be nicer to be with you and even if I could not be with you right away, then at least work and life should make sense, whereas here work (sports, massages...) are necessary, but a bad waste of time. It must not be very pleasant at home because Mama wrote that she will be happy that I did not come now. Fritz is supposed to be, if I read it correctly, sick again x). Mama wants to pack for me already, but if this continues like this, I will really still have to take the test and I really do not want to. If the thing could only somehow be expedited.

At the bottom of Steffi's letter, he wrote "x) incorrect", meaning Fritz was not in concentration camp again.

Steffi ended the letter by writing:

> Mama wrote about an American woman who wanted to obtain an affidavit for me, which you seem to know about, but I really do not need this anymore since you have worked so hard to obtain plenty of guarantors. —Now I am going to push my bicycle home and will soon, in my thoughts, be falling asleep next to you. Good night!



Lorelott and Rudi Siegel gave Steffi this photo, dated February 7, 1939. Rudi was a sports school colleague of Steffi's. As a wedding present to them, Steffi wrote a "simple" poem and then had "...a professional write it and decorate it with a picture."

[101] A typical January error: Steffi wrote 1938 but it was actually 1939.

Tante Rosa wrote Steffi [January 23, 1939]:

> I heard from your dear Mama that you are well and I am very happy that you survived and have a nice, happy future ahead of you; also, your dear Mama is her old self again, dear and good and much calmer since you are back: those were difficult times. Unfortunately for us they are continuing: you certainly know what is happening in our store; unfortunately it was not possible to endure things as we wished; it will not be long before Herr O. will be in charge; you can imagine how unhappy poor Onkel Dori is; his proud, nice business in which he poured his heart and soul, will be taken away from him, what we will get for it and if there will be any money left over for taxes, etc., we do not know; it is terrible for both of us, we never thought that we would have such problems in our old age, and I can only say that we are perplexed. Also, concerning our Fritz; I was so happy to see him again, but now this uncertainty is dreadful; we do not have anyone abroad who could help us and for him to be sent out in the wide world is a terrible thought for me. Perhaps, dear Steffi, you will think of something that we can do for him; you were with him for a few weeks, perhaps you can advise me what he should study, what he can do to help himself get ahead. Mary hopes to be able to work for awhile longer in the store, since she has to do the books and is not saying anything about the future; she would go with Fritz if she had a possibility to earn something; I cannot help her and do not know what all of us will do. You can imagine, dear Steffi, how terribly sad all of this is making me; I am no longer the old etnat asor,[102] and therefore living with Karl once again was not as we all imagined it to be, which also saddens me; but soon he will be leaving and his memories of me will not be the best; but my nerves are shot and I often do not know what I am saying or doing. You will also notice it in this letter.

In Bertha's letter of January 24, 1939, she wrote about the difficulties she was having with obtaining Steffi's passport and was not certain where it would be issued—Vienna or Stuttgart. She also wrote about a request for him to appear at the General Consulate and to ask for Vice Consul, Brewster R. Morris. Other news would come from them in a few weeks.

> That is probably a result of Liese's intervention or the *Hilfsverein*.[103] What do you want, I have done everything possible. Now you only have to wait. If Liese is so impatient, what can I do? The main thing is that you are once again well and I have not heard from anyone that people get sick again. [Do not end up in concentration camp again.]

Then Bertha wrote about Tante Rosa, who was "...very despondent... Karl is still in Vienna and does not feel comfortable at 'Ältlein's.'"

At this point, Bertha was living with her dear friend Käthe Neumann, who was still working as a principal at a school on Börsegasse and needed someone to care for her elderly mother. Bertha wrote to Steffi:

> I am doing well here, as I wrote you, naturally I have things to do, one does not get RM 40. per month for doing nothing. Frau Neumann crocheted a bed jacket for me for England and tearfully gave it to me.

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[102] etnat asor = Tante Rosa backwards.

[103] Aid Society.

Bertha wrote that Hede said to tell Steffi that there was "...still no law regarding Jewish first names. One should only get identification cards and fingerprints, but that takes a long time. One needs to have a picture taken without it being touched up, with a free left ear.[104] You can imagine how one looks."

Sophie wrote to Liese [January 25, 1939] about the pending move out of the apartment they had lived in for many years:

> I am really very happy that Mrs. Hilton is so good to you and thank her for me with all my heart. I cannot really write to her because I do not know enough English, so tell her this. I really do not have any time to learn English. Now we have the move ahead of us. By the 28th of February we will be moving out because from March 1st on a new tenant will be able to move into the apartment. The apartment on Langegasse is very nice, but at the moment I have no joy from it. First of all, it is too expensive, it works out to be c. 140 Marks per month, secondly we will have to give up 1–2 rooms of the 6, with shower privileges (which also does not please me); thirdly it will be too large and will make lots of work for me. We could have stayed here until the end of April, but since Papa's counsel colleague has already left, Papa cannot keep the big apartment for his own office. Tante Steffi will at least be able to stay with us. What kind of room she has depends on the rental, after all, every room there is nice. You can imagine, dearest Lieschen, how difficult the work of moving will be for me, if I think about it, I will also have to deal with the separation from the children.[105] Just imagine, Papa and me without children, we were always with you. Papa could not imagine you being married while he was still in Gersthof.[106] One thing consoles me a bit, that you, my dearest Lieschen, when Hede and Hans hopefully will be in the same city, and then hopefully your Steffi comes, that you will not be so alone on the Continent. When will we finally come to you all, that is still the big question. Until now, Herbert has not done anything. Did you write to him?

Oh, the elusive cousin Herbert! The letter ends with the usual motherly advice: "Lieserl, if you have ugly hands from housework, then always rub them with lemon and after washing with Nivea or some other hand cream. Lemon juice makes the skin delicate and white and takes away the ugly black spots, also ink spots, just do not use ungentine nitrium!"

Liese's father added on about how busy he was:

> I already have gotten a few new clients, also recommended by Aryan colleagues who are no longer allowed to have them as clients. They will all be from my judicial area where the main work has to be done by March. If there will also be that much work in April, I do not know yet. Now I am doing well because contracts from December notes are still coming due, let us hope that the new work will also continue like this.

Franz Alt, an acquaintance of Pepi Deutsch [Dewton], wrote Liese how he had heard from Pepi that she was not satisfied with her employer and had spoken with acquaintances in Washington

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[104] Probably meaning profile.

[105] Hede and Hans.

[106] Hugo wanted to be present at their wedding, which was to take place right after Steffi's arrival in America.

who immediately offered to help her, "...whether it be finding a new job or to speak with your employer. Please call: Mrs. Louise Sissman, 1758 North Troy Str., Arlington, Va..... She is completely reliable and very capable."

On January 26, 1939, Steffi wrote Herr H. Friedmann and the Immigration Division of the Jewish Community Center in Vienna, asking if he knew when and where Steffi's passport and other documents would be sent. Steffi also wrote to the Division of Jewish Immigration granting them permission to send his passport and documents to the local Police Authority so that he could pick them up himself. Steffi's return address was listed as Azenbergstrasse 51, "bei Stern."

Many of the family letters from Vienna referred to "Prinz Eugenstrasse," which was the address of the Rothschild Palace. According to a correspondence from the Austrian National Library Photo Archives, "...after 1938 it was the center of the *Reichspost* and the European and foreign correspondence center, and in addition it was the 'central place for Jewish Immigration,' though it was not listed in the official address books from those days."

Steffi wrote Liese [January 26, 1939] that he had received a "...very sad letter from Tante Rosa in which she desperately asked me for advice. I am now abundantly impatient and hardly know what advice to give myself...." He continued:

> I have absolutely no interest in the gymnastics instruction, that I have already said before. My thoughts are always outwards and therefore naturally directed towards you. If you would only wait for me if I do not have my turn in Vienna, I do not want to frighten you, you are a pessimist anyway, or have you now become an optimist in regards to us? I love you so much, stay well and write me a lot and about everything, everything about you and around you so that I know and, if possible, can be part of your thoughts, your big and little worries. We will always tell each other everything, right, my dearest precious one?

Steffi reassured Liese that her parents were doing well and ended the letter by saying:

> There is a commissioner at the Allinas, they do not know if they will get anything out of it and after all, what should she begin for Fritz since Mary[107] is understandably no great loss?
>
> Yes, I unfortunately am not in a position to help—aside from a few nice words in my letter—for first I myself must get help to get "out." And now something else that is unpleasant, I will have to go to the dentist here since I bit out a filling there;[108] are you all right in that regard and are there good dentists there? Tante Gisi's brother[109] can study in L'don for 6 months and then be a dentist again. Many unending kisses and love, I send you more than love Your Steffi

Steffi's next letter to Liese [January 28, 29, 30] showed a different mood:

> What good is it to me that I am now eating better and live better in the *Beth* if I no longer have any desire? No desire to train and no desire to begin anything here, it is hopeless to be living so apathetically and if this continues, I will certainly be unhappy.

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[107] Mary Kohn was married to Fritz Allina for 11 months.

[108] Dachau KZ.

[109] Dr. Mor Schiller, aka Ala Mor, had been a dentist in Vienna.

On January 29 he continued:

> Now, such moods as yesterday will surely pass if I had all the documents and stamps that would bring me to you. Over there you will see how I once again become ambitious. At the moment, my only purpose in life is for you and a happy togetherness with you. And I, that is we, will make it, right? Today I had 2 fillings done by the dentist, he has to, just like the others, stop on the 31st. In the afternoon I studied English; from the R. Kron book: *The Little Londoner*, in which all the vocabulary is noted through footnotes either in English or explained through synonyms. In the instruction we learned about the set-up at a lunch counter and the cafeteria, more interesting than all the sports expressions such as: *to file*, *to line up*, *wall bar*s, etc. Now I have to complete the statement of capital and drop it off here, that is what the local Head Finance President wrote. Now I will read something about *food & meals* and then ride to my place. We also train in the morning on Sundays. Naturally English would interest me especially, but the others still do not know anything and so I am also bored with that. There are still no classes for advanced people in the teaching house, as there were before.

And on January 30 he wrote:

> Today finally the certificate from the Palestine Board B'lin[110] from the 27th of this month was handed out, and afterwards I will be sent to England for training for the jobs there for the purpose of later emigration to Palestine and in c. 4 weeks will be signed up, that is, get a permit. I will, as best I can, expedite this, just so I can travel with Mama. I do not understand what is happening with the America thing, there is still no answer from the Viennese places about the request of the Help Organization. I am coming—that I know, that you know, but the sooner the better and am annoyed that I have to wait so long even though you did everything possible long ago. I do not understand why your letter did not arrive on Friday because Frau Bechhöfer, who has her daughter and son in N.Y., got mail on that day. I am sending this letter with the Washington so that you will get mail on the 8th and 10th (Queen Mary), hopefully it will find you well and happy. I am writing to you during Hitler's[111] talk, perhaps you have also heard it. Please write more often, so then you do not have to write 2x, as you did this time, but rather put the letters together so that you save on postage. But never let me worry about you and tell me everything truthfully; how is your hand? Hopefully your letter will soon calm me down and also assure me of your love. For I love you so strongly that I am only asking for you so we can begin a nice life together. Is that the right state there? After all, we surely want rest and peace, to live for one another and to be able to work. And you still love me, despite the big separation and the long waiting period, which is apparently still ahead of us.
>
> Just make sure you write me informatively, also about the conditions of your boss, and what you know about my affidavit giver, I still have not written to him and have a bad conscience; also how is the house furnished, modern car, vacuum cleaner, etc. Yes, I am asking you an awful lot, it would be better if you wrote everything you have experienced in the form of a diary, but you are not a striking sport student who can write during the lessons, but I am more interested in

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[110] Berlin.

[111] Of the many letters that were transcribed and translated, this particular letter from Steffi was the only time anyone dared to actually write the name Hitler.

> everything you are experiencing, that I am sure you will understand. Dearest Liese, I love you, only you, and kiss you affectionately. For the lecture, during which I have been writing, has already ended. Many, many kisses
>
> Your Steffi

On January 27, 1939, the Palestine Council in Berlin of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Career Preparation Division issued a Certificate stating:

> The above named person [Steffi] has been notified about a position in England for training for a later emigration to Palestine in ca. 4 weeks. To prepare for the needed formalities, the above named needs a valid passport for stateless people for here and abroad and aside from that, a return which is valid for 13 months. Signed by Gerhard Israel Lass

In her letter, dated January 29, 1939, Liese wrote:

> Dr. R[ansom] is extraordinarily good to me, he is always friendly, even if I make a mistake, which happens sometimes, and he almost treats me like a daughter. I notice that on the small things, for instance, I asked him if I could go to a musical evening, even though Mrs. Rhodes[112] was not here, and he said that he wants me to get out among people as much as possible. In a word, he is nice in a very fatherly way. He has to be both father and mother to his children, and therefore he is always occupied with their "problems." These brats are so spoiled and always present another challenge. And the Dr. takes everything so tragically that I sometimes have to laugh at him. —You are probably wondering how I am able to run a household all by myself. I do not know myself.

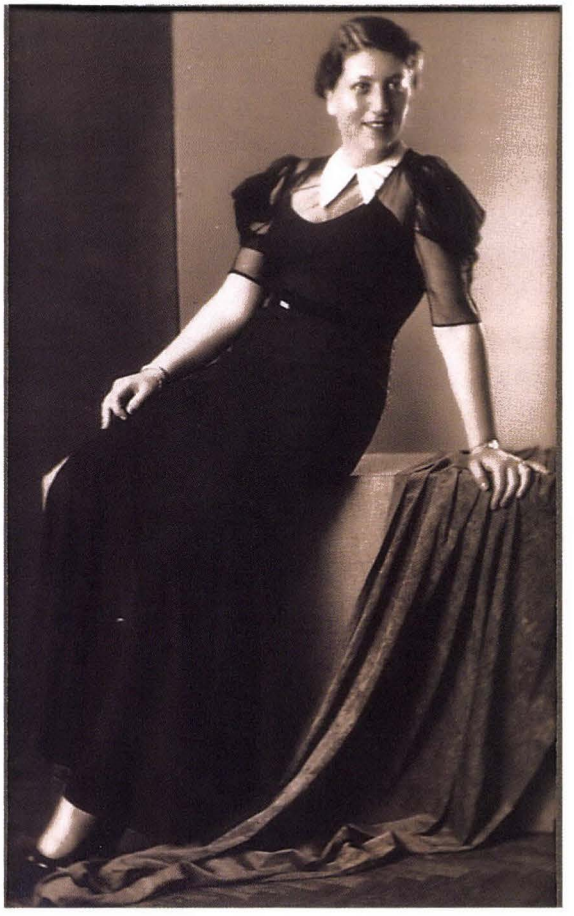
Apparently Liese was responsible for the cooking in the household and, according to American standards, did not use enough salt in her dishes.

Liese had occasion to wear her black evening dress, which she said she had not worn since March 7, 1938. "And I was thinking the whole time how nice it would be if you were sitting next to me."

As for her learning "American," Liese wrote:

> I already know a whole lot of slang expressions, but still am speaking with a pretty heavy accent. Especially with the, s, w, and l and it is also apparent with -ing.... The Americans are terribly polite, especially when you are a girl you have to grin a lot. That is then called charm. By the way, I am just remembering that in my last letter I said that I would enclose the "manuscript" of the poem from Dr. R and did not do it. I am including it today because I believe one should always do what one has said. I do not know if you are aware that Dr. R speaks German well.

[112] Mrs. Rhodes was apparently living in the Ransom household and had just had a difficult surgery. Most likely she was the housekeeper, though my mother never mentioned her name other than here.



Liese in her evening dress, 1938

Chapter 31: Survival Mode

Bertha wrote to Steffi [January 30, 1939] that "Karl is being very decent and is taking care of some of my things, but naturally not without having to pay him." Everyone had worries and was in survival mode. Bertha had visited the Schuschnys, who were relatives of her sister-in-law, Tante Gisi [Gisela née Schiller]. Tante Gisi's niece, Ida Schuschny, was married to Robert Weiss. Robert had also been imprisoned in Dachau and apparently owed Steffi RM 3.50, which he gave Bertha when she visited them.

Bertha also wrote about Herr Friedmann, from the Jewish Community Center, who had had a nervous breakdown. "Up till a short time ago he was able to perform his duties." Then, in the next sentence, she wrote: "Do you know what you really need, Stepsi—shoes." Bertha also wrote that Lisbeth's in-laws, the Kahanes, had left the previous week for Palestine. They had sufficient resources to accomplish this.

> If Ältlein[113] would not have all his money tied up with the store, then he could probably buy a departure there for Fritz. I feel so sorry for Tante Rosa. There is no way out! If only I could help her. I will not be able to do anything when I am in England. Naturally you could not say much to her.

At the end of the letter, Bertha wrote:

> Arthur's[114] wife should already be in England, she is there on a visit, he already had a permit. That is really tragic. Karl waits and waits. In the meantime, his conductor took a job in Berlin.

Gerda Newbower was a former girlfriend of Hans Dewton, who left Vienna with her husband and moved to Gloversville, New York. She wrote Liese about the cost of glove leather, the efforts to obtain affidavits for family and friends, etc. "About Hans and Hede," she said, "you do not have to worry about financial things, after all, we are here, I also tried to get them a little money in Paris and invitations so that, in any case, they will not be unhappy." The letter ended:

> Otherwise we hope that all of us can get our people out in time, and that the whole muck over there will come tumbling down with a roar. —I wish that and also the best for you,
>
> Gerda

The post script was: "Is that why his name is Ransom, because they do not pay you?" And they kindly sent Liese $5.00.

Sophie scolded Liese [January 31, 1939] for not having written to Bertha after she received the telegram announcing Steffi's release from Dachau. Sophie wrote of the arguments with Hede about taking various pieces of furniture, how upset she got over this, but, according to Hede, they would have had to get a larger lift, which was not worth it. Sophie also wrote that they might rent out part of the new apartment to their friends Herr and Frau Grünwald. "There is a big difference, spending an afternoon with people, or living with them under the same roof."

On February 1, 1939, Liese wrote a quick letter to Steffi, who was staying at Frau Bechhöfer's in Stuttgart, Johanesstrasse 44, to inform him that a telegram from the Consulate had arrived on that

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[113] Onkel Dori.

[114] Bertha's brother, Arthur Schifferes.

day, saying that he had registered on May 31, 1938, in Vienna, and that he would soon be called. She also stated that she hoped that he would not have to go to England, but would rather go straight to America.

Meanwhile, in Stuttgart, Steffi—ever the poet—wrote these stanzas in English!

My darling Liese!

I try, instead of being lazy,
but you will think me shurely [sic] crazy,
to prove you by a little song
how for you my dear I long.

When I seek verbs, when I endeavour,
to say you, that for ever and ever
I love you and I hope that you
love me and are just so true.

And so I try and so I seek
and write to you six times a week;
but all efforts they seem in vain,
for I can not see you soon again.

The only wish I have is this,
to give you, (not to send) a kiss.
The little poem shall prevent,
my dearest, that I you offend.

Yours true Steffi

The following letter was written in the old German script [*Kurrent*]:

Dear Lieschen! Stgt. 1.II. 1939

So now we can resume the correspondence because your letter from 19. I., which answered my first writing, just arrived now. Unfortunately it takes so long, and unfortunately, I have not found myself to be in the same mood, which is completely my fault. But in the meantime I hope you have forgiven me because soon after that I wrote you completely differently. Unfortunately I have not gotten it together the way I would like and I am letting myself go and am often apathetic and melancholy. I already wrote you that, even though I have no reason for it. It was better for me there and here than for other people. I had the chance to get out, but that is just it, —until now I have only had the chance and still no summons. That makes me, despite seeming rested, more than nervous and then there is the story of the passport not working, it still is not here. Mama is already packing for me and does not understand why I am so impatient. All of this should only explain my present condition and not the first letter, that was a letter that should rather be forgotten. Actually it was written shortly after my return, but I am not using that as an excuse and also not with the lines in English gibberish verses, but rather am very angry that I did that to you. Believe this one thing, Liese, I am so alone, like you over there, but much more lonely. Anyway it seems you think that no one is writing me about you. Only Mama once a week, Tante Gisi never, Tante Rosa 2x about her situation, Karl once about himself and

your relatives just once. They all have other worries and nowadays I cannot hold it against them. Just that my situation, which naturally is not less of a concern, is not a very pleasant one. Imagine this, you have to patiently sit on the school bench, whereas in V. you could still be taking care of things, Mama is taking care of the passport as she is ruining her feet doing it, poor thing. I cannot request that she boost my spirits. Now this about my apology, please forgive me and the poem. Even if I am not yet the old one, so you will have noticed my unfailing great love for you, which you must have read in-between the lines.

There seems to have been a flurry of activity around this time. On February 1, 1939, Bertha sent Steffi a telegram stating: "PERSONAL APPEARANCE BEFORE THURSDAY NEED COME WIEN."

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to
VD 811.111 Schifferes, Stephan

FEBRUARY 2 1939

My dear Miss Strauss:

Referring to your inquiry concerning the visa case of your fiancé, Mr. Stephan Schifferes, a telegraphic report has been received from the Consul General at Vienna, Germany from which it appears that Mr. Schifferes was registered under the German quota on May 31, 1938 and that his turn on the list is not expected to be reached before the end of the present quota year ending June 30, 1939. The Consul General states that the evidence of support submitted on behalf of Mr. Schifferes has been received and will be examined in due course.

Sincerely yours,

A. M. Warren
Chief, Visa Division

Miss Liese Strauss,
Care of Dr. C. Ransom,
Falls Church, Virginia.

Department of State letter to Liese

On February 2, 1939, the Department of State sent Liese a letter in which she was told that Steffi's German quota "...is not expected to be reached before the end of the present quota year ending June 30, 1939. The Consul General states that the evidence of support submitted on behalf of Mr. Schifferes has been received and will be examined in due course." At this point, Liese sent a telegram to Steffi: "*WIENER* [Vienna] QUOTA ALL RIGHT."

Liese's letter [February 2, 1939], which followed the sending of the telegram, said that she

> ...hoped the telegram calmed you down because that was its intent. In the beginning I thought I would cable you, as you will see from my postcard, then I thought that both would be important and that you would not be angry if in this case I do not watch what I spend.... Every day now I am hoping: Steffi will get the summons today. Then I think again: perhaps he has it already and will surprise me as he really likes to do. But this time, your precious beloved will be there, for I have to pick you up, otherwise you will end up on Ellis Island. Oh, if I only already knew the day, I cannot really wait any longer.

Then she proceeded to explain "American" English to Steffi:

> ...Americans do not say *due* (dju), but rather du (as I say to you when I quietly ask you something). The same with all words that contain ue (*rescue*), also *stew* (stu). Aside from that, here they say ither (*either*) and nither, haf (not *half*), past (*past*), plant. That is pretty much the main difference between the English and you get used to it soon. And then when you know a few more "sleng-expressions" [sic], such as: *what in the Dicken's*, (devil) or "*oh boy*" (wonderful) —*oh gee, o.k.*, etc., you are a genuine American. But all that is so secondary.

Then she went on:

> Really, I even wonder about myself; even though everything seemed to come crashing down on the 12th,[115] I held together pretty well, except for a 2-hour-long crying session, which poor Onkel Emil had to live through without a clue, I bit my teeth together tightly and tried to gather strength from all sides. Unfortunately I am not much further with my plans and am kicking myself again. If only we were together again! I also took our not being able to say goodbye as a sign from above, but I would have rather said goodbye to you 10 times.

In her explanation to Steffi about his options in America, she wrote: "If we have any luck there will be good possibilities, as well as a healing gymnast and masseur. But you certainly do not need any certificates." Liese was curious what plans Dr. Ransom had for her, but was certain that once Steffi was in America he would not want to go to Australia. She told him:

> I often cannot comprehend how nice everyone here is to me. For example, today I needed 2 notarized witnessed signatures for the crates, noticed "*Notary Public*" in passing, went in—was obviously desperate when the notary asked for $1. I told him shyly: in town it is only a quarter (25 cts) for each signature (which is true), whereupon he gave me 50 cts back. He told me he knew me from my walking by and wished me good luck! Nice, is it not? The postmaster takes me for a ride in his car...

[115] November 12, 1938, was the day of Liese's arrival in Stuttgart as well as the day Steffi was arrested.

As Liese proceeded to describe her life in the new country, she wrote about the food.

> The food is excellent as soon as you have gotten used to small changes, such as the butter and every meal is not salted, that the salads are made up of unusual combinations of things, that the milk does not have the taste of the cow, that there are sweet potatoes and that one eats fruit jelly with meat, and getting used to the breakfast and dinner and the little lunch and so on. You can get every fruit and vegetable at the market during the whole year (People are crazy about vitamins here) and the biggest Eur. lambs are available (smoked oysters, etc.). Just wine and beer are not as good, we will miss that the most![116] Americans find eating important and eat excellently.

In closing, Liese wrote:

> You asked indirectly if I have changed. No, my dearest Steffi, I do not believe so and you can rest assured that you will find me just as I always was in Vienna, Stuttgt and you will not have any surprises. Perhaps I am more serious, quieter, but that is surely temporary. Please, Steffi, be hopeful, I cannot imagine that you are unconcerned. I believe that one can achieve so much through desire, at least I have always achieved what I have wanted because I wanted it to be so.

The postscript announced that she had just received a telegram from the Viennese Consulate "...in which it says that you probably will not be called before the end of the past quota year, which ends with the date June 30, 1939. Awful! Hopefully England will work. Perhaps try for a tourist visa for here, if that is possible to arrange in Stgt. I am completely despondent." Naturally, Liese had hoped that Steffi would be able to leave Vienna immediately, instead of having to wait for his quota number to come up at the end of June.

Steffi tried to console her in his response.

> Stgt. 2. II. 1939
>
> My dear Lieschen!
>
> This morning your telegram came to Johannesstrasse and was given to me by Siegel, who is going to Magdeburg today to get "married." "Vienna Quota all right" makes me happy and calms me down. But I should have already been summoned, the whole thing must also be inexplicable to you, the mistake is not only mine (servant), but also in the system of the Consulate. Here I received a number as confirmation, I believe 8853, namely it is to be found in my document folder in Vienna and I would know exactly when I will be called; it will still take 1 year. Now I am happy that I will not have to wait so long. You are really clever, cleverer than the local help organization which still does not have an answer. Now you know that my Permit should still be coming this month. If the summons should arrive sooner, then I would absolutely inform the *Chaluzim*. If the summons should not have come, then I would send my passport there upon the receipt of the confirmation from the English Consulate and then slowly prepare myself for the departure. Unfortunately a lot of time will pass until then, until the A. Consulate will finally summon me. Then I would absolutely wait in order to still be examined in Vienna, hopefully it will work out, even if just for

[116] Ironic; neither Liese nor Steffi drank alcohol.

the passage to be paid for by the K. G.,[117] as you advised me. Now I would like to inform you of the text of my telegram: if I received the summons to the Amer. Cons. in V.[ienna], e.g., for the 23. March, the telegram would read: "Americaz 23." Hopefully I will not have to wait until April, that I would state through "Lamerica." Of course I would inform you in a telegram of my departure, just as it is certain that I would inform you through a telegram (about the A. summons) if I went home and you no longer needed to write me here. I have to ask one thing of you, do write to my Mama, she really likes you and is sad when I write her that you will now only be writing through me. She already has the Permit and now has to buy a suitcase and go through the horrible standing in line. If I were in Vienna, I could at least do that for her, but instead I am passing useless time here, other than doing my obligations and am participating in the sports with apathy. I hope that I have informed you exactly about my possibilities and will write you more at night—we just had the mid-day break, which I spent at school. This letter should be going with the "Queen Mary," a fast ship, so that you will soon find out that I am coming quickly and only—to you. Dearest, dearest, Liese, I am so looking forward to everything, everything is taking too long. Unfortunately I must have patience, but since your letter took so long and I also had no news from Vienna, I really missed it. I must now "continue." Take care, Kisses from your Steffi.

P.S. I am just writing to Mama that despite the telegram, I am skeptical since I do not know under what presumption you sent this. Perhaps the employee at the Consulate wanted the men of the *state department* and therefore you [Exactly what Steffi meant by this is unclear.]. Because, as I said, the summons should have been here a long time ago, according to what the people with whom I spoke said. Though you do write that I should still have gotten the request to fill out a waiting list, but on the other hand, you do know that Mama was one of the last to be taken onto the waiting list. Until I have things in black and white, I will not believe it and will not give up the England thing. And with and through this belief, we will surely be reunited. Today rather than tomorrow, I assure you of that and want to fulfill all your wishes and do not want to delay things any longer than necessary. I kiss you again.

Your Steffi.

In another letter written later that evening, Steffi wrote:

2.II. 1939 7 p.m.

Dearest Lieschen!

Yes, I still love you the same and still have the same longing for you, which is always growing. I could really hardly tolerate it when I had no news from you. Your 3. writing got lost. Still, by the time you read this, you will not know which. So, your 1st letter I received from your mother, your 2nd from you as you wrote throughout the day and were always disturbed. Now I have your latest 4. letter from the 19.I. in my hands, but I already wrote you that on Friday the mail should have come, but I did not get anything. A pity, a pity for every line from you, my love. If only I could let you know how much I love you, *ach*, you know

[117] *Kultusgemeinde* = Jewish Community Center.

it and even if I was supposed to lose my feelings there [Dachau], so there is still enough left over for you, just that I can no longer describe it for you. You are surely no longer angry with me, that would be a big mistake which I cannot write. Yes, strange, even though I am lonely, I am seldom alone. Now the men, whose daily evening guest I am—we eat a cold dinner with tea together—are still gone and so I am happy to be able to quickly write you about my very big love, still and again. I love you, so much, as I was able to show you with my hot kisses—even though you are so far away, but every step and every increase in strength, as in today's telegram, seem so different to me, awaken the hope, the prospect that I will soon be reunited with you, my sweet, that I know and see that the love in me is still in me and that I am happy, so very happy, finally to be able to find the words to be able to tell you all of this.

I am very sad when I think how much longer it will take; I have a quick medicine that will not allow me to be happy too long. So dearest, you will still have to wait and so our suffering is shared, but still hard to bear. Concerning your letters, I only have one wish, that you write more about your day-to-day experiences and actually more about you. Yes, if I were in Vienna and could speak with your Mutti, or could read the letters that you sent her, then I would sort of be saving you this work, because there is an older established correspondence. But believe me, the smallest thing interests me, and also the unpleasant things, even if you do not want to stay there, tell me everything. For, if need be, we will search together for another country, but sooner rather than later. But until I know that you are relatively satisfied and I am happy that you are not like Ruth Richter, who sent a complaining letter from the sport school full of homesickness and complaints about the unfamiliar way of being treated by the supposed very strange servants—she posted it on an announcement. I am happy that you are such a smart capable girl, a dear splendid fellow, whom I do not deserve, but love endlessly. I know, thank God, how sensitive you are, my dear bride!

Stay well! Keep loving me, darling! Many, many kisses from your

Steffi

Bertha was indeed lucky to have gotten hired as a housekeeper for Mrs. George Mason in England. At the time of her departure for England, on April 18, 1939, she was almost fifty-four years old. According to Tante Stephy's letter [February 2, 1939], one had to be younger than forty-five. Hede wrote Liese an explanation of why Steffi was still in Stuttgart:

Steffi still does not have his passport; he tried to take care of it in Stuttgart because his mother preferred that he stay there. Why I do not know, in any case you should not make too much of it; it is just one of his moods. For the examination he will surely be coming here, in case he does not get his English permit before then. Whichever comes more quickly is surely the best, that is, he should seize upon any possible departure even though at the moment there is no concrete reason. I hope that in the meantime you are sufficiently informed, that Steffi, because of his course and because Dr. Adler demanded for him to continue the course, is in Stuttgart. I also already wrote you that Steffi explained that he would attend the course until the first departure possibility arises. Steffimama has a permit. That Steffi wants to await the end of his course is also a misunderstanding. Because after the 10th of November so many affidavits came for today that were already noted for the quota, that is how things are. I am

> already curious as to which answer you got to your inquiry. In any case, do not be nervous, Steffi will hopefully also suddenly have his turn just as we did. When and with which ship will first be decided on the 16th and it will depend on when we obtain the visa. In any case we will leave as soon as we can. I am already very, very happy to see the Flops.
>
> The winter was here with snow only from Christmas to New Year, then there was mush and now it is dry and quite nice. I have been looking for snowbells on Wallnerstrasse, but have not found them yet. There is not any snow anywhere so we could not go skiing. I hope that you now have interesting work and are satisfied. I can only advise you about Steffi's arrival, not your changing of jobs because who knows if it would be better anywhere else. And you surely do not have it bad. But still, you owe it to Dr. R. to stay there, considering that he waited so long for you. We will hopefully soon be able to make our mutual plans face to face. It is terrible how quickly the time is passing. Suddenly we are leaving. Hopefully everything will be good for us and our parents + Stepsi will soon be with us.

Hans added on that he was "sometimes employed somewhere, mostly without success" [since he could no longer work as a lawyer]. Liese's father wrote that "...starting next week I will have a helper, Bruno Kröhl. You know, he is capable and happens to be in my field!"

Tante Else wrote to Liese [February 2, 1939]:

> Your news that you young ones will endeavor for us so that we can spend our later years with you pleases us and we are certain that your strength will make these possibilities come true. Dear Onkel is very despondent and is taking everything to heart, which naturally makes me useless. But enough of that since you understand our predicament so very well!!

Then she wrote that

> ...according to the newest regulation of the English government, married couples where the husband is over 60 years old can travel immediately to England if they have a permit. Of course they cannot work.

Tante Else was hopeful that one of Liese's friends could help. Bertha wrote Steffi [February 2, 1939] that she hoped he would be able to travel to England with her,

> ...even if you end up going directly to the USA. The woman for whom I will be working lives in Burley, which must be by the town or city of Ringwood and is supposedly 3 hours from Southampton.... I will be working there as a cook, and a butler and a woman will do the other work. I will get £52 and travel expenses will be reimbursed after a year. She wanted to send me the money, but I would rather have it in England.

Bertha also wrote that she had so much to do, "...especially now that Tante Gisi and I are taking a pastry class." Then Bertha wrote that she was writing the letter from Tante Rosa's, "...who is involved with Fritz's summons. The poor thing does not know up from down."

Steffi's letter of February 4, 1939, included the following request:

> I like to see "My beloved Stephy" written in your handwriting, "very prima," as they say here, but I would like it even better if I could hear it and see it said. If you are already so used to English, then write me, but only if it comes from your heart, as it did in the letters I have gotten up until now and just make sure you write important things about my departure and advice so that there are no misunderstandings or translation mistakes. Please do not misunderstand me, the expression of your love and thoughts and activities is also very important, —but you know what I mean. Perhaps you should also tell me about the arrivals of your ships with which the next mail will be crossing, in Europe, so that I know approximately when to expect the next letters, and I ask you please to write a letter with every ship, unless it makes you too tired, I will always send a response coupon. You must have a lot to do because you write so often of being tired, whereas in Vienna you hardly slept and were not very tired. Please do not overwork yourself so that I will see you being dear, fresh and sweet, just as you were in Vienna and just as I see you before me. I also am getting, that is [riding my bicycle back to where I'm living] to go to bed early and be assured that you and our future together is always part of my night-time prayer in which I beg for happiness and God's blessings. Just stay very well and keep loving me. Take care, good night, until tomorrow. I love you so much, you sweet Liese.

The frustration of not being able to leave was expressed by the following remark: "Unfortunately Simon[118] died and I am afraid that that will happen to more Rabbis before we are married." And again Steffi professed his love for Liese:

> My love for you has not changed, for I love Liese Strauss as she is, my beloved fiancée. I am only happy that you, who are so far away from me, are doing well, write me a lot, but do not mail it haphazardly, hopefully that has not happened to me. Unfortunately your inkling that I will be summoned already has not happened yet, and the passport situation is also not progressing well. The next ships which leave from here are 10. Hansa, 11. Aquitania, 15. Ile de France, 17. Deutschland, 18. Queen Mary, 23. Manhattan, 24. Hamburg, and 25. Aquitania; so more in January and I hope that you are satisfied with the abundance of my letter and its girth.

The Jewish Central Office in Stuttgart sent the following to Steffi [to Gartenstrasse, on February 4, 1939]:

> By order of the Secret State Police, Stuttgart Police Station, we would like to inform you that you must observe the following before being notified of your emigration:
>
> 1. As soon as you have a fixed date for your emigration, you should go to Room 74 of the Secret State Police, State police Headquarters Stuttgart, where you must show your passport with visa.
> 2. In addition, you must report in the usual manner and present the notification of departure for which you are responsible.

[118] Rabbi Abram Simon, who provided one of Steffi's affidavits.

> The notice of withdrawal in regards to number 1 and 2 must, in all cases, be done personally: written notification is not permitted. Exact observance of the orders is necessary, otherwise there could be severe difficulties.
>
> We request that you report in writing in three days, according to instructions.
>
> Furthermore, we want to let you know that you must report about the temporary grant to leave through the Central Office; information will only be given personally.
>
> Jewish Central Office
> Karl Adler

Liese was longing for her fiancé to arrive. She wrote how she would not be able to go to New York to meet Hede and Hans[119]

> ...because it is very hard for me to get off and also I have to save money. But I will for absolutely certain come to N York on the most wonderful day of my life, that is, for your arrival and I am already so happy about you and have already imagined 100 times how I would be standing on the pier and would see the ship coming that is bringing you to me. But for the moment these are just wishful dreams that should be fulfilled very soon.

In Steffi's letter to Liese from Stuttgart, dated February 4, 1939, he seemed to have doubts:

> Are you ashamed of your love for me? Do you feel that I am not reciprocating it enough? We were engaged, Lieschen, dearest, and are engaged because we are in love; I know that you love me and that you have done everything for me. If I could convince you of my love, of my longing which I cannot conceal, to which I will remain true until our reunion.

Then he wrote, "I am only interested in you and my imminent departure to see you and would like to send you poems which are for you alone."

The Palestine Council in Berlin [Meinekestrasse 10] wrote Steffi telling him that his permit had arrived and that he should immediately send them his passport "...so that we can have the visa arranged through the English Consulate. At the same time, please send RM 8,30 for Germans and stateless RM 16,60 for foreigners to our postal check account Berlin Nr. 150 064." It was signed:

> *Schalom*!
> Palestine-Council
> Career Training I.
> Hans Wendel

During the week of February 4, 1939, there was a flurry of letter writing and notices!

- The Palestine Council in Berlin sent a letter to Dr. Stephan Schifferes to Wien 9, Neue Thorgasse 17/14, which stated that they were "sending him his Permit, Passport with Visa, Work training for England."
- The Israel Welfare-Department on Hospitalstrasse 36 in Stuttgart wrote to Steffi c/o Lehrlingsheim on Gartenstrasse 30 telling him: "We request that you come with the enclosed

[119] Nickname was Pintschis.

assignment paper this coming Tuesday between 3–4 o'clock to our Kleiderkammer, Rotebühlstr. 1a. Bring packing material with you."

- The *Gestapo* in Stuttgart notified Steffi [who was living on Azenbergstr. 51] on February 7, 1939, that he and Dr. Emil Goldschmidt [who was living on Zeppelinstr. 13] had to appear on Monday the 17th at 7 o'clock.
- The Immigration Division of the Jewish Community Center in Vienna wrote [February 8, 1939] that Steffi should present himself on February 21 at 4 o'clock in reference to his registering for the transit camp in England.
- Billy Ostermann wrote a long letter to Liese from Basel on February 7, 1939, telling Liese that she had to turn in her German passport and was asked to appear again in 3–4 weeks. The English Consul would not give her a visa for an expired passport and since a Swiss travel paper did not exist, she was basically stuck there. But her big decision was that she would study medicine and in two-and-a-half years become a doctor.
- Tante Stephy wrote that she was worried that if Liese asked too many Americans for help providing affidavits, then Liese would "shut off the possibilities for us." [February 8, 1939]
- Hede and Hans were living with the Strauss parents because their beds had been taken apart for transport. At the end of February the Strausses were to leave their apartment (38 Alseggerstrasse) and move into Langegasse, where Grandfather Strauss now had his office. Tante Stephy had also been evicted and was already living on Langegasse. Hede added on to inform Liese that Hans' relative, Emil Held, had died, but apparently his brother, Siegfried Held, would help them in America.
- Hede wrote [February 8, 1939] to advise Liese that she thought it would be better if Steffi came back to Vienna himself to collect his passport and to be examined for his trip to England. This would also enable him "to tie everything up at the same time."
- Liese's doubts about Steffi's intentions continued. She wrote that she was distressed because she felt he was only going to immigrate to America because she was there, and thought that she was getting in his way. A Washington lawyer named Guthman was apparently helping her procure affidavits for Steffi, his mother, and the other members of Liese's family.

Liese's letter writing continued, but the schedule of the regular mail ships was only available in New York and Washington, not in East Falls Church. In response to Steffi's inquiry, Liese wrote that Falls Church was divided into East, West, Great, and Little Falls Church and each had its own post office; "the mail is not delivered here," she added, "it is completely rural." Liese again acknowledged Steffi's complaints about America—to which she replied [February 9, 1939]:

> Please just come here and we will try it, we will see. There is certainly more peace and quiet here than in Palestine and I am certain that each of us will make a nice life for the other; love conquers all, right?

Chapter 32: I Felt Like a Pilgrim, Too

Sophie's letter to Liese [February 8, 1939] included, despite the usual worries all around them, motherly advice:

> ...make sure you go out with people, it is very important, also go walking, this is also very important, actually, how much do you weigh? Do not get too fat, for that reason go for fast walks, working at home is not the same, going for fast walks makes you slim. After washing dishes, put cream on your hands. Black spots from work are from cooking, [they] can be removed with lemon juice. Lemon juice makes hands soft again. Do not scratch the pimples on your face. Do not put your hands to your face!

In the same letter, Tante Stephy warned:

> Unfortunately, it seems that my worst fears about Herbert have come true and I beg of you, dearest Liese, to look around for another affidavit. So I am afraid that if your parents do not get out, [and] if I see that I have an affi, I will wait for my quota number, which should come up in July or August, if not, I will go to Engl. So many acquaintances are asking for your address so you can help them, but do not do it because of that, for then you will shut the possibilities off for us. For the Americans will not always want to do favors.

Hugo added on a very little bit, saying that he had a lot of work that needed to be finished in a short period of time. Hede wrote that Liese's telegram, which said, "Viennese quota all right," did not tell them very much. She told Liese, "Do not worry unnecessarily, everything takes time and we have also had to wait a long time." She added, "Perhaps you will find jobs for us in Washington?... It does not matter to me where we end up, but still we will have to see that we are all together soon." And at the conclusion of the paragraph she wrote: "Does Herbert, the crook, speak German? So I can give him a piece of my mind."

Among the "treasures" my family saved was a note from Louise Sissman, who knew Liese in Washington. She had sent an article from the *New York Times* with the headline: "70 REFUGEES IN COLLEGES." The International Student Service, 6 West Fortieth Street, reported that refugees were being placed in American colleges, but only "...brilliant young men and women who meet our rigorous academic and personality requirements." According to the article, about 20 percent of the students were Catholic, 10 percent Protestant, and the rest were Jewish.

Steffi wrote on February, 8, 1939, that he was "...just sending this postcard because I promised to write with the 'Hansa' and I know what it means to be alone and be waiting senselessly for mail."

In a long letter to Steffi [February 9, 1939] Liese expressed frustration with the situation:

> The day before yesterday it looked as if I would never have to write to you in Stgt. again, namely I found, which hopefully you already found out in the meantime, a way to procure an Engl. Permit for you because of the affidavit. This would have happened soon since everything was cabled. Then yesterday a cable came from Vienna which I have yet to understand, but which I hope to be able to figure out as soon as I have it in front of me because it was conveyed to me over the telephone. I doubt that the visa will work now. But we should never give up hope because somehow it has got to work.

Then Liese wondered how she would be able to get an income report from the deceased Dr. Simon. And she also tried to reassure Steffi of her feelings for him:

> I believe in you so completely and our—your and my—love. I hope you are doing the same even though I see doubts in this letter. There should be no doubt in your mind, my dearest person in the world, that I am longing for you so terribly, that through my love my longing for you has grown, that I can hardly endure the passing of time during this terrible period.

Liese's doubts included those about Steffi really wanting to come to the United States because, she said,

> ...I have a growing feeling that you are only coming here because I am here, i.e., if you did not have me you would go somewhere else, i.e., furthermore that I am getting in the way of your other plans. I already wrote you that we will first try here, we will see. At the moment you only have the choice between here and Chicago, 1–2 years *Hachscharah* in England, Palestine. That means the narrow choice is only between the U.S. and England. That I am taking seriously and so are you.

The other news from this very long letter from Liese was that she had to pay $14 for the crates, which arrived while she was not there, and also that no one need worry about the burn on her hand anymore, which she had not even written about to Steffi because she did not want to worry him.

> You will be able to see where the wound was for a long time, but I think it is not even a beauty flaw and surely it will fade. In any case, it was a very painful and unpleasant incident, but still I have other problems, for that reason I had no time to think about it.

She was glad that she lived in a physician's house, "... otherwise I would have had to spend money on a doctor for the thing."

Liese also wrote that she had heard through Ines [Mandl] that Trude Willheim was going to be marrying a German man in Brazil "...whom she saw for the third time in three years. I feel sorry for her in this situation, she is only doing it because she is afraid that she will not find anyone and it is also a means of getting to Brazil. Hopefully she will be happy." Desperate times called for desperate acts.

Despite the myriad of frustrations with the bureaucratic nonsense, Liese tried to explain the reason she had not written to Steffimama [Bertha] after receiving her telegram. "I certainly do not want to make excuses, but it says a lot because this letter is the first news to you (or was it the 2nd?). Anyway, no one should be angry if I do not write, my day needs to have 26 hours...."

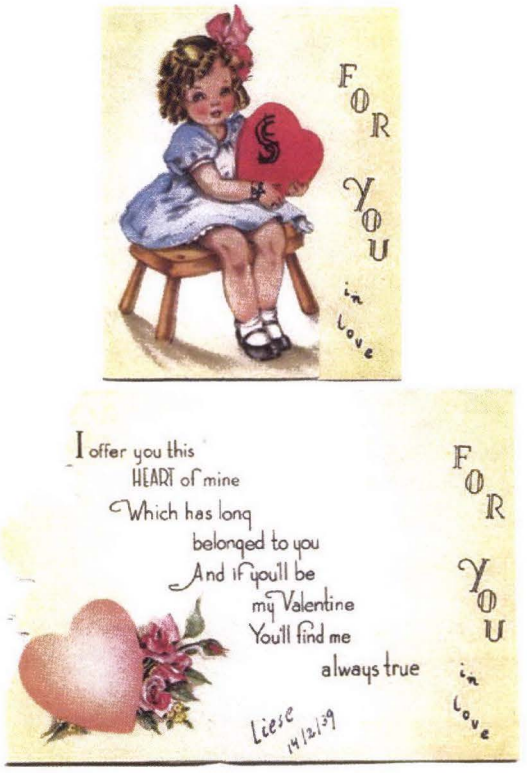
Not only did Liese write to Steffi, but she also wrote regularly to her parents and did a lot of running around to expedite Steffi's exit from Nazi Germany. And anyway, she continued,

> Your Mama should not complain, she has to understand that at the moment I am living an absolutely rushed, wild life here, [there are] always new paths and things that are so much more important to us than a letter. Anyway, I have always included her when I wrote to my parents.

The letter continues:

> About our getting married, you certainly do not need a document, every employee can do it. You go there, say you want to get married and are married. But so that you do not think that there is no romance here, I want to tell you about Valentine's Day, Feb. 14; that is the day when people who like one another express it and also buy things for one another.

The letter ends: "And what I feel can no longer be called longing, my hopes are increasing daily to know that you are here or in L'n. Every ship that brings you closer is certainly welcome."



Liese's first valentine to Steffi

On the same date [February 9, 1939] Bertha gave motherly advice to her son regarding what sort of suits, shirts, etc., to bring along: "You cannot prepare yourself for the next 30 years...." She also told him this news—"Karl is unfortunately still here. Such a poor devil. He has lost everything that one could possibly lose."—and added an update on the Allina family: "The Allina's store will probably be liquidated and we will see what develops. Still, no one knows what will happen with Fritz, who should be leaving in June."

Tante Rosa wrote Steffi [February 9, 1939] c/o Stern, Azenbergstr. 57, Stuttgart: "What we are going to do is still uncertain, we have, as your dear Mama said, been living on the moon and cannot grasp the situation. I can only say, I am clueless and am racking my brain." She also spoke of Karl wanting to leave and wrote that she could not show him Steffi's letter "...because you wrote about the old narcissus..."[120]

[120] Karl's wife, Mandy Schifferes, who divorced him.

Bertha's letter from February 10, 1939, was written from the Café Johann Strauss, where she was taking care of her varied correspondence and then later her errands. She wrote that she could not go to Tante Rosa's that day because Tanta Rosa was visiting Fritz in Inzersdorf where, it was believed, that he was interned in a mental hospital. Bertha expressed the desire to be in England already, "...and then at least I would know that I can live there for a longer time and would know that you are safe." Bertha also wrote about her friend, Käthe Neumann, for whose mother she was caring. She said that Käthe, who had been a principal of a school, was now "...wandering from one school to the next. At the moment she is a teacher at Gerhardusgasse (20. District)."

The Strauss family wrote a brief letter [February 13, 1939] noting that perhaps "...the foundation successor of Dr. Simon will give the explanation so that he will take over the affidavit." In that way, Steffi would have been assured of a strong affidavit.

In an extremely long letter, mostly in English, written on February 12, 1939, Liese finally described her departure from Vienna and her arrival in Stuttgart, shortly after Steffi's arrest in November 1938.

> *The last two days [in Vienna] were just as terrible for me as they could be. —In the morning, at 3 o'clock we had visitors,*[121] *who wanted to see my father and this lasted till 11 in the morning.... Your mother knows only too well how nervous everybody in our family was, she and Onkel Alfred had dinner with us. When I left, I was the only person who did not cry, but believe me, it took much strength not to do it. HeHa were the only persons to accompany me to the station, I did not want my parents and your mother to have all the excitement there.*

Then she proceeded to say that she did not remember the trip from Stuttgart to Zurich. She had missed her airplane, so she called home, then sent a cablegram to [Onkel] Emil, who waited at the station for her. The five days in Zurich were a blur for Liese, although Onkel Emil was glad to have her there and *"...he was really sorry that I left because I wanted to stay in Paris a couple of days, though I did not enjoy it at all, neither in Zurich nor in Paris nor anywhere."* She stopped in Basel to visit her friend Billy Ostermann, and in Paris she saw her friend Hans Liatscheff. Then Liese spent two days sleeping on the floor of the Hochmuth's apartment

> *...because they had no beds yet themselves, though they had a large apartment. Mrs. Ida [Hochmuth] brought me to my train. I took the special boat train, which had only 2nd and first class. In Havre I felt like dying. The feeling when you leave the Continent was terrible!*

Liese had a beautiful stateroom on the SS Normandie,

Then Liese said that she even got dressed up for a Gala dinner. *"We certainly did have a lovely dinner, but I did not enjoy a thing on this boat—I saw the 'divine' Marlene [Marlene Dietrich, famous German actress] and the Baroness Rothschild of France, and the skiing champion of Switzerland danced with me...."*

In her letter of February 12, 1939, Liese described her arrival in New York on the previous November 24,

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[121] Liese is probably referring to some Nazis who came to question her father about something.

> *...a holiday in the U.S. It is called Thanksgiving Day: the first pilgrims coming over arrived on the 24th of November (year?) and they thanked God for their good arrival. I felt like a pilgrim, too.*[122]

Pepi Deutsch met Liese at the boat, as did Dr. Ransom and Mrs. Hilton, and they took her out to an elegant hotel where they had Thanksgiving dinner. *"There I realized that I have to change my table manners. Here you only eat with your fork and use the knife just if your meat is tough. I ate sweet potatoes for the first time and oysters."* Then they went to the N. Broadcasting Building, which was supposedly the largest skyscraper of the city, where they saw a program and afterwards they went to a movie.[123] But Liese's exhaustion caught up with her and she slept through the whole movie. She then spent a few days with Pepi and Lilly Deutsch, where she played with Ruth, who was almost two years old. After the train trip to Washington, she stayed with Mrs. Hilton and on January 4 began living in East Falls Church, in Dr. C. A. Ransom's house.

> *Now closing the letter for today I must tell you as [a] good American how much I love you, my beloved darling (darlen as they say here) and how I am longing for you. I am so glad to have your letters and I read them over and over. You once asked in one of your letters if I am optimistic for us (pessimistic as I usually am): of course I am, I trust that things will happen quickly. Maybe that in a month or 6 weeks you are already called for the medical examination.*

In addition, Liese was expecting Hede and Hans to arrive soon and was hoping to be able to meet them in New York.

At the end of Liese's very long letter, which she concluded on February 14, she described Valentine's Day.

> You might find this manner of expressing love or friendship without taste. But the Americans have a way of celebrating real gestures of friendship and there are a whole bunch of holidays that show friendship and thanks. I think that is very nice even though similar things, like Mother's Day, are business ventures. I also received a whole bunch of Valentines from the Ransom family and a box of candies from Jean [Ransom, the daughter].

In a brief letter to Steffi, his mother Bertha wrote [February 12, 1939] that she would be accompanying Karl to the train station on that day. Did she even realize that this would be the last time she ever saw her youngest brother?

The SS Vulcania, the ship on which Hede and Hans arrived, ran from Trieste to New York in 1939 as part of the Italian Line. In March 1940 she commenced her last voyage (Trieste-Naples-New York-Trieste) and thereafter was requisitioned by the Italian government to carry troops to North Africa. She had an interesting history, including being chartered to the American Export Line, running from New York-Naples-Alexandria.

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[122] Actually, George Washington proclaimed that a day of thanksgiving be celebrated on November 26. On December 26, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a joint resolution of Congress changing the national Thanksgiving Day from the last Thursday in November to the fourth Thursday.

[123] Perhaps Liese meant a radio broadcast at NBC studios in the GE Building (formerly called the RCA Building) in Rockefeller Center, followed by a movie at Radio City Music Hall.

In a letter dated February 13, 1939, Steffi once again tried to convince Liese of the steadfastness of his feelings for her: "I love you, I will keep loving you, I am waiting for you, I am longing for you. Oh, if I could console you with my big, very huge love or if I could even reach you." In the same letter Steffi said that he had become quite ill with a flu that was apparently affecting many people, "...and the death rate is climbing." Because of his not feeling well, his outlook changed:

> If only I could first be well again here at my position, then I would surely feel better spiritually. Unfortunately I must say honestly that I need a jump-start in order to really be capable of going on. Despite that, I need to sit here passively for now and there is no one in Vienna anymore who can take care of things...

The letter ended:

> I feel bad that you are working so hard, please take care of yourself, also do it for me! Let me kiss the beautiful Liese and not the rouge-covered or suntanned cheeks. Do not be angry with this short letter. Take care of yourself, I will write again soon and longer and nicer. I love you intimately and with my best strength will endeavor to make you happy and it will be so nice, just like we described it and spoke about.... I am once again courageous with you, through you, for you.

Then he asked if perhaps one of the affidavit-givers could request that he come to give massages because Steffi had heard that the process was expedited "...if a person is needed urgently for a specific work...."

In Bertha's letter of February 13, 1939, she told Steffi that when he came to Vienna he could stay either with Tante Rosa or with the Strauss family on Langegasse. She also wanted to know if he would be receiving money for travel. If not, she could ask her future employer to send her the travel money. Bertha was hoping to be able to make the trip to England with Steffi: "There would be a lot to talk about." Bertha had stopped her cooking course, which the Jewish Community Center helped pay for. She also said that Käthe Neumann had given her a map of London and an English cookbook as going-away presents.

"Everything is very different from what it was in October," Bertha added. "One can only get the travel permit if one has a visa." She also wrote that she had received a letter from the K.G. [Jewish Community] saying that Steffi was summoned to a transit camp for the 21st. She wrote that she would ask Hede about that.

Chapter 33: Dead Time

Finally on February 15, 1939, Steffi had recovered enough from his illness to take his first walk to the former sport field.

> The doors are locked and the passage through the guesthouse is forbidden. I am still coughing, the weather is cold and nice, the second period of frost continues. I experienced the first one there [Dachau] in light clothing for then, at the beginning of January there was quite warm weather for the beginning of the year.... If only something would allow me to get over there sooner, it would not matter to me if it were through Cuba or San Dominica, I am prepared to go anywhere, wherever it would mean a quicker reunion with you, my dearest. Now I will write a perfect card to Berlin and the result will be: Wait. I am so impatient and will hardly be able to stop, I do know that I cannot expedite anything and that, if we live to see it, everything is possible through the passage of time. But the unnecessary waste of time, this dead time for us, throughout which this great longing is increased, is lousy, that there cannot be an exception to this ridiculous law, that there is no possible back door! Well, I am starting to be angry again and that is a waste of energy, time, and paper and—your love. Keep it for me, yes!

Liese had asked Steffi for photos of him, but he wrote that he did not have any, "...partially because of lack of opportunity, partially because of the punishment haircut,[124] my hair is gradually growing...."

Both Liese and Steffi knew that Dr. Ransom collected stamps, so Steffi always sent him ones from different countries. "Also, when I put stamps on, I always try to use different ones. The Zeppelin stamp is still valid, but is no longer available, the rest of the air mail stamps are good until the end of '39."

Karl wrote [February 16, 1939] that they were leaving from Vienna the next day from the Westbahnhof and he hoped that Steffi would await him at the train station in Stuttgart. Karl assured Steffi that he would be able to get a good clarinet in England or in the USA. "You have to let A. appraise the instrument before you leave and aside from that, they must have been made before 1.I. 1938." As a postscript, Karl wrote: "Do not be so distressed about permit and affidavit, [it] will be faster than you think. Keep your head up, old lad, we will get it. Can surely help you from outside." Little did Karl know that he could not even help himself.

On February 17, 1939, Liese wrote a very long letter to Steffi, mostly in English. She wrote that she would be willing to wait longer, provided he could get out of Nazi Germany. *"I am glad to hear that you are YOU again. I knew you could not have been changed by anything in the world."* She continued with advice about clothing, the clarinet, and German-English dictionaries.

> *I have a good James[125] (large) and I never looked up a word yet. When you are in the country you pick up the language, without studying it. I certainly have now already quite another accent as when I came but it is not the real American one yet.*

[124] Which meant that Steffi's head had been shaved upon his "registration" at Dachau.
[125] Dictionary.

In her continuation in German, Liese wrote that Hede had no time to write to her:

> I really believe that everyone has too much to do, but because of that, my loneliness is becoming more apparent. The letter was addressed by your mother. But what I can gather from her not even signing her name or writing anything, she must be angry with me. I am wondering why and for what reason. I am getting suggestions from all sides about not writing, even though I have written. I do not want to write a lot about that to you now, but cannot understand all of that. If you should have any insight to these suggestions, then I assure you that you will understand everything when we finally have a chance to talk about it. I can only say that perhaps my work is more beneficial here and I am terribly worried about everything and I am really spending every free minute writing [letters]. When I think about it, I do have time, but how rough things are here I cannot really say. I do not know why I am writing all of this to you because I certainly do not want you to ever mention that because I do not want a lecture. It could be that I am mistaken. I certainly do not want to defend myself, but am, as I said, unaware of any mistakes that I have made and for that reason feel that I am being judged unjustly. I also have the feeling that something like this could have an impact on our love and therefore hope that I change, for there could not be anything more unpleasant than having the feeling that our happiness could be hurt.

In the same letter Liese wrote that she was also thinking about her parents: "...I just cannot imagine what both of them are doing without their children." And, she said, Herbert, "...the scoundrel, did not even answer my letter, so that means Hede will have to start working on him when she comes." Liese also said that her prayer at night and also during the day was "...about you and you being here soon. But that will take some time. Too bad."

Liese also wrote about how she found things that the Ransom "brat" had stolen from her in Jean's drawers. But that was the least of her worries. While listening to Beethoven's "Pastorale" Symphony, Liese said, she was

> ...thinking of you, my dear Steffi, what are you up to, and how terribly awful the fate of our separation is. And today everything seems to be so hopeless. I was also expecting a telegram from *Pintschi* [Hede], but it passed and I am therefore assuming that they still do not have their visa. And so nothing is proceeding and my longing and loneliness is becoming more and more unbearable.

She wrote that even going out with Mrs. Hilton "...cannot help me forget about my worries for even a second and if it continues much longer in the same manner ... but aside from encouraging you, my poor thing, I am complaining to you."

Though the distance separated them, Liese and Steffi were still trying to figure out what work Steffi could do when he arrived.

> *I cannot tell you exactly, but we will go as a couple (governess and chauffeur) if you cannot find a job driving for one of the grocery stores, or a sports teacher, or massage. You do not have to worry about that and come without any judgment just like me (hopefully soon!!!). People here help one another.*

In response to Steffi's questions about what suits to buy and what clothing to bring, Liese said: "...if you like it, I will probably also like it. Anyway, none of that really matters. Nothing matters

except you, since you asked, you know that and not even the nicest letters that come 2x a day satisfy my longing."

Liese continued:

> Now I would like to be 2 months older, then I would certainly know the outcome of this thing. And since I am optimistic, I wish the time to fly by.... I just heard a Brahms quartet for clarinet and I thought of the nice hours that I liked to listen (even if you thought it did not interest me). How often I sing the melodies (hum) that you played, sang, and we heard together. And my longing for you, how unhappy, lost, and lonely I am when you are not with me, then I have to imagine how happy I will be with you. But in the meantime the deep ocean, which you must cross, lies between us.

Again she spoke of Herbert and how he had his nerve not to fulfill a promise he had made. Liese knew it would be difficult to find a different affidavit for her father because he was not in good health.

> Anyway, I am really worried about Papa and you know that I often spoke of it, how sorry I feel for him because of his illness, also for Mutti. How I would like to see my parents again! The poor things only worked for us children and are so alone now. And time makes it so much harder to heal the wounds. Funny, I was not homesick, just have terrible worries.

The letter ended:

> With that I will close, but not without repeating that I love you so much, as no other person in the world, that I am waiting longingly for you and hope to make you happy, just as you will make me happy (can I say it that way?). Yes?
>
> ...I fall asleep with these thoughts, wake up with them, live with them. Tomorrow I will find out which steamer will carry many, many kisses over the ocean. I would rather find out which ship will bring you to me and I see myself so often, excited in N York, on the pier, waiting for you.

Pepi Deutsch wrote suggesting that if Liese were not being paid, she should come to New Jersey and look for a job there. He advised:

> Later, towards the Spring, it becomes more difficult to find a job. By the way, I wrote to Hans that he should not wander around Europe but rather get here as quickly as possible. Here time is not only money, but also security.... As far as Herbert Muller goes, I would absolutely suggest that you write him again registred [sic] and ask him what has prevented him from meeting with you. Attack him fiercely, I think that will make an impression here!!!"

(However, Herbert Muller did not even have the courtesy to respond to Liese's certified letter and she said that if she had the money, she would send him back the $10 he gave her when she first saw him in New York City.)

Then Pepi wrote: "Our news from Vienna is rather calm and for that reason makes us even more fearful and we push even more to expedite things." He mentioned how Paul Fischer, a friend of Hede and Hans from Vienna, had received a scholarship at the College of William and Mary and was studying bookkeeping. Pepi thought Paul might be able to give Liese suggestions. But when

Paul replied to Liese, he told her that she need not worry—her fiancé would soon be in the States and everything would be fine. Little did he know how ambitious my mother was and how hard she was willing to work to allow her family a better life in this country.

Paul told Liese she should write to a Mr. Robert Spivack, International Student Service, 8 West 40th Street, N.Y. City, and she should not mention his name. Furthermore, he said that the chances were not very good for her. "I have gained the experience here that the students do not particularly care for refugee students (rather, they prefer their own, we will take away their future jobs)." He explained that his case was different because he had a fellowship with teaching obligations. The reason he was able to obtain this position was that in Vienna he had been an assistant of a well-known professor. He encouraged Liese to ask Mr. Spivack for a household position or a job as a governess.

Hede wrote Steffi [February 17, 1939] to assure him that he should be getting his summons in about two to four weeks.

> So, again [there is] confirmation that your registration is in order here. I can only continue to assure you that the Viennese number is better than the Stuttgart one since Stuttgart only gets as many numbers as is allowed within the quota. You need not worry about the Viennese notification. They are not giving tourist visas for non-Aryans now. If you go to England in the meantime, then you would send your Viennese document to London and would then get the summons there. Your mother certainly already wrote you that on the 21st you should appear at the Jewish Community Center here concerning a transit camp for an English re-education. Since you have to come here anyway because of your passport, [then] that will be perfect. We would also be very happy to see you here before our departure.

A letter to Liese from Ines [February 20, 1939] expressed her delight that Steffi was free once again, which she could actually write because both she and Liese were out of Nazi Germany. According to Ines, "...all normal immigration must defer to those who have come out of concentration camps,[126] so that you can expect Steffi sooner than you thought."

Ines tried to bring Liese up to date on their classmates: "There are already many acquaintances in the USA, and many more will be coming, and also many are coming here." Ines also mentioned that "...only Franzi Löw[127] is still in Vienna, who is accomplishing a lot through the Community Center."

Apparently Ines loaned Liese money, which she said could be paid off when she came to the USA, "...which will hopefully happen soon and you need not grow any grey hairs because of it."

Liese's letter, [February 21, 1939] written in "American," as she said, continued to express her frustration with how long Steffi's emigration was taking. She also said that her longing for him was so great that she felt compelled to write with every ship, and even calculated how many more

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[126] Remarkably, Ines' use of the words "concentration camp" was the first reference in all the letters that were transcribed.

[127] Franzi Löw, born 1916 in Vienna, was a classmate of Liese's. She was a social worker for the Jewish Community Center in Vienna and helped many children during the Hitler era. She was particularly devoted to fulfilling her assigned tasks in the community, caring for the indigent while also assisting those who had gone underground—the so-called submarines—with food provisions. She likewise cared for deportees from Greece, Croatia, and Hungary who were transported via Vienna en route to the extermination camps (see www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205429.pdf).

letters she could write that month: "*This one is going by Queen Mary, the next one on the 28th by Champlain.*" Liese also expressed dismay that she could not afford to go to New York to meet Hede and Hans when they arrived, and her continuing frustration:

> *I can understand how impatient you are, also measured by myself: I am not myself anymore, though I did not change. But I don't think I could laugh or have any fun at all. Still, I have grown so much older and Fritz, who said often a time that I was the type of woman who will stay young along* [sic] *time, was most certainly mistaken. I felt it the other day when I was rejuvenated by the 77 years* [sic] *old lady. In all my decisions and plans and everything I am left alone, only Pepi tries to help me out, whenever I ask him to do it, but nearly always I have got to go ahead and do it myself. I would not mind that, but it gives you the feeling of this terrible loneliness in this world, even though I have you, my relief, my hope, (You my yearning, you my heart, you my delight, you my suffering,* the text is probably not correct word for word, but touches on and I remember that when you sang this song in Vienna, I often wanted to tell you that I especially like this song), *I have this suffocating feeling of helplessness. Then I get so nervous that I feel sick. But enough of all this stuff! I should not bother you with those things and I know you feel very much alike. You know my "let's call it temperament," don't you, and will only know to* [sic] *well, what I am like now. The only relief I have (a very small one indeed), is that I need not worry about myself, because I am fine here. But I don't enjoy a single think* [sic] *of my life. I don't go anywhere anymore, I am not interested in anything, only in having you come over.*

A lawyer named Guthman was apparently helping Liese expedite the matter of Steffi's emigration. It is unclear how she found him. It is also doubtful that he actually did anything for Steffi.

In the same letter, Liese described Dr. Ransom's Siamese cat, who was apparently in heat and would howl the whole day and growl and wake her up. Liese would then lock her up "...in some hidden corner so we can sleep. I said, to everyone's great amusement, that it is a lucky thing that this is a characteristic of cats and not humans, to behave this way when looking for a husband."

Liese was encouraged by the fact that Paul Fischer got a scholarship to continue studying. She hoped that she could finish her degree, though she realized that she had to continue to earn money and, therefore, would not have that luxury. She even attempted to cut her own hair in order to save money and ended up having to pay a beautician twice as much to correct the damage she had done.

She again mentioned her concern for her parents:

> You write that I am more courageous than that girl and do not write home about being homesick, I think I wrote you already that I am not homesick and feel myself so very well here and have gotten used to things, so I feel like I have been here a long time. But I have a terrible longing for you and naturally my parents, who still do not have any prospects for seeing me, as you do. I feel so sorry for my parents, I cannot even begin to tell you. They, who were always so used to having us around them, are now all alone. This time the ideal family life is bad, I wish I could spare my parents the pain for if we, Hede and I, were not so attached to our parents and they to us, it would be less cruel for them. What can Papa begin now, to earn and to work when there is no one but Mutti there to spend

money. Poor Mutti must surely have a broken heart, during the move, having to pack all our favorite things that we had on the floor, the dolls, the doll house, the animals, picture books, children's beds, children's wagon, linens, and all the other things to go through. I desperately tore myself away from all of these things when I left, but I often think of this and that, the things I was so attached to as a child.

Liese ended:

Hede does not understand why I am so often on pins and needles, but I cannot help having a restless temperament, even though I know that I make mostly me and everyone else nervous. But I am happy that you love me, despite my bad characteristics that I never hide. And I want to tell you that I love you so much that my longing not only cannot be concealed, but rather grows larger day by day and sometimes I ask myself where it is leading, if there is not a change in our situation.

Chapter 34: Illegal

In a letter dated February 21, 1939, Steffi wrote that Karl wanted to go to France "illegal" with five other people from his orchestra, including two women. However,

> In the German border town Berg, in Pfalz, the customs worker described the horrible consequences of being sent back by the French authorities, [so] that he became fearful and on the same evening, with the last of his money, rode back to Stgt. and woke me from my sleep.

Steffi had just gotten to bed at 2:30 a.m. when Karl arrived.

> I put Karl, who had not slept in 3 days, to sleep in my bed (7:30), where he remained until the afternoon; in the meantime I went to do exercises and arranged lunch and the possibility to spend the night in Stuttgart and train ticket at the Jewish charity, as well as a permit to go as far as Munich.

In the same letter, Steffi wrote that he was going to Vienna the next day and was not certain if he should take along all of his luggage.

Hede's letter to Liese [February 21, 1939] announced that she and Hans had gotten their visa on the 16th. Grete had to wait until March 10th because there would not be any quota available any earlier. Hede wrote that she did not need to write about the procedure at the Consulate because Liese had experienced the exact same thing "...and things have not changed." Hede suggested that Liese obtain a bank statement from Rabbi Simon's widow, though she thought that "...Leeb's affidavit is certainly in order and will, in my opinion, suffice."

Hede and Hans were hoping to leave from Le Havre on the 8th or the 15th of March.

> Tomorrow is the search from the Jewish Community Center for the travel allowance and I hope to get something. Herr Goldenberg is in love with you and we are getting 400 DM. Fine! I thank you very much for your conquest. You should send him a picture, so write a few lines to our parents and then they will send the picture from here and I hope to get something.

At the end of the letter, Goldenberg sent Liese "...warm greetings with best wishes for your health." Hede asked Liese if she had gotten in touch with the German Consulate. "One has to do that every three months, otherwise you lose your citizenship."

Steffi wrote to Hans Wendel at the Palestine Council, Berlin, to inform them that five of the *Chaverim* had already left for England and that he was awaiting the permit in order to depart. "...I ask you if you can expedite my departure to England because I am the last of the Stuttgart *Chaverim* that is being supported by my homeland community and when my mother leaves, I will have no chance to survive." At this time, Steffi gave his address in Stuttgart: Azenbergstrasse 51, and in Vienna: Grünentorgasse 17/14, which was the apartment of Käthe Neumann, his mother's friend.

Among the treasures in the straw suitcase was a newspaper clipping, which was soliciting young men to sign up for a transit stay in England:



Transitaufenthalt in England

Gesunde männliche Personen vom vollendeten 18. bis 35. Lebensjahr, in besonderen Ausnahmsfällen bis zum 45. Lebensjahr, die keinerlei andere Unterbringungsmöglichkeit haben, können um einen Transitaufenthalt in England nachsuchen, falls sie nachweisen:

1. daß ihre Ausreise dringend ist,

2. daß ihre Weiterreise von England nach Übersee oder Palästina gesichert erscheint und diese nicht vor 3 Monaten möglich ist, aber nach 9 Monaten unbedingt erfolgen kann.

Diese Personen werden für die Zeit ihres Aufenthaltes in einem Lager untergebracht und einer Umschulung zugeführt. Da die Anzahl der für dieses Zwischenlager in Aussicht genommenen Personen beschränkt ist, kommen nur Anwärter in Frage, die den oben angeführten Bedingungen unbedingt entsprechen.

Personen, die den erwähnten Voraussetzungen entsprechen und die Aufnahme in das Transitlager anstreben, wollen dies schriftlich unter genauer Angabe von Name, derzeitige Adresse, Geburtsdaten, Staatszugehörigkeit, Beruf und Einreisemöglichkeit in ein Überseeland der Auswanderungsabteilung der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde, Wien 1., Seitenstettengasse 2, Zimmer 27, wenn sie die Einreisemöglichkeit nach Palästina haben, dem Palästinaamt, Wien 1., Marc-Aurel-Straße Nr. 5, mit der speziellen Bezeichnung „Transitlager" per Post bekanntgeben. Persönliche Vorsprachen sind zwecklos.

TRANSIT STAY IN ENGLAND

Healthy men from age 18 to 35, in exceptional cases until 45 years old, who have no other possibilities, can have a transit stay in England, if they fulfill the named conditions and can prove:

1. that their emigration is urgent,

2. that their continuing journey from England overseas or to Palestine can be documented and that this is not possible in 3 months, but will absolutely take place after 9 months.

These people will be put up in a camp during the time of their stay and will take part in re-education. Since the number of people taken is limited, only candidates who qualify for the above named conditions will be considered. Persons who can fulfill the mentioned requirements and who want to go to the transit camp should mail their exact name, current address, citizenship, profession, and emigration possibilities overseas to the Emigration Division of the Jewish Community Center, Vienna 1., Seitenstettengasse 2, Room 27, if they have the possibility to emigrate to Palestine, to the Palestine Office, Vienna I., Marc-Aurel-Strasse Nr. 5, with special marking '*Transitlager*'. Personal interviews are useless.

Werner Stern, who was a *Hachsharah* friend of Steffi's, was handing out Agricultural Permits to England. Steffi, realizing that his options for getting out were either stagnating or taking too long, decided to take the permit. By doing this, he hoped that it would provide him a means of leaving soon. On February 22, 1939, Werner wrote a postcard in which he told Steffi:

> Your notification is once again urgently made even though it has not yet arrived at the Home Office. So you can count on it being valid approximately 4 weeks. If you think that you can stay in Vienna (at least) that long, then I have nothing

against you going, but I beg of you that you send your Viennese address to Erich in Berlin....

The *Oberrat* of the Religious Community in Württemberg sent Steffi a letter on February 22, 1939, which said:

> You have asked us to manage your emigration opportunity and asked for a vacation of 2 days. We permit you to take this vacation as of right now until Sunday the 26.2. included. We expect to see you promptly on Monday the 27.2 for instruction. We request that you let us know of your willingness to do this by signing the carbon copy for the School division of the Reichs Representative.
>
> Cohn.

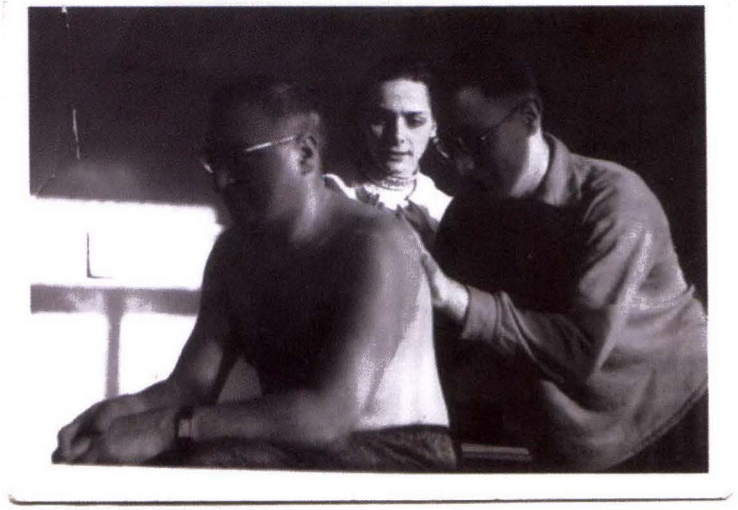


Photo taken February 23, 1939
(Note how much weight Steffi had gained at Dachau)

In Tante Stephy's letter to Liese [February 25, 1939], sent with the return address: Consultant Dr. Hugo Strauss, Langegasse 63, she wrote that Steffi had been together with all of them and they drank to Liese's health "...and with the wish that we will all be together in the USA. I am convinced that it will happen soon and it will only depend on all of you to get us an affid." She also encouraged Liese to wait more patiently and be happy. "The time passes quickly and one should use every opportunity to establish good connections." As to Hede and Hans' departure, Tante Stephy wrote: "We have so much to do that we do not have much time left to be sad about the children's departure, so that we can hardly think about it."

Steffi added on while he was visiting Liese's parents and did his utmost to encourage her:

> If I can stand it until June? Yes, what would be if I were still there, [in Dachau] as are others, then should I have not said I cannot stand it anymore? Liese, you are a dear, smart, capable girl, you will stand it, now Hede and Hans will soon be there and they will bring you my greetings and intentions. Unfortunately I have to make an English detour, but if I leave from here, I will send you the telegram I wrote about and perhaps you can arrange that my documents and affidavits get to L'don as quickly as possible because I am fearful that I will not be able to arrange things there as well as here. 1.) *Haver* 2.) not English (speaker) 3.) emigrant.

In conclusion, he wrote that she should stop upsetting her "...parents, or, better yet, nothing more about your worries about me, —they are superfluous." The departure for the transit camp in Richborough, England, was to take place at the end of March.

According to Sophie's addition to the letter [February 25, 1939], letters took one month to arrive because there was no longer air mail. Hugo wrote about the move out of their apartment on Alseggerstrasse:

> In the morning the moving van will come, or, actually both, and then we will vacate the place where you both spent your youth. The departure from certain people was actually very touching, they were even crying. If one has spent 25 years in the same building and shared joy and sorrow with them, the separation comes with difficulty. There were fine people amongst them, such as Greisler, and above all, the tailor Gas, from whom I still had two suits fixed, i.e., hems put in.

The Grünwalds wanted to move in with them, but Hugo said that they had behaved so badly that they would not take them. In conclusion, he wrote that everything was packed and: "...starting tomorrow a new life will begin. Steffi was very dear to us, I am putting all my hopes into you both."

Steffi's letter to Liese of February 26, 1939, included a schedule of the departing ships, which showed her when he would actually be able to mail letters to her and how long the trip would take He was writing on the train between Vienna and Stuttgart, on the leg of the journey that was Augsburg to Stuttgart.

> SS "Queen Mary"
> via Cherbourg[128]
>
> (*Kurrent*) Augsburg-Stgt, 26. II. 39.
>
> Dearest!
>
> The train is so wobbly that I can hardly write; you certainly see that. But I have now read your dear 23 letters to your parents and the one to my mother and from them have found you to be fabulous, so I wanted to tell you right away. For in them I see how much you love me, how concerned you are about me and what I have in you (rather, unfortunately, will still have). Many of your letters are filled with worry about my remaining true to you and in your second to the last letter from 30. I., you write something about "Steffi getting away from you." You really do not think that, but that you are concerned about this shows me a certain lack of trust. How I would love to free you of this worry; too bad that you do not know me well. It is not my style to be childishly angry, but rather on the contrary, I see in it that you have all sorts of things to ponder, whereas I am blinded by love and completely and totally trust you, for I can only presume the good and only the best in the one I love. Certainly I could be more disappointed and then, as a consequence, could have worse blows. How dumb is this English delay, but nothing could change my love for you, I will stay true to you, not because of the promise, not because of the engagement, but rather because I only

[128] As mentioned earlier, most letters to and from Europe had the name of the ship on which they were carried as well as their port of departure.

want you, [I] only want my Liese. I will repeat this theme like a broken record, but is it not the right thing. Always the same and always new and always beautiful. I will withstand it, just as I now wrote you from Vienna, just as I asked Hede to calm you down. Hede is a dear, capable young woman, quiet and wise. [It is] fine that they can both leave. Too bad that they can no longer be helpful to Mama. Your father also helped my mother so that she hopefully will have her papers in order, it is very lucky that she already has the permit because once again it is more difficult to be over 45 [years old], hopefully she will still get it and will soon get the visa. I will not smear anymore because the pen also does not want to continue.

Ship departure		
March	Length of crossing	Stuttgart 27. II. 1939.
1. Paris	7	(8. III. N.Y.)
4. Queen Mary	5	
8. Ile de France	6	
10. Hansa	7	
15. Europa	5	
17. Deutschland	7	
18. Queen Mary	5	
23. Manhattan	7	
24. Hamburg	7	
25. Normandie	5	
April		
1. Europa	5	11. II.
8. Bremen	5	

Dearest Lieschen! So that you know when you should go to get one of these ships, actually Hehas are coming with one of the first ones. It is only so well organized here, main p.o. has more and you can get a copy of the list. The letter has to be there by 10 a.m. Today I got your dear letters from February 11th and the little Valentine's day letter. I am happy that you write so much, that you finally can see from my writing that your worries are lifted. Awful, this correspondence by ship, in the meantime, I already know about your experiences because I read your letters and you made the effort to write the same thing to me in English. Please, dear Liese, write in English if you feel like it and even with the typewriter, just as you wish. Really, I am so happy with every line and from your letters to your parents I see the same naturalness and sincerity written on the typewriter. So just as you wish, if you are near the typewriter, then type, if you have to be quiet, by hand, if you want to write in English, if you are in a rush, then German. Do not write all night. Of all your suffering I am most upset about your back. From what do you have back pain and ask what kind of condition it is. Poor darling! What you are going through for me, but none of it has helped yet and, in a way, the long time between letters is good, otherwise I would be

disappointed more often because, according to your letters, I should have been gone a long time ago. It is true that I got my passport and certificate in Vienna, which is good until 23. III., and that I signed up for the Richborough Transit Camp and still hope to get the *Haver*-permit beforehand since I would feel myself freer in England. I do not know what is happening with your (the one you obtained) permit, it should already be here. Yes, these things are taking frightfully long, good that I was not in Vienna on the 10. XI., otherwise I would have left with a perfect emigration and you see how long it takes and unfortunately this is exactly how many Viennese are still waiting. Liese, I am going to end this letter so that I can mail it on time because last week I neglected you a bit because of my Vie.[nna] trip, still, I asked Hede to ask you for forgiveness for that—already in person. Unfortunately I still have to do work for school today, I would rather be writing you about my love and about the enthusiasm with which I reciprocate yours, which you expressed so nicely in your writing from 11. and 14. II., actually, as I already said, especially for your concern (with which you unfortunately burden your parents too much) about me during my absence. My dear, sweet precious, there is also no doubt about our love, I am so very happy to have your confirmation concerning that. Liese, I am not like every Fritz or whatever his name is, who would let Trude or Billy sit there, for my love and you (it is superfluous to say because you are my whole love) are so precious and Liese, I believe that you know it well, that I am not flirting with you, but rather that I, plain and simply said—love you. Only you and I know how; sometimes I am peculiar in this regard because I am always paying attention.... You will surely know this, stay as you are, I love you so much, so much. That would again be the key word, in order to complain to you, but since I was in Vienna and saw that I have 3 things in the offing, I am calmer and more patient. Now this is the most important for you: I found your people to be unchanged, your father could walk without a cane, also my Mama looks relatively good, hopefully she will just get out soon because she can only stay at Käthe's as long as the old woman is still alive and at Tante Rosa's there prevails a hopeless mood, Fritz has to be out by June, Mary now wants to leave him, naturally, because the financial advantages are gone and one can just hope that Mama's thing works as quickly as possible. We will fetch her, as well as your parents soon, your father's office is doing prima, he himself says that he is one of the busiest, but he is also of the opinion that all of them, last but not least, have to try to get out because you are out now. I have your affid. with me and naturally read it, Hede gave me the advice that in case it is superfluous that I give it up and then you can work for getting your parents [one] without any burden. I have to leave now because the Angels are going to sleep and I will carry this letter to the train station from where I will say goodbye to 3 *Chaverim*. I remain always in

Love
Your Steffi.

Liese wrote [February 26, 1939] that she had spoken with Mrs. Simon, the widow of Rabbi Abram Simon, and to her son, Mr. David Simon. She wrote that Dr. Simon's son would take over the responsibility of the affidavit and that they would wire the Consulate that everything was in order. She also thought that if the American Consulate would explain to the people in Vienna that the affidavit was sufficient, everything would be fine. Then, for some reason, Liese went on a

little tirade about how the whole *Mispoche*,[129] including Hede and Hans, were irresponsible in not keeping Steffi adequately informed about the status of his situation and that four weeks after the fact, Steffi had to hear about everything through Liese. "I don't mind," she said,

> if Tante Else writes that I should send you regards from them, that is so unimportant and could be done when you are already here. I am for being involved and taking care of all YOUR personal things all by yourself. Perhaps (this is my excuse for the people in Vienna) I see things from a different perspective, but your letters give me the impression that you are completely uninformed. I am supposedly informed for "show" (and actually the opposite happens) not about the 10th, the letters from home come irregularly and I do not even know as of today, the 26th, if HeHa are on their way.

Then she apologized for her mixture of English and German. "My German is already influenced a lot by English and it seems that sometimes I cannot even think of the word in German." She said she forgot to ask her mother to send an "INEXPENSIVE" rain cape with Steffi when he came,

> but that is the least of my troubles. I wish you would write me that you are the proud owner of a passport and, if possible an Eng. and Am. visa, that is much more important to me than all the rags. I beg of you to not let a day pass, even if it means leaving without a shirt. Because the condition of agitation and longing is becoming more and more unbearable for both of us. And if I have written in my last letters that I will be happy when HeHa are here, (they are probably swimming right now and are seasick), that does not change the fact that there is no one in this world who could replace Steffi (your dear mother will surely forgive me for this thievery).

Liese encouraged Steffi to leave as quickly as possible and told him to learn as much English as he possibly could in England: "And the *Chaverim* will surely at least be interested in learning English, which is the most important thing here." The *Chaverim* with whom Steffi lived in Stuttgart were probably thinking and hoping that he would also emigrate to Palestine. In many of Liese's letters she expressed concern that Steffi would go there rather than come to America.

She also thanked him for sending pictures of himself.

> At first glance I had hoped that you did it like my colleagues, that is, when they meet a pretty girl they ask us our experienced judgment. And to close, when I knew who took the pictures, it reminded me of being a spectator at my last Stgt. visit [when Steffi was arrested]. Actually I had told myself never to discuss this with you for it was the worst experience of my life and sets me back with shivers every time I think of it. I cannot remember such a reaction to an event and I first recovered a bit on the ship. That is, I unfortunately re-gained the 4 kilos I had lost during that week, thanks to the fact that I mostly lay in bed and my high temperature went away, thank God (I boarded the ship with fever).

Then Liese delved more deeply into her feelings:

> I would like to write you something that I have probably never told you, (do not be angry, please!). I wanted to do something I had always done as a child, if I was upset, and that would always shock my parents. Namely, run away.

[129] A Yiddish word of Hebrew origin, meaning the entire family.

> Somewhere, into the darkness, where I could once again find my thoughts and then return with shame. The only reason I do not do this is that I would have been ashamed. I believe that you were not as out of control as a child to even think of such a thing.... I want to tell you that I only remember one incident that I actually did do it, when I went as far as the Türkenschanz Park and then ran back; since then I have learned to control myself.

Liese also wrote about her meeting with Mrs. Simon at Friday night services. "I already wrote you that I have had the best experiences with all the people I have met here."

Liese wrote that she was suffering qualitatively more than Steffi.

> But each one of your dear, dear letters means so much to me, you know that as well as I. And that you mean everything to me, life, luck, love, heaven, I want to tell you in closing because it comes from my heart. You are far away from me and yet so close; but still I only have an approximate idea and no knowledge of your feelings, but rather only nice memories of you.

Chapter 35: Leaving Without a Shirt

The following document was sent to Steffi on February 27, 1939:

Jewish Control Post
Stuttgart N. 27.II. 1939.
Gartenstr. 15. II.
Telephone 63734

As ordered by the Secret State Police [Gestapo], State Police Post Stuttgart, we must inform you of the following:

1. It is confirmed that individual persons who were formerly in protective custody are obligated to report every week. The Secret State Police strongly advises that if this is not done—strong measures can be expected.

2. Obligatory notification of change of address must be given to the Police Precinct. If the time of notification must be changed because of work, then a proposal should be turned in.

3. In case of temporary exemption of the obligation to register due to illness or travels which cannot be delayed, you should proceed as follows:

a) If it is certain that time to report must be missed because of illness, you must immediately—that is, not wait until the last minute—notify us and have a note from the doctor. As soon as the doctor has found you well, you must rearrange another time for reporting.

b) For urgent departures, especially in cases of emigration preparation, a petition must be turned in stating the reasons, the goal, and duration of the trip. This petition must be turned in 2 workdays before the intended day of departure.

4. At the notification of withdrawal, which must take place personally in Room 74 in the State Police Station in Stuttgart, the passport with visa placed next to the certificate of discharge from protective custody must be brought. You must drop off the change of address certificate at the police station. We ask that you stop by here after all this has been taken care of.

Complete notification to the Secret State Police, as stated above, as ordered by the Stuttgart State Police Post should be turned into our office (see above); you must enclose the following things: name, date of birth, place of birth, address, responsible Police Station, date of summons and—time. In order to avoid questions and to simplify the regulations, we are not prepared to answer questions on the telephone.

We urgently request that you follow these instructions as closely as possible.

Jewish Central Post
Karl Adler

Bertha sent Liese some candies with Hede and Hans and wrote: "Though it is only candies, still I hope I have made you a little happy. Your sister, who stood by me like a daughter some of the time, will tell you everything else about your loved ones."

Bertha wrote Steffi [February 27, 1939] telling him that forms should not be folded! And that his notification arrived and he had the possibility to go through the transit camp in England. In addition, she wrote that he should take care of the travel documents as quickly as possible. "For the further emigration to the USA (so they write) you should send in duplicate the completed driver's license and proof of where you live." Then she asked him to sign two powers-of-attorney, one for her and one for Karl, "...perhaps he can save me a trip to Prinz Eugenstrasse."

On February 28, 1939, Hede wrote Liese saying that there was no more room on the Roosevelt, so they were going to be leaving on March 15 with the SS Europa from Cherbourg. On the way, they would visit Onkel Alfred in Chur and Onkel Emil in Zurich and then go on to Paris. "Somehow we will manage." She ended by saying: "It is a completely unfamiliar feeling, having to leave, but we hope to have everyone together soon."

In Steffi's letter dated March 3, 1939, he wrote that since his visit to Vienna he was holding his head high because there were four possibilities: (1) The *Chaverim*, (2) the transit camp, (3) the "England thing", and (4) the affidavits. He suggested that Liese use the other affidavit for her parents because the one he was able to obtain from Mr. Leeb was in order. He reproached Liese a bit by saying that the $20 she spent on "the England thing" was "a lot of money." He also said:

> The time is passing and our "when" will hopefully soon be solved. My poems are certainly written only for you and also my letters, why did you leave them in Vienna and your mother burned them as a precaution, or were these only my last November letters?

Steffi said he was hoping to get his mother out of Nazi Germany and into England

> ...and then I would like to give not just her, but also you a life filled with peace. That should happen soon because of our good saving and in some sort of occupation where we can earn money. Because my mother is really an especially good woman. Every mother loves her child and every mother loves her child the most in her own way. But such a selfless person, without any consideration for herself, who sacrificed everything for me and was always ready every time, even in the most difficult times, there Mama was. Aside from that, her whole life long she always worked for me despite the most difficult acts of fate and as she faced her big financial error, her most difficult material worries, and at the same time with pains in her body, was there for me. I am very happy that she likes you so much because she would surely only give me away to someone whom she knows loves me, like you. And I love you, only you, and am looking forward to seeing you again.

Hans wrote from Chur [March 3, 1939] telling Liese that he could not understand "...about what you will be worrying now that we are no longer [in Vienna] and your bridegroom is no longer in... [Dachau]." Onkel Alfred added on that Onkel Emil also had his American visa and would be traveling in March.

Bertha wrote [March 3, 1939]:

> Tante Gisi got her permit approved by telegraph and would be the only one who would have time to help, but she is not very helpful and only concerns herself

with her money. And what can one ask of Karl, you already know. Tante Rosa has gone a bit crazy and concerns herself only with "*Ältlein.*" So perhaps I will be able to take care of everything myself and at the same time take care of your things.

Bertha finally got her passport and wrote Mrs. Mason about that. They were all keeping their fingers crossed that her permit would then be changed to a visa.

Steffi wrote [March 3, 1939] that Liese should not be worrying about her parents; ...having lots of work and having you in safety helps both of them throughout this separation and actually, we are all hoping to be together. When will lady luck be shining on us?" As to the reproaches about not having time to write to Tante Else, Steffi suggested that Liese take a half a page of air mail paper and write a separate note to Tante Else when she wrote to her parents, telling her that she has to "steal" time to write and that Tante Else knows everything about Liese from the letters to her parents. Liese should also ask Tante Else to write to her, "...even if the answer does not always come on time." That way, everyone would be satisfied, Steffi thought.

Then he wrote the German words of the poem Liese liked so much:

Du meine Seele, Du mein Herz,
Du meine Wonn', O Du mein Schmerz,
Du meine Welt, in der ich lebe,
Mein Himmel Du, darin ich schwebe,
O Du mein Grab, in das hinab
Ich ewig meinen Kummer gab!
Du bist die Ruh, Du bist der Frieden,
Du bist der Himmel, mir beschieden.
Dass Du mich liebst, macht mich mir wert,
Dein Blick hat mich vor mir verklärt,
Du hebst mich liebend über mich,
Mein guter Geist, mein bessres Ich!
[*Schumann Lied*, poem by Rückert].[130]

Steffi added that he could not sing anymore because he ruined his voice "there" [Dachau].

Steffi said that it did not matter to him that Liese did not get her diploma and that he himself was only "...studying now for the practicality and material things; after all, if I could have chosen what to study, then I would have chosen medicine because anatomy lessons interest me."

[130] You my soul, you my heart, you my bliss, O you my pain, you my world in which I live, my heaven you, to which I float, O you my grave, into which my grief forever I've consigned. You are repose, you are peace, you are bestowed on me from Heaven. Your love for me gives me my worth, your eyes transfigure me in mine, lovingly you raise me above myself, my good spirit, my better self!

Then Steffi wrote a poem in English:

My beloved and dearest sweetheart thou,
again I try a poem now
to show you how I think of you
and that my love is always true.

Indeed we got some heavy blows,
but, as for me, my great love grows,
therefore I won't complain my fate,
for we come together at any rate.

Confide in me like I in you
and hope the days becoming few,
which cruelly still separate
a loving pair, that wants to mate.

I am indebted to you for your pain,
which will be rewarded by love in main
and you shall be for all my life:
my only sweetest beloved wife.

He added the following about his uncle: "Karl, who actually came back when a part of the chorus went over (Fr.[ance]), was once again attempting to leave." Steffi was also hoping that his mother was well enough to pass the physical examination.

Chapter 36: Ingraham Street

As of March 5, 1939, Liese had a new address: c/o Mrs. Edna Ellis Hilton, 1224 Ingraham Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.



1224 Ingraham Street, N.W.

She wrote Steffi that she really could afford neither the time nor the money to go to New York to meet Hede and Hans (Pintchis, as she called them). But, she said:

> ...I will absolutely dead-certain come to N York on the most beautiful day of my life, namely for your arrival and I am already looking forward to it and painted the scene 100 times how I will stand on the pier and will see the ship coming that will bring you to me. But unfortunately, for the moment these are dreams, which have to be fulfilled soon. Well, soon is within reach because May is probably the best possible date. But the time will pass quickly for you because somehow you will get over to England and since that is the most important thing for me at the moment and the fulfillment of this wish will wait and will be a consolation for everything else. Life as it is now, with its ups and downs, even though things are going well for me, seem anything but worthwhile living, and I do not need to assure you that I am not lacking a thing in my day-to-day life except perhaps a little money, and my longing for you increases every day.

Liese also wrote about Dr. Ransom, who had just returned from Florida with a car filled with grapefruit, oranges, and coconuts. She wrote that his behavior towards her is "...fabulous and he is a very precious man. I find a bit of a father substitute in him, just as Mrs. Hilton is there in a motherly way. Even though I am old enough to be independent, this is what helps when you are lonely."

Liese wondered if Steffi was surprised about her spending so much time in Washington and then proceeded to inform him that she had spent the last month looking for a job in the District. The reason was that Dr. Ransom was sick and could not begin the nursing home he was planning, but would rather continue his own private practice. Liese could have continued as before, doing housework and helping with the babies on Saturdays, but Dr. Ransom did not want her to continue to stay as a domestic because he felt she was over-qualified. Liese applied for many jobs, mostly as governess and housework, with cooking. Mrs. Hilton was helpful and told her: *"No, I don't want you to be a slave in anybody's kitchen."* Then Liese described how she ran around for two days in search of a job and "...if it had not been such a serious thing, looking for a job, it would have been, as they say here, '*loads and loads of fun.*'" She looked in employment offices, went to all the department stores, libraries, art galleries (for Hans), medical buildings ("that is where all the doctors have their offices; there I looked for a name that I liked, but ended up at the wrong one, but Dr. Lyons gave me a list of doctors, who all asked for *laboratory,* x-ray or *MASSAGE!!*)."

She also went to travel bureaus and schools. Then, her friend Frances Newman called to tell her that her best friend had opened a soda-bar on Connecticut Avenue and was looking for someone to work as a bookkeeper. The friend hired Liese as a waitress, which Liese determined was much better than working as a domestic, working for "only" eight hours a day, six days a week, and she would get paid $16.50 per week plus meals. Mrs. Hilton suggested that Liese live with her since she [Liese] was lonely, thereby saving $16 to $20 a month and Liese would be able to save everything she earned, including tips. Then she asked for forgiveness for not having told Steffi (or her parents) sooner, but she felt that everyone had so many worries and did not want to burden anyone unnecessarily with her problems. Dr. Ransom did not "throw her out," on the contrary, he treated her very nicely. But it became obvious to Liese that he did not want to have any more obligations to her, so it was time to move on with the next phase of her new life in America.

In the meantime, Bertha wrote to Steffi [March 5, 1939], who was still in Stuttgart, and asked him when he would be coming to Vienna. Käthe Neumann had tentatively found someone else to care for her mother, which meant that they would no longer need Bertha's help. Furthermore, Bertha was in the throes of preparing for her own departure for England and needed time to attend to all the bureaucratic things. "I am so afraid I will not get a visa and will have to stay here," she wrote. She also wondered why Steffi was still staying in Stuttgart, considering that it really made no sense for him to continue his training there. Karl was still in Vienna and wanted to help Steffi by turning in some documents for him, but he arrived at the office too late. Bertha wrote that she would have to do it on Monday. Tante Rosa called Bertha to tell her that Karl was going to leave that night and needed RM 50. "I will not give it to him," Bertha said. "He has already gotten enough, and actually Tante Rosa has more money today than I, but she complains better."

The next day Bertha wrote Steffi that Karl left the previous day "...by the same route, hopefully this time it will work." Tante Gisi was too busy to be of any help to Bertha and "...is always afraid that one wants to get money out of her." Then Bertha wrote that Liese should not be angry with her for not having written. "I believe I have reassured her of my love and trust. I have embraced her in every way as a dear daughter."

Liese wrote to her parents, Tante Stephy, and Steffi's mother, whom she called Steffimama, [March 8, 1939] that her feet already hurt in anticipation of standing for eight hours a day at the new job she would be starting the following week. The boss was a very rich woman, Mrs. Hutchinson, and the main thing for Liese was that she would have time to take some courses. Not only that, she would be living in a "gorgeous" room with a balcony and a garden and would only need to spend money on travel. Furthermore, she said, she would be able to save her clothes because she would be wearing a uniform. Liese was looking forward to the arrival of Hede and

Hans, hoping that Hede would be able to solve her problems easily, and also wrote that she wanted them both to spend a week in Washington so that Hans could look "...around right away for what possibilities there are here for utilizing his knowledge of culture." Liese said that there would be more opportunities in Washington since it was the center of art and literature.

She asked whether her mother cried a lot when Hede left. "Hopefully she has calmed down, otherwise the ocean will rise and the poor *Pintschis*[131] will have a stormy crossing."

The news she had from Mr. Guthman, the lawyer, was that Steffi could go to England if someone would vouch for his living expenses there and if he had a ticket. And she was sending the statement "...which Steffimama, or someone else who is smart, will go to HIAS (be careful that the transit camp thing is not influenced by it." A letter of explanation should say that Steffi needed to leave and must therefore wait in England until he was called for the examination.

In a registered letter dated March 8, 1939, Liese wrote a statement in which she said that she would immediately provide $200 (by depositing it in the National Metropolitan Bank in Washington, D.C.) to Dr. Stephan Schifferes and the sum of $35 each month "...in order to make it possible for him to stay in England temporarily until he gets his permanent visa from the American Consul in Vienna." Steffi's quota number was due to come up before June 1939 (the end of the quota year) and he had registered in May 1938. By giving Steffi this amount of money, Liese was assuring that he would not "...become a charge to any English county, city, or community." The letter was signed by a Notary Public.

Liese also wrote:

> You know how much I am longing for you and love you, but today I must say that I am beginning to not like writing to you so much because every letter makes me nervous and more impatient and I would have so much to tell you that I hardly know where to start with everything that should be said, aside from that, I only always have to say, actually just like you, that I once again do not have anything to say.

Bertha [March 8, 1939] again expressed concern, not about the examination, but by the fact that people were saying that she would be taken only if she were under 45 years of age. "I am already very nervous." Bertha still had not heard from Karl. "If he continues to be so lazy, he will not get far." She also wrote that Steffi was absolutely right about Tante Gisi—she was going to go with Bertha to the doctor. "How well you know people!" It seemed that my father was able to predict when his aunt would make herself available to spend time with her sister-in-law, Bertha. Apparently going to the doctor was one such occasion.

On March 13, 1939, Pepi sent Liese a postcard from Newark, New Jersey, that had at the top of it: "One year A.H. in Vienna" [Adolf Hitler]. Hans had written them that they were leaving Vienna on the 28th and traveling via Chur, Zurich, Paris, and Cherbourg on the 15th on the SS Europa.

[131] Liese's nickname for Hede and Hans.

CHAPTER 37: INSTRUCTIONS

At the beginning of March, The Emigration Division of the Jewish Community Center in Vienna sent Steffi instructions for:

> ...the selection of people for a transit camp in England. In Richborough (Kent) a Transit Camp will be established for which men from the ages of 18–35, and exceptionally from 36–45 years, whose further emigration to a country other than England no longer than nine months and whose immediate accommodation in the transit camps is urgent.
>
> Prerequisite for the entrance into the transit camp, in which the further emigration should be prepared mainly through manual labor, personal fitness, human qualifications and condition of personal health.
>
> Not taken into consideration:
>
> a) People who have other living possibilities outside of Germany, whether it be through relatives or acquaintances, or through accommodations in other instructional program in other countries (e.g., *Hascharah* abroad).
>
> b) People who absolutely could emigrate to another country within 3 months.
>
> The decision for the choice will be made according to the urgency with regard to the whole personal and known circumstances. The urgency is the primary consideration.
>
> Necessities are:
>
> 3 Photos,
>
> Photocopies, such as documents for the possibility of further travel, within 9 months.
>
> Personal documents (birth certificate, certificate of nationality, passport, etc.) Documentation of professional training and other qualification.
>
> Copy of voucher of personal character, such as statement by references. The written orders by the directorate of the camp have to be observed.
>
> The rules of the commander must be obeyed. In case of indictable offenses, one must expect to remain in the camp and in addition, continuing of the journey would become impossible. People who want to keep kosher must notify us in the questionnaire.
>
> Aside from personal luggage, things for emigration should include:
>
> 1 bedspread, 3 blankets, 4 sheets, 2 pillows, 4 pillow cases, 4 towels, work clothes, 1 rain coat, personal silverware.

It was good for Liese to be reminded that other Viennese refugees in other parts of the world were also having difficulties. Edith Skall, the daughter of the Strauss' dear friend who had recently died in Vienna, wrote from Sao Paulo, Brazil:

> I do not know if I will ever be finished with it—with Vienna + separation from my parents + Papa's death + my seemingly purposeless life battle + the mentality of the people here + my sensitive health, still when I think about it coolly, I think

> not.... If God is good to me, then I will take the reward, Mutti will come soon and then my life will have a face to it and also a purpose.

And Liese's friend Trude Willheim wrote about her friend Fritz who was going to India and would hopefully be able to find a position there. She was hoping to go there to be with him, but she knew that her parents would not be able to tolerate the climate in India and also thought it would be impossible to go there with a German passport. Trude also wrote that they had one more Tante [aunt] in Vienna "...and the thing is taken care of. [That is, if they could only get her out, then everyone would be taken care of. But, she added...] We have little hope of being able to find something for her. We shall see." How many times was this story repeated?

On March 13, 1939, Steffi received a letter from the *Palästina Amt* [Palestine Board] in Berlin, informing him that his permit had been forwarded to Vienna and he could take care of everything there. He was asked to send them his passport so that the visa could be issued through the British Passport Control Office. "It is necessary that you send us your passport so that your departure for England will not be delayed."

On the same day Steffi sent Liese a telegram at Dr. Ransom's telling her that he had gotten his permit from the Palestine office. In his letter dated March 14, 1939, he wrote about all the running around he had to do in Vienna in order to take care of bureaucratic matters. He had to go to the Hotel Metropole, where the Gestapo was, to the police at Rossauerlände for the documents for the departure, as well as the certification that he did not owe taxes, to Prinz Eugenstrasse for the proof of residency and certificate of good conduct.

"Here things are finally coming to an end," he wrote.

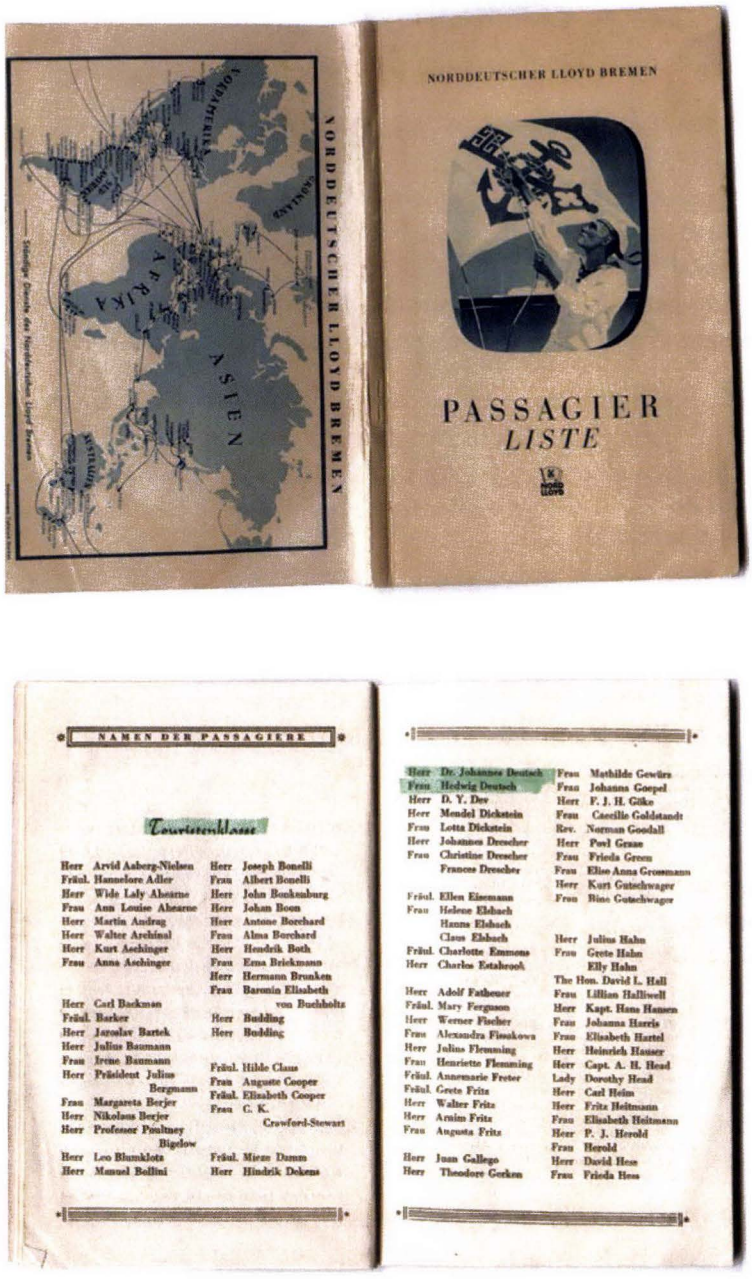
> I mean, for example, the Allinas, that is why I am so terribly anxious if I have to leave Mama alone, for she can only stay at the Neumann's, where they are very nice to her, as long as the old woman is still living, and she is already 80.

Steffi said he would look around for things for Mama in England, "...but the conditions for leaving and entering are becoming increasingly difficult." He wrote that Liese's parents seemed to be doing very well, despite the fact that both of their children were gone, that they were not as depressed as she might think because they both had a lot to do, especially Liese's father with his consulting "business."

> But both of them realize the senselessness of living here and they will certainly get affidavits since Hede and you are such competent and dear children. Your father, despite his sickness, and in his inimitable funny manner, has decided that he will be your caretaker when he comes over.

And the weekly reporting to the Gestapo, which was implemented upon Steffi's release from "protective custody" [Dachau], continued. It had such an effect on Steffi that he said he could not even be inspired to write poems or take the time to write Liese about how much he loved her. But he did write that he wanted to ask Liese's father if he could include Steffi's skis and music things in the shipment to the United States, since Steffi was only allowed to take a suitcase to England.

On March 15, 1939, Hede and Hans left Europe on the SS Europa, which sailed from Cherbourg.



Dr. Johannes Deutsch and Hedwig Deutsch listed as passengers

The worries continued in Vienna. Steffi wrote Liese upon his arrival [March 16, 1939] to say that his mother was terribly nervous

> ...because she is afraid that the visa will not come, despite the permit, for that reason she cannot even write to you. Even though I am again at her place, but angry she is not. She just has a terrible fear that she will have to stay here without me. And I have the same nervousness, the same fear, but not about me, but rather only about her, for I would really have to leave her here in her misery.

In that same letter, Steffi wrote that it was snowing all the time. "The snow is already high and the bus to Salmansdorf is not running, but for other reasons." This was a cryptic reference to the times.

Liese had suggested to Steffi that he change [Americanize] the spelling of his last name to SHIFFERS, to which Steffi replied: "Must I really give up a C and E? I am even ready for this, my dear, dear Liese." In the meantime, the Nazis were also changing street names in Vienna, thereby making them more "German."

A flurry of correspondence from the various Jewish Agencies arrived, including one from the German Jewish Aid Committee (Council for German Jewry) housed in Woburn House in London. It informed Steffi that he would have to show the enclosed pink ticket and his valid passport upon his arrival in England. "The pink ticket must be guarded very carefully and not be lost, otherwise you will have difficulties when you land. By showing your passport at your arrival in the port, you will have to turn in your pink ticket." Then, in capital letters and underlined: "THIS LETTER MUST BE KEPT and upon your arrival in London you must immediately go to the REGISTRATION with it."

J. S. Guthman, whose law offices were at 1524 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., sent Steffi a letter at Tante Rosa's house, informing him that "... an additional affidavit of support together with corroborative documents executed in your behalf were forwarded to the American Consul at Vienna under date of March 13th." Liese was truly amazing, working two jobs, running around for everyone in search of affidavits.

The *Reich* Protection of Jews in Germany, Berlin-Charlottenberg 2 - Kantstrasse 158, School Division, sent Steffi [March 23, 1939] a letter and the certification, in German, of his participation in the sport course in Stuttgart. Apparently Steffi also requested the command tables[132] in Hebrew and English, which they were unable to send, but told him he would have no difficulty obtaining them in England.

> Our file No.: III/6316/39 Go/Ho
>
> Dr. Stephan Schifferes
> Vienna IX
> Grünentorgasse 17/14
>
> Dear Dr. Schifferes
>
> We are happy to learn from your letter that your emigration is so quickly to be effected.
>
> The desired certification for your participation in the sport course in Stuttgart we enclose in the attached. This certification is issued by us only in the German language.
>
> Unfortunately we cannot furnish you the command tables in the Hebraic and English languages as the materials are not currently available. You will certainly be able to procure the English command tables without difficulty in England.
>
> With best wishes for your future,
>
> The *Reich* Protection of Jews in Germany
> School Division
> By
> (Signed) Cohn

[132] Apparently in European sports, various commands are called out when doing exercises and sports.

The certification stated that he had been a student of gymnastics and sports teacher studies there until February 28, 1939. The curriculum was for a year, beginning in the summer of 1938 and included the following subjects:

- Gymnastics
- Apparatus gymnastics [translated by them as Useful Gymnastics]
- Floor gymnastics [Fundamental gymnastics]
- Light athletics
- Jousting [Competitive games]
- Teacher skill
- Formation and instruction theory
- Sport theory
- Medicinal science
- Judaism
- Eurhythmics
- English

The American Consulate General in Vienna, Germany, sent Steffi a confirmation of the receipt of two affidavits: one from [Rabbi] Abram Simon and the other from Liese Strauss. And then the consulate confirmed a separate notification provided by William A. Leeb.

There was even a baggage insurance form, dated March 21, 1939, to the amount of RM 1000.—for a premium of RM 10.—issued by the "*Europäische Güter-und Reisegepäck-Versicherungs-Aktiengesellschaft* [European Quality and Baggage Insurance Company].

Steffi wrote Liese a letter from the train to and from Cologne on March 23, 1939. He apologized for having neglected her during the hectic period of preparing for his departure. He also wrote that he had been a daily guest at her parents' house.

> Your father is really an especially nice person and I am happy that you have most things from him. Especially your diligence, ambition, with which you now "ran around" to find another job.

He also sang her praises, how, after four-and-a-half months she was able to save $90. Steffi ended the letter by sending greetings to "both Deutsch families" (Hede-Hans and Pepi). "But to you the most heartfelt kisses for the last time, thank God, from the German *Reich*."

A correspondence sent by the *Palästina Amt Berlin* on March 27, 1939, indicated that Steffi was to "...travel by train through Hoog van Holland (Poles must go through Hamburg-Southampton) and please, in case there is a change, send us word..." to either Teddy Kollek[133] (who was working at that time at the Bloomsbury House in London) or to the *Beth Chaluz* in Hackney, England. Steffi was advised to bring along work clothes in his luggage that he was taking with him "...so that you can immediately be settled after your arrival. It is suggested that you also bring a pair of rubber boots and a warm jacket." The rest of the baggage would be sent to the customs division at Victoria Station and then on to Liverpool. For the "honor" of the permit,

[133] Kollek later became a renowned person in Israeli history; he was mayor of Jerusalem from 1965 to 1993. It was said of him that he was the greatest builder of Jerusalem after Herod.

Steffi had to pay RM 8.30 for the visa fee, which had to be deposited in the bank account of the *Palestina-Amt* in Berlin.

On March 23, 1939, Steffi arrived in London and was staying at the "Jews' Temporary Shelter" 63, Mansell Str., Aldagate E. 1. He spent the night in a "clean single cell," and wrote that he would go to "Woburn House, that is Bloomsbury House," where the German Jewish Aid Society was. There, he wrote, it would be decided if he could "get away" from the *Chaverim* or not. Then he described the trip, saying that he "...was not examined at all and the others except for 1–2 suitcase probes, also not, just that [they] wanted to see the certificate of not owing any taxes." Steffi brought along two wedding bands and a little silver tobacco holder, and an old coin which Tante Rosa gave him. His watch, he wrote, as well as Liese's family jewelry, was "arianized;" an optician E. had it.

"Now the British people are nice, but the distances are awful," he wrote, "and everything costs extra...." At the Bloomsbury House an Aryan official asked if he could instruct a girl in gymnastics, to which Steffi said yes. But then, when he was sent to the Trainee department, since he had a trainee permit (pink card), he was told that he would have to work as an agricultural student.

> I speak better English than most people... there are so many emigrants here for whom so much is being done, but unfortunately not enough.... I am merely a number, A 8687, for whom the pink card means being sent to a camp.

Steffi wrote that he was probably imagining it to be worse than it actually was, but for him it meant more lost time and camp reminded him "...of the prison camp D" [KZ Dachau].

Then Steffi wrote about his worries about obtaining the summons in London:

> At the freeing at D., we were told that if we came back after emigrating, then we would be stuck in a KZ for the rest of our lives, and the Gestapo in Vienna told me the same exact thing. I asked there [Bloomsbury House] if I could return for the summons, he said I would be allowed to do so. So that would be dangerous, but should be thought about.

Bertha received her medical certificate, which stated that she had been examined and she was found to

> ...not be mentally or physically defective in any way, that she is not afflicted with tuberculosis in any form or with an infection, loathsome or contagious disease, that she is not suffering from favus, leprosy, framboesia or jaws, trachoma, syphilis, or scabies.

Mentally defective included:

- Idiots
- Imbeciles
- Feebleminded persons
- Insane persons
- Epilectics
- Persons having previously had attacks of insanity
- Persons of constitutional psychopathic inferiority
- Persons suffering from chronic alcoholism.

The certificate also stated that "...Mrs. Bertha Schifferes had never been in a mental hospital nor in a prison." It was signed by the Medical adviser to the British Consulate.

2)

Dr. Alfred Schwarz
Wien VI.,
Gumpendorferstr.72

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

Place: VIENNA
Date: ....13/3....1939.

I hereby certify that I have examined
Mrs. Bertha Schifferes, 58 years of age.....
and find .her.., not to be mentally or physically defective in any way, that ..She. is not afflicted with tuberculosis in any form ~~or with an infectious, loathsome or contagious disease, that~~ ...She.. is not suffering from favus, leprosy, framboesia or yaws, trachoma, syphilis or scabies.

Negative Wa

J. V. d'Abreu
.....
Medical adviser to the
British Consulate.

Mentally defective includes:

no
- Idiots
- Imbeciles
- Feebleminded persons
- Insane persons
- Epileptics
- Persons having previously had attacks of insanity
- Persons of constitutional psychopathic inferiority
- Persons suffering from chronic alcoholism.

I also certify that Mrs. Bertha Schifferes.....
has never been in a mental hospital nor in prison.
Vienna,.....13/3....1939.

J. V. d'Abreu

Bertha's Medical Certificate, dated March 13, 1939

On March 25, 1939, another telegram came to Mrs. Hilton's house, informing Liese that Steffi had arrived in London and that he could receive mail at the main post office.

A most interesting, typewritten letter by Steffi was found among the myriad of letters and documents. Though there was no indication of the date when it was written, it concisely summarized Steffi's life from June 6, 1938, until March 1939:

"Enclosure" Stephan Schifferes, description of losses suffered:

After the *Anschluss* of Austria, I, Stephan Schifferes was offered training at the Gymnastics and Sports School of the *Oberrat* of the Württemberg (Jewish) Community and a place in its affiliated Jewish school. For that reason, on the 6. June 1938 I moved to Stuttgart, Gartenstrasse 30, and participated in instruction at the aforementioned Gymnastics and Sport Instruction School. This participation abruptly ended due to my arrest on 12. November 1938, and transport to Dachau. On 4. January 1939 I was released from Dachau and remained in Stuttgart until my emigration in March 1939.

I presume that the Police Registration of my stay is known to the officials and I can verify that my residence was in Stuttgart Gartenstrasse 30.

Damages due to deprivation of freedom (Nov. 12 until Jan. 4).

Damages to property: I had a stamp collection, an Austrian emergency money collection, books, music, music instrument (clarinet), skis, that were taken from me.

Damages in professional progress: my training was for naught, in England I worked as a farmer.

The Jewish Community Center in Vienna, Emigration Section, sent Steffi a letter, dated March 26, 1939, in which he was informed that his Permit for England would be arriving and he would soon be departing for the transit camp in Richborough [Steffi received this letter after he had already left Vienna]. It also stated that he would have to appear before the Emigration Division on Seitenstettengasse 4, II. Floor, Room 8 on March 28, 1939, at 15 o'clock [3:00 PM] and have the following documents with him:

1. Passport for here and abroad, at least for Great Britain your country of choice. Passports of stateless people must be marked and filled out by the Passport Council in Vienna V., Wehrgasse I.

2. Proof of no past taxes due in case they are valid until April 3, can be used, earlier expired documents must immediately be updated. In this case the red slips should be handed in (with numbers).

3. 4 Photos.

4. 5 white envelopes not stamped, with normal format, with your address.

5. Expenses for the trip, fee for Visa and permitted papers are RM 80.- to be paid immediately.

If there was a previous notification permitting the exit of papers of value, you must bring this permit to our office in Vienna.

6. List of Property with a duplicate copy of the enclosed form, where it is stated that the property should not weigh more than 100 kg. On the train only provisions for travel can be brought along. All expenses for transportation of property, customs inspection, etc. are RM 4.50 for 10 kg.

The transit stay in Richborough... and the continuation of the journey to your final destination is a generous act on the part of the Council for German Jewry

and the English Aid Committee, that has been guaranteed by the English government.

Now it is a question of being physically able for work and that we have self-discipline and have good values which are expected from us. There can only be order in the camp if everyone behaves himself properly.

There will be learning stations set up so that you can be advised concerning possible professions. Aside from language instruction in which everyone must participate, there will be speeches and music.

The departure from the camp and the trip to London, etc., will be given as a limited vacation. Also the camp inhabitants will be able to have visitors at certain times.

Everyone will be able to have some clothing in their bedroom. The larger luggage will be stored somewhere else. Moveable objects, that is, furniture, large trunks, and other baggage cannot be stored in the camp.

Under the best circumstances, of foremost importance:

1 bedspread	3 blankets	4 sheets
2 pillows	4 pillow cases	4 towels
1 work outfit	1 raincoat	1 personal silverware

The committee recommends the following things that for the individual will not seem that important, but when multiplied will have an enormous impact. The items are:

Razor, shaving soap, shaving brush

Toothpaste

Well-equipped sewing kit with needles of various sizes, safety pins, scissors, buttons

Some wool for darning socks

Patches of cloth for the repair of clothes

Shoe polish, balls of string.

It is also requested if you own a bicycle and you have received permission, then you can bring it along.

Please take these suggestions seriously, as they are intended. Think if you are prepared to have the self-discipline that will be expected of us.

Liese's letter of March 25, 1939, was sent to London, but was then forwarded to the farm where Steffi was sent: c/o Brunt, Stubby Lees, Fisherwick, Lichfield. She had received the telegram on that same day and was so happy that Steffi was "...finally this far along and at least is now in safety."

In this letter Liese wrote that Mr. Guthman, the lawyer who helped her with Steffi's emigration (and also took money for it, by the way), was the President of the B'nai B'rith in Washington and as a result had connections to the State Department.

Liese asked Steffi if he needed money and if he did, she was saving almost everything she earned: "...except for $5.00/week for room, streetcar $1.25/week, and 30 cts for breakfast...." She was earning about $20–$22 each week. And she had already made arrangements with Ines to give Bertha money if she needed it. She had also gotten money from Onkel Emil, and Herbert Muller gave her $10 when she saw him in New York after her arrival. Somehow Liese was able to find time to go to school every day except Saturday and also went on Sunday from 10–2:30. In anticipation of Hede and Hans' arrival in Washington, Liese had arranged for a room for Hans and wrote that Hede would be staying with her. Then she wrote: "Hans wrote me: now that Steffi is out, I fear you will not have anything to worry about. But unfortunately, my parents are still in hell and the recent events in Europe[134] gave and will give everyone adequate opportunity to worry a lot." And for $130 Mr. Guthman said "...he would take care of the thing within the next few weeks... I could pay it in installments or if I did not have it, not at all." Liese was very torn between spending the money or seeing if things would resolve on their own.

At that time, Ines was reachable at Oxford Circle, Oxford Circle Building, or at 32–35 Regent Street, Flat 12.

According to one historian, "by September 1939, 60,000 refugees representing 80 percent of all the refugees in this country [Great Britain] had registered with the Jewish Refugees Committee, and of these some 47,000 were still in Great Britain." [135] There was a huge amount of work involved in caring for the refugees.

> The main part of the Council's funds went to the Jewish Refugees Committee which dealt with individual cases, whilst other allocations were made to the Richborough Camp, for 3,500 male refugees awaiting re-emigration to agricultural training schemes and to other organisations dealing with children, domestic servants, academic and professional workers. Money was also spent on assisting and training refugees for emigration to Palestine and elsewhere.[136]

In 1939 the various offices were put into a central location, which was Bloomsbury House, an old hotel. This became the headquarters for all the major refugee organizations.

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[134] On March 15, 1939, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia and ended any chance for appeasement.

[135] François Lafitte, *The Internment of Aliens* (London: Libris, 1988), 43. "In 1933 the Central British Fund for German Jewry was founded to assist refugees. Services to the refugees were centralized in 1939 at Bloomsbury House. The British government had been reassured that the support for the German Jewish refugees would be privately funded, at no expense to the state. "This promise exerted some influence on the relationship between the refugees and their British hosts; there was sympathy tinged with suspicion on the one hand; gratitude tempered by insecurity on the other" [p. 42].
Refugees were waiting re-emigration. In the meantime, they were being trained for emigration to Palestine and elsewhere. In 1939 it was decided to centralize all the various efforts of the refugee committees in one building. It was to be housed in the hotel Bloomsbury, which was then renamed Bloomsbury House. "Up till the end of November 1939, domestic service was the only form of employment open to refugees, who were permitted to enter the country otherwise only if arrangements were made to train them for re-emigration, and on condition that they took no work, paid or unpaid, while in Britain" [p. 48].

[136] Ibid.

Chapter 38: Out of the Hell

In her letter to Steffi [March 27, 1939] which was sent c/o the P.O. in London, Liese wrote that she had not had any mail from him since March 6. The letter was then sent to Lichfield. She said that she only paid Mr. Guthman for his expenses and if she had money later, would then pay the rest. Then she warned Steffi to not let any Jewish organization (neither HIAS nor B'nai B'rith) transfer his affidavit. He should arrange for this himself. She also wrote that Mrs. Hilton knew the American Consul in London and if there were any difficulties, Mrs. Hilton would write to him on Steffi's behalf. Liese also encouraged Steffi to get in touch with Ines: "...she is my only friend who is almost as close to me as Hede."

Guthman, the lawyer, assured Liese that she need not worry about the money, although Liese was convinced that the thing would proceed even without his help. Furthermore, she was hoping that Steffi would be arriving in 14 days: "That is pure optimism taken straight from the air, on the other hand, there is no reason for me to think that." In any case, she was so happy that he was out of "the hell."

In the continuation of the letter [dated March 29, 1939], Liese opined on the difference between herself and Hede. After Liese's talk with Guthman, she was so upset that she sent Hede an express postcard at Pepi's and asked Hede to come immediately. Hede's reply was that her postcard woke them up and that they would be arriving on Wednesday, since they still had to go to see Herbert. As a result of this, Liese vowed to become more independent and realized that she had exaggerated the situation. Hede was indeed a peaceful being!

Käthe Neumann[137] wrote to Steffi, telling him that she had been at the train station, "...but unfortunately I could not see you, so I wished the traveling train all good wishes for you. Now we are happy that you are out...." Bertha added on that Karl was still in Paris and was hungry, "...but unfortunately I cannot send him anything. Hopefully he will be able to earn some money soon."

Peter Meyer, Steffi's friend from the Sports School, wrote [March 28, 1939] that he had picked up Steffi's bicycle and put it in the schoolyard. The day before he had written to the Foreign Office to ask for permission to send it to Steffi in England. Peter also informed Steffi that their friend, Bernd[138] [Hanauer] was in the Jewish Hospital in London. Apparently there was a school friend of Steffi's in the same room as Bernd. Then Steffi's friend Hans added on, saying that the Richters were

> ...going to Palestine just like you (but really)... Slowly, but very slowly, Stuttg. is becoming empty and only the die-hards remain here and want to show off on the gym equipment (sad mistake).... From there one can see everything better. With your capability, everything will work out that your mother can follow you soon.

Then he wrote how the one professor at the school kept talking about Steffi: "'yes, if Dr. Schifferes were here.' It is still to be decided if Königsberg will be your successor...."

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[137] Käthe Neumann, who was born on July 23, 1885, was deported from Vienna to Maly Trostinec, Belorusse, on September 14, 1942, and was murdered there on September 18, 1942. [www.doew.at/cgi-bin/shoah/shoah.pl]. I can only gather that after the war Bertha came to the conclusion that Käthe had been deported, since there were no more letters from her.

[138] Bernd Hanauer was a colleague from the sports school in Stuttgart.

Apparently Steffi sent Bernd Hanauer a card to the Jewish Hospital and Bernd replied by inviting Steffi to come visit him there so he could meet the man who had such good connections to the Woburn House "...so we can straighten out your thing."

Steffi's mother wrote [March 28, 1939] saying that it would take another three weeks before she would be able to obtain the English visa. As for Steffi, she wrote that she had heard that sending the affidavit to England would only delay matters a few days.

Bertha also wrote that Onkel Dori [Ältlein] actually sold her desk for her for RM 20.—and even gave her all the money.

> This time I was wrong to doubt him. Karl's wife is still visiting there, until she will become dangerous. Tante Rosa says "Dori seems to be like a captain who will be the last to leave his sinking ship." I can only hope that the other captains will be somewhat smarter.

Everyone turned to every possible person he or she could think of. For that reason, Manfred Wechsler,[139] whose family was friendly with Tante Stephy and the other Kurz relatives from Holic, wrote to Liese in Washington to ask for her help. His return address was Brünn, Germany. Yes, the Nazis had invaded Czechoslovakia just a few weeks earlier. On March 29, 1939, the American General Consulate in Vienna, Germany, sent Steffi a form letter, which told him that his affidavit from Benjamin Bateman (a CPA who lived in East Orange, New Jersey) had arrived and asked Steffi to notify Bateman of its arrival.[140]

The Council for German Jewry Agricultural Committee sent a form to the Clothing Department, requesting them to supply Steffi with a pair of gum boots, a pair of warm trousers, thick socks and a scarf.

March 30 was Hugo Strauss' birthday, and Steffi had sent him diabetic pastries from London via Bertha, who was still in Vienna. Bertha also told Steffi that Tante Stephy was taking a course in children's clothing and for that reason could not stand in line on that day. Bertha was uncertain as to what to do about Steffi's certificate of good conduct and proof of residency. "For that reason I also stood in line for 3 hours. Hopefully it will soon have an end. In spite of that, I would stand longer if I knew I could help with your American thing."

According to a letter that Bertha sent the American Consulate General in Vienna, her son had four affidavits: from Liese, Rabbi Abram Simon, William Leeb, and Benjamin Bateman. She also wrote that she hoped there would be no further delays because of the transferring of the aforementioned documents.

Steffi also wrote that he would try to not use Liese's affidavit so that he could give it to her parents. "But I believe that later you can go to citizens for your parents." He also complained bitterly about having absolutely no free time on Fisherwick Farm. He felt he had not done things very intelligently and should have rather gone to a *Kibbutz* [Hebrew word for workers collective] and assured Liese that there would have been no reason for her to have been afraid of that. At least he would have had free time and would have been paid. And he felt he would have learned more English and would not have ruined his hands, as he was doing at the farm.

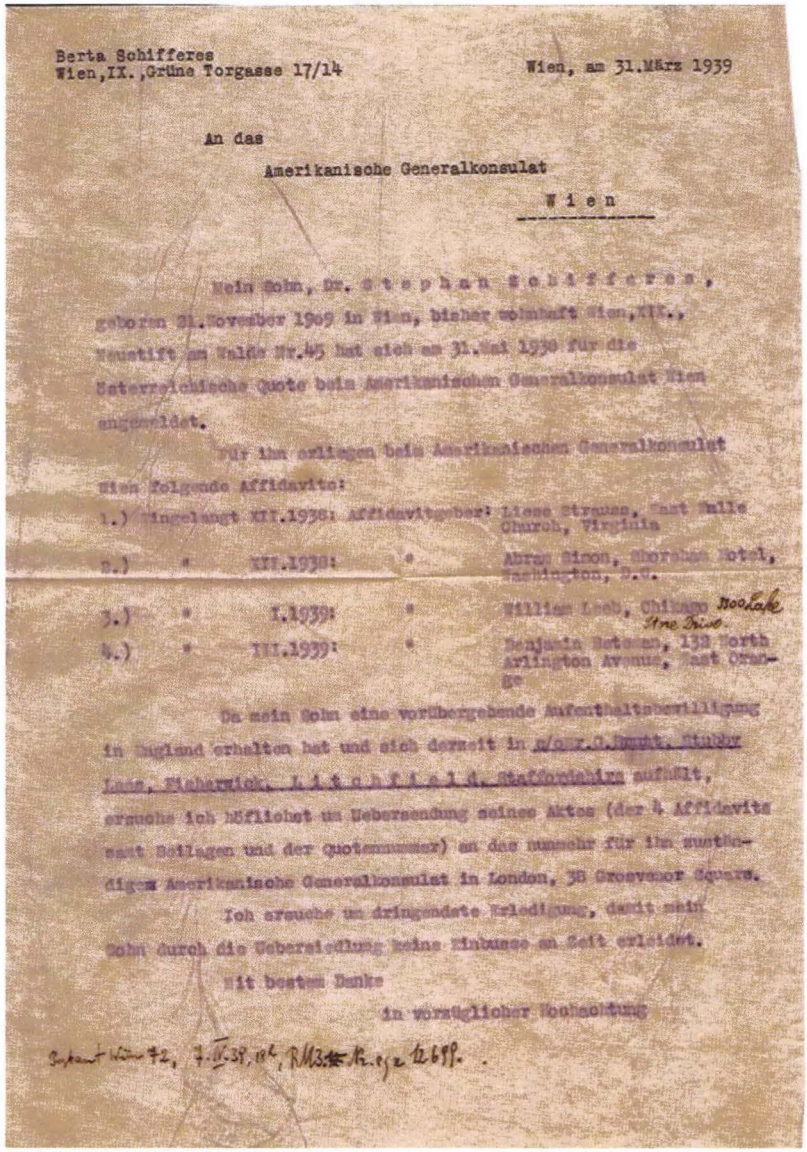
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[139] Manfred Wechsler, born August 24, 1907, was transported from Brno to Theresienstadt on March 23, 1942, and a month later to Lublin. [www.yadvashem.org].

[140] There is no information about how Liese "connected" with Benjamin Bateman. Since he was from New Jersey, she might have heard about him through Pepi Dewton; or possibly she may have found him through one of the Jewish organizations she was contacting.

Hopefully it will get better soon, if I am already working, I want it to be for someone, not for my own food. But without you, everything I begin makes no sense.

Steffi wrote that he had read in the newspaper that Hitler was giving Hungarian Jewish engineers work in Düsseldorf—about 500 RM per month.



Berta Schifferes
Wien, IX., Grüne Torgasse 17/14

Wien, am 31. März 1939

An das
Amerikanische Generalkonsulat
W i e n

Mein Sohn, Dr. S t e p h a n S c h i f f e r e s, geboren 21. November 1909 in Wien, bisher wohnhaft Wien, IX., Neustift am Walde Nr. 45 hat sich am 31. Mai 1938 für die Österreichische Quote beim Amerikanischen Generalkonsulat Wien angemeldet.

Für ihn erliegen beim Amerikanischen Generalkonsulat Wien folgende Affidavits:

1.) eingelangt XII. 1938: Affidavitgeber: Liese Strauss, East Falls Church, Virginia
2.) " XII. 1938: " Abram Simon, Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.
3.) " I. 1939: " William Leeb, Chicago 800 Lake Shore Drive
4.) " III. 1939: " Benjamin Bateman, 138 North Arlington Avenue, East Orange

Da mein Sohn eine vorübergehende Aufenthaltsbewilligung in England erhalten hat und sich derzeit in [illegible] aufhält, ersuche ich höflichst um Übersendung seines Aktes (der 4 Affidavits samt Beilagen und der Quotennummer) an das nunmehr für ihn zuständige Amerikanische Generalkonsulat in London, 38 Grosvenor Square.

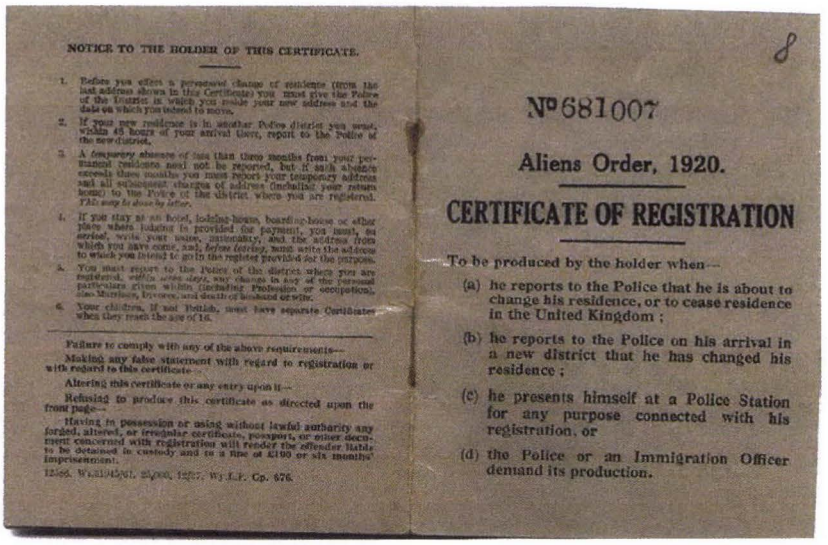
Ich ersuche um dringendste Erledigung, damit mein Sohn durch die Übersiedlung keine Einbusse an Zeit erleidet.

Mit besten Danke

in vorzüglicher Hochachtung

Beilagen: Wien 42, 7.VI.38, 104, RM 200.-- K.2.9/2 4699.

Copy of letter sent by Bertha to the American Consulate General, dated March 31, 1939, stating that Steffi had four affidavits (1. Liese Strauss, 2. Abram Simon, 3. William Leeb, 4. Benjamin Bateman)



NOTICE TO THE HOLDER OF THIS CERTIFICATE.

1. Before you effect a permanent change of residence (from the last address shown in this Certificate) you must give the Police of the District in which you reside your new address and the date on which you intend to move.
2. If your new residence is in another Police district you must, within 48 hours of your arrival there, report to the Police of the new district.
3. A *temporary* absence of less than three months from your permanent residence need not be reported, but if such absence exceeds three months you must report your temporary address and all subsequent changes of address (including your return home) to the Police of the district where you are registered. *This may be done by letter.*
4. If you stay at an hotel, lodging-house, boarding-house or other place where lodging is provided for payment, you must, *on arrival*, write your name, nationality, and the address from which you have come, and, *before leaving*, must write the address to which you intend to go in the register provided for the purpose.
5. You must report to the Police of the district where you are registered, *within seven days*, any change in any of the personal particulars given within (including Profession or occupation, also Marriage, Divorce, and death of husband or wife.
6. Your children, if not British, must have separate Certificates when they reach the age of 16.

Failure to comply with any of the above requirements—

Making any false statement with regard to registration or with regard to this certificate—

Altering this certificate or any entry upon it—

Refusing to produce this certificate as directed upon the front page—

Having in possession or using without lawful authority any forged, altered, or irregular certificate, passport, or other document concerned with registration will render the offender liable to be detained in custody and to a fine of £100 or six months' imprisonment.

12/36. W.3194/91. 25,000. 1937. Wy.L.P. Co. 676.

8

No 681007

Aliens Order, 1920.

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

To be produced by the holder when—

(a) he reports to the Police that he is about to change his residence, or to cease residence in the United Kingdom;

(b) he reports to the Police on his arrival in a new district that he has changed his residence;

(c) he presents himself at a Police Station for any purpose connected with his registration, or

(d) the Police or an Immigration Officer demand its production.



Registration Certificate No. 681007

Issued at Pinkfield

on 31st March 1939.

Name (Surname first in Foreign Capitals) SCHEFFERES, Stephan

Alias

Left Thumb Print (if unable to sign name in English Characters)

PHOTOGRAPH

Signature of Holder

Nationality Austrian by naturalisation. Austrian.

Born on 21/11/1909 in Vienna

Previous Nationality (if any) —

Profession or Occupation Agricultural Student

Single or Married Single

Address of Residence Hinkenbein near Pinkfield

Arrival in United Kingdom on 23rd March 1939

Address of last Residence outside U.K. Hohenstaufengasse 10 Vienna 19.

Government Service Nil.

Passport or other papers as to Nationality and Identity. Passport No. 65149 issued 20th Dec. 1938 by the Chief of Police Vienna

Certificate of Registration, March 31, 1939

Chapter 39: English Farm Life

On April 1, 1939, Steffi wrote to Liese describing his life on the farm as an unpaid agricultural student. But he also mentioned the chaos going on at the Bloomsbury House in London. Steffi hoped that Bernd Hanauer could help him get a paid position. His fatigue and dissatisfaction with farm life are obvious in this long letter.

Fisherwick April 1st 1939

Dearest!

In one of your last letters you asked (I really do have to stop the habit of writing in *Kurrent*,[141] but it seems to go much faster and I am used to it and it seems more legible) if I would rather have a waitress or a servant. Now I am, after the sports school, *agricultural student*,[142] that is to say farm boy, because servant is not yet sufficient. So let me relate in order, for it is I who does not know, *when to post the letters to rich* [sic] *the quickest ship*. I was in London every day except for Saturday and Sunday, at the Bloomsbury House, where things are bad, practically worse than in the *Kultusgemeinde* [Jewish Community Center in Vienna], 1200 employees, 5 floors and there is even work going on in the *Basement* of the house, which used to be a hotel. I went to the Pal. Office there, as well as I could, was also sent there last and had to accept an *agricultural job as my training job*, for lack of other opportunities, I could not find another available job and could not work there. Still I did not want to be with the *Chaverim*, for obvious reasons,[143] most of them are in the camp near Richborough, *near Dover*, others in Surrey, others *near Liverpool* where they (the Stgter)[144] want to still be together. For that reason I told the authoritative *Haver* that I wanted a single position *last not least* so that I could learn English better. He arranged a meeting with the apparent Lester; Lt. Colonel Waley Cohen, who, with his secretary's help, Mrs. Lester, arranged for this job here. I already wrote you where it is. The *farm* Stubby Lees belongs to the town Fisherwick, close to the village of Elford between the train stations at Tamworth and Lichfield, the next biggest city, as I said, is Birmingham (16 miles). The farmer is a *farmer*, has 60 cows, 12 horses, 40 calves, 300 *sheep*, 250 *lambs*, 60 *pigs*, 4 *dogs, cats, and poultry* (1000 hens), 3 cars, 2 tractors and other machinery. The Farmer is not doing this out of sympathy, a 19 yr. old *German refugee* came to me one day, but rather wants cheap labor; he just will not pay anything. I wrote to Bernd Hanauer, whom I visited in L'don where he is in the *Jewish Hospital*, where he had an operation on his meniscus, he should see if his boss, who pays 2£ a week, can hire me. Of course he has to pay *extra* for his room; that is in Twickenham, 20 min. train ride from L'don. I do not need money here because I cannot go to the movies anyway, —I was in L'don twice on the 6th, 1/2–3/4 hour on a fast bicycle to the town and when would I have time. So the farmhouse: we are always sitting in the kitchen, which is not clean, without electricity and central heating. The walls are covered with wallpaper, also *in the*

[141] *Kurrent* is an old form of German handwriting based on late medieval cursive writing. It is known in full as *Kurrentschrift* or *Alte Deutsche Schrift* [Old German script].

[142] English words in italics indicate that Steffi wrote them in English, not German.

[143] Meaning for fear of being pressured by them to go to Palestine.

[144] The *Chaverim* from Stuttgart.

kitchen, but the things, e.g., cushioned furniture, where the farmer sits, like the cars, tractors, and other machinery, and the same with the animals are together, with no regard to care and hygiene, in horrible condition. Though we do always have warm water in the *wash kitchen (wash house)*, but only one sink in which the dishes are washed and the chickens are plucked. For example, to wash bottles, an iron bowl is used. Even the W.C. is set up in the same manner, completely neglected. In the courtyard there are 2 wrecked cars and I do not know *why they don't wash the horses, cows, and themselves*. Though they do wash their hands. They, they are the old farmer, his wife, his 3 sons, 2 daughters, 1 servant and 2 19-year-old boys, daughter-in-law and 2 grandchildren (14-year-old girl and 12-year-old boy who has a horrible rash on his face), are terribly unclean because they are actually not used to anything else and the washing facilities are so bad. We sleep two together in the wide beds. I have a nice room with a German who is from Kreise Siegen (Westfalen), more like a double bed, though we use our own blankets. Unfortunately I do not get any money. I could already be earning money for us because here I could take money out. Now to my *Dress*: aside from shirt and underpants, I wear my training suit, the oldest one, over it a pair of pants from the mechanics suit, *gum boots*, and *sometimes* an old wind jacket and a cap. So other than laundry, handkerchiefs, and hand towels, I will also save my clothes. Now to what I do: *it is hard work but healthy*. In the morning we get up at 6:30, very late for farmers, drink tea with very white bread and butter and go into the cow stall. First the cows are milked (4 milking machines), then milked more by hand, some have to only be milked by hand, naturally I cannot do that, though today I held a young cow who really did not want to be milked by the horns and the nose, yesterday I was afraid to do it, then the cows are fed with *corn & grain*, the calves get watered-down milk and the same with more corn. During the day they then get ground *cotton cake* (cows). Before that, the trough is cleaned and not used and sold [sic, soiled], it runs over a cooling apparatus. At 9 o'clock we eat *breakfast*: roasted *bacon*, a large piece hangs in the kitchen, pieces are always cut off from there, 1 fried egg, cheese, bread and butter, and we 2 *refugees* get cocoa instead of tea, a big full bowl of tea, then trash is picked up and I *leaded [loaded] manure (filled mock [muck])* the *whole day on the cart*. Good that I just had so much activity, I was angry that my soft hands would be less appropriate for massage, now it is good because I will no longer get blisters like the other German who, even though he worked in a factory before, wounded his hands from the work. Yesterday I worked the *potatoe-sorter* [sic], potatoes from the big thing, which he separated at the same time. One always has to turn it, just like squishing the *cotton cake*, which I also did.

2) At noon the cows are let out and we eat *at about 1 o'clock*, *Tea*, yesterday *beaf* [sic], *today young lamb*, always roasted, potatoes, milk rice, at 5 o'clock tea and bread and butter, in the evening warm cheese with bread and butter, *Tea* with milk, dessert flat *pastries* (?) and cheese is always around. Today I cannot keep my eyes open because of the unaccustomed sojourn in the air. *Good night my darling, sleep well and love me like I you.* (9:15 is very late for farmers, everyone is still up), boy can they work and the women, amazing what they do, these 4.

April 2nd 1939

Sunday there is even a break from 1–4 p.m., but it is a *wet and dull day*, just as the oldest son said. Now what can I say about my new occupation? Above all, that many German Jews, even if they can still continue their more intelligent occupations, are probably envious, that there are so many still in Buchenw.[ald] who are eating terrible food and are treated badly [and] now have to work hard and are not more broken than I. The first 3 days are not so bad, that is a change of pace, soon the senseless occupation will become boring. If I could just be able to save some money from all this hard work! Room and board is also worth something, but this bleak strangeness. The farmer's children, 22–37, are nice and good-natured, but still no company for me, the same with the J.[ewish] German. The people—with the exception of the 2 farm lads who come from L'don—are from Derbyshire and speak a dialect which I have a hard time understanding. The one farmer lad, who said it was too *stuffy* in the office, is more intelligent and tries to explain the language and the work to me, the other one is, just like the sons, an unbelievable workhorse. Now I am sitting by the fireplace—and got tired. Your friend T. Willheim is a poor thing. She was such a rich girl and surely wanted to try her luck here and is angry and ashamed that she has not become a socialite [*eine Dame der Gesellschaft*]. That is what she answered me when I asked about Brazilians. She came to L. before the others arrived in England (*Refugees*) and is now again going to a country where she knows no one. That means that she is ashamed and unhappy. She was very surprised because she had to write a report about Brazil in which it talked about the unpropitious events concerning the distribution of visas and E. passports. Also Dr. Marmorek is only capable of writing and when I inquired, he asked me to speak with the people of his division to thank them, which I did, even though they could do about as much as the cows here. I would really like to type English reports on the typewriter, but in the horrible L'don air. —By the way, Trude Willheim invited me to a modest *Lunch*, for which she paid for 1/2. What was I supposed to do at Ines' and Frau Huppert?[145] Say here I am and then eventually be invited. Yes, if they could at least help me through Intervention at the A. Consulate. I asked Tante Gisi's sister-in-law,[146] but she just moved and is too comfortable and actually everyone who is here is just a better emigrant than I. So I am writing the local American Consul that I will be having my turn in Vienna, but for the statements, that these should be in Vienna now where I have already paid the tax for the requested postage, where I have requested the transfer of the affid., and he should be so kind as to send me the *forms* since I will need them for the L'don Consul. The address is A. Consulate General, Immigration Department, 38, Grosvenor Square, L'don W 1, in case you have any use for this, not like me, where I did not write down Ines' address, but rather put it in one of your letters. Now what will be with Mama, the Consul still has not given a visa. It is hoped that she will soon get out, does not have too much work at Mrs. Mason's and remains well, unfortunately she is complaining about places that have been operated on.

Now I am curious how our efforts will develop. As to me, I am so angry that I cannot do anything, could not accomplish anything and in consideration of me being so far from L'don (4 hours *railway*, *fast*) and am sitting here with tied up

[145] Lilly Doktor Huppert was Hede's best friend from Vienna.
[146] Esther (Etka) Schiller.

hands as in Stgt., Vienna, and D. [KZ Dachau], just that there I stood more. The trip to L'don costs 14/6, my heavy suitcase is being sent, lack of money is *good*, I should have paid £2/5, so I will have about 10/ to live off of. I hope it arrived without change and damage—at the station in Lichfield and it will be picked up with a car tomorrow by Susi. —I seem to be living in banishment—it is that similar—not a single soul who loves you, no friends as in Stgt. and I was really always used to Mama's dear spoiling me. I am just the same as before, just that this powerful, suppressed impatience, just as the self-control can never lead to a result and that makes me even more nervous. My whole anticipation and hope for the Am. future, but rather considering the American thing at all, I mean the affid., which you told me about. If this thing falls through, well, then I will be exasperated. God only knows what the A. Consul in L'don will now ask for or what kind of difficulties will arise. And if I am really supposed to wait until July, who knows, perhaps they will cease immigration. So one sits here with an uncertain feeling and *when a war will come and my mother must stay in German* [sic] *and your parents*. But one must not think of the worst and if one is already writing about it, that does not signify that it will be or happen to us. Now it has been 14 days since I have had news from you. How you are, how you are tolerating your new, now already gotten used to, profession. Hopefully it [the new profession] will please you since there is nothing worse than working with "*Untrust.*" My work is not too repugnant, if it gets to be too stupid, then I take *a look at the fields and meadows, where there are some old trees*. [If it gets to be] too much—less boring. This English landscape has an unbelievable quieting effect, and tells me patience. The way to freedom will hopefully begin for me at the American *Statue*, but when and what will I be able to do there? Though that is a secondary question, but still something to think about. With a certain desire one can do everything and I imagine that the loss of so-called freedom that marriage is supposed to bring will seem very nice. Your mother and aunt wrote me very dearly on one of Mama's letters. [Steffi]

Liese wrote [April 3, 1939] that the lawyer's intervention on Steffi's behalf was not really necessary because he had received Bateman's (which she always spelled Bethman!) affidavit. But if Steffi learned of something important, then he should cable her and she would ask for Guthman's help. She also wrote about Hede and Hans' four-day visit. During those few days Liese skipped school so that she could show them all of Washington and "... spoiled them, for who knows how it will be for them in Chicago? Unfortunately they both speak English so badly. They themselves are confident." Hede waited for Liese at the soda bar at 11:30 at night so they "...could chat on the way home, then we talked most of the night because I could not sleep anyway." Liese was very happy with the good shoes that her parents sent with Hede and also with the candies that Steffimama sent her. She said that Onkel Emil was going to arrive on April 6, 1939, and HeHa were going to pick him up in New York.

Liese also expressed concern for Steffi, saying that she did not know if he was still so nervous, hoping that he was "...once again calmer and feeling more secure." She also wrote that Hede and Hans told her about Steffi and that she herself had "...spoken to people who were in Dachau and was, therefore, already quite well-informed."

Liese said that "Herbert, the scoundrel, agreed to do everything for Hede, but in the meantime has not done anything despite intensive working on him. But the possibility for our parents to come here unfortunately is very far away." She asked Steffi when Tante Gisi would be leaving and if

Lisbeth and her husband already had good jobs. "Australia is a puzzling country to me that has many possibilities," she remarked.

Then Liese wrote that her dear friend Ines' birthday was coming up on April 19th and that she should really be sending her something, although she did not know what. "Aside from that, the times are too bad for giving gifts, I think."

In the continuation of the letter on April 4, Liese wrote that she was afraid of a war "...and am very frightened for you and my parents and that is not something new."

She also suggested that Steffi go to the B'nai B'rith in London, "...perhaps they can help you regarding your coming here." She continued:

> Unfortunately it is probably too soon to talk about it, but that does not matter: if at all possible, come first class because 3rd class is not the cleanest pleasure. But I still have hope that you will come before July.
>
> Now something about me which will probably interest you. I already wrote you that the people here who hired me are very nice to us. But they want me to look for a different job because they think it is not the right thing for me. I have a different opinion because I am happy to be earning money and am earning more than I need, even though last week was not so good. I will stay here until you come, except if Hede finds a job for me in Chicago, which I doubt.

Then she wrote that the only unpleasant thing about her job was that the "...stupid men do not leave me alone... a single girl without a family is something out of the ordinary. But no one is insistent about it, which shows the difference between America and Europe."

Liese wrote about her lack of concentration, how she was always so rushed and was never alone and could never find time to think.

> My only pleasure is sleeping. Sad.
>
> But it will be different once you are here. Then things will be as they were in Vienna and Stgt. and always, when we were together (in the meantime, unfortunately more than 1/2 year has passed) and your calming influence on me has ended.

On April 3, 1939, C. Waley Cohen wrote from the Council for German Jewry Agricultural Committee, 233-237 Bloomsbury House in London, in response to Steffi's card dated March 30th:

> I hope you will stay with the farmer until you have learnt to milk a little more, although I appreciate that you find it difficult. When you have learnt to milk and something about farm work during the summer, it will be easier to find a job for you later.

In another letter Steffi once again described life on the farm and tried to explain why his handwriting was still sloppy:

> ...I am only writing this way because all day long I hold the dirty pitchfork in my hand and am rushing a lot; 2 prongs for straw and hay, 4 prongs for manure and 9 prongs for potatoes. Do you know what that means from 7 a.m.–5 o'clock in the evening... Even the oldest farmer's son is now sick and that really means

> something for that to happen to such a bruiser who is twice as strong as I. But I would not like to be a farmer. For that, one has to be brought up with it from childhood. They know nothing other than animals and work. Unbelievable, only a break on Saturday from 11–4 and often in the evening the sons work on holidays. But whereas we can at least sit down to eat, there is no break (!), not even for the women. No pleasure—nothing, and one is so tired to boot and must understand that when they go to drink ale and are with similar people, they discuss animals, fields, and politics. They have a radio and at 7:15 we listen to the Engl. version of the German news. I do not understand the people. They do say, happily and with difficulty (the 2nd son): "All right, that will do, Steph," in broad English. Cinema is unreachable, 1-1/2 hour trip at night; it is not worth it. So you see from this that your saying "more time than you" is incorrect. At best I understand the English report on the radio and the newspapers, I really try, but during work there is hardly any talk. You have no idea how diligently they work at night, if the farmer sits at the fireplace, no one dares to open their mouth. Strange. Well, it certainly does not bother me, actually I mostly always am writing or reading the newspaper. But I do not want to overwork myself because 1. I do not get paid and 2. I am not quite with it. Still I have to, since we often work together, pull myself together so that I do not hold things up too much. I am really not that strong, more of an "athlete": but after about 2 years could become a wrestler.

In the same letter Steffi wrote that he could understand Liese's lack of time in writing about her daily life there: "...I have no other choice, if only I had a possibility to have verbal reports! But that is what is so awful—same as in D.[achau]—you do not know when the end will come."

The frustration of having to wait for an unknown date was getting to both Liese and Steffi. Liese was dreaming that it would take place in 14 days. Steffi, on the other hand, was very used to the bureaucratic nonsense.

> When I was released from D. [achau] it was said that I would be getting the Engl. Permit immediately from the *Chaluzim*. Now on 9. III. it arrived safely in Vienna. But 2 months and if I could personally congratulate you for your birthday, if we maybe could celebrate our first anniversary of our engagement as husband and wife, then I would be overjoyed. But the question still arises, then what! But this is secondary, because nothing is happening here, at the moment I am writing on a haystack (unshaven and dirty in the manner of an English farm worker).

The frustration was mounting:

> Oh, it is a pity that you give me hope that I will have my turn soon, now I had begun to accept things and will once again become impatient. That is not to say that I am longing any less for you here in England. Oh, how I have had enough of this vagabond existence. What I mean by that is: no home, no love, no chance to speak or be spoken to (even though I am talkative), and no order, i.e., no room (closet, etc.), I merely open the most necessary items, naturally the things are becoming terribly wrinkled, and no hygiene, that is the worst.... This evening I went on a hunt with a few farm boys and saw the unbelievable vastness of Stubby Lees farm. No shots were fired. Unfortunately the nicest romantic thing in nature is so filthy.

In the same letter Steffi wrote how "...the waiting filled with longing..." was making him so nervous and that he had experienced the same thing in Vienna.

> Mama thinks it was the fault of D. [achau] But I did not write you about that, it is not so important and thank God is forever past. In comparison to what the others lived through, it was the nicest restful vacation (7 1/2 weeks).

According to what Steffi wrote, Liese's father had had an "upsetting event," which he was certain Hede told her about, and then he had

> ...had 2 more such upsetting things, the poor thing, and how the situation is, I am afraid I do not know. (Careful, do not upset yourself, everything will be all right, he said that himself, that the bank was interested so that the thing need not come out in the open.)

Perhaps when there is access to the Viennese archives we will find out what these upsetting events were. Surely the Nazis documented such things.

Steffi also tried to assuage Liese by telling her that things had ended with the *Chaverim*.

> You need not be afraid anymore regarding this.[147] I have not broken it off with them and if I want to (they are going to, as I told you) live together in Liverpool, then I should also go there. But hopefully the summons will come sooner and if not, then I can continue to do what I want because my permit does not say anything about Pal.

In his April 3, 1939, letter to Liese, Steffi waxed philosophic:

> What sense does life have, what purpose does mine have since I have no one else for whom I can live or work? Neither for Mama nor for you and for these farmers where I am merely filling my stomach, I just have nothing left.

Then he went on to talk about London: "As I said, I did not like L'don, terribly dirty, badly organized traffic, in my opinion, many more streets need to be made into one-way streets. The underground is fine, but so far down it is too warm..." And then he wrote about Tante Gisi's brother, Dr. Moritz [Ala Mor] Schiller, who had been a dentist in Vienna. Ala Mor[148] was taking a one-year break and would then take the test to be able to practice dentistry in England. Apparently he was concerned about the written part because of the language. Steffi also wrote that Ala Mor said that the English

> ...do not know how to do a root canal, that is why they pull right away. Here very young people seem to have false teeth and I have never seen so many painted women as in L'don. Terrible, in Paris one cannot use more rouge. Now in America it is probably similar.

On April 4, 1939, Steffi continued by saying that Bertha had sent him a form that said Bateman's affidavit had arrived. Then he complained to Liese: "I do not know why you are not writing me more, do you now only want to express your love for me through affid." He had not had a letter from Liese in 14 days. "That never happened before! Now you will surely have your reasons."

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[147] Palestine.

[148] The children in the family had a difficult time pronouncing "Onkel Moritz," which became shortened to "Ala Mor."

Steffi then signed: "...I send you heartfelt greetings and kisses *darling waitress from your Cowman* Steffi." Then there was a postscript in which he said that Liese's parents were taking good care of his mother and how grateful he was for that.

Bertha was devoting time and energy to get herself out of Vienna, but there was still the problem of the visa. She wrote Steffi [April 6, 1939] that she even spoke with the visa department of the British Consulate, but she believed it was only an employee with whom she spoke who told her "...in the nicest Viennese dialect that I need to have patience. Yep. I think I have already had enough." She told Steffi that she felt sorry for him that he had to work so hard, but at least she knew that he was eating well. "Here we have *matzohs*. I would rather eat butter and bread. But have to have the second without the first." The Neumanns could not find a replacement for her because all the women "...would rather get a permit for England than be employed here." And certainly no Christian woman could work for them. Bertha added that

> Ältlein' [Onkel Dori] is more nervous than ever and Tante Rosa has problems... a true martyr. At the same time she saves on her own meals and sees that he has a lot of good things to eat. She is working too hard and considering that she owns the land and house, needs to go to the authorities.

Tante Gisi was very busy, as always. Heini [Heinrich Pollak] was out of Dachau, but his father, Carl,[149] had no money for a ship ticket. Karl Schifferes wrote Bertha and asked

> ...if Tante Gisi could send him Onni's certificate of honor from the French Legion, he thinks it may be able to help him there. Hopefully he will have some success and will not make his brother ashamed of him.

[149] Both Carl Pollak and Carl Schifferes were named Carl with a "C". Carl Schifferes, however, changed the spelling of his name to the more "Austrian" spelling, thus he was known as Karl.

Chapter 40: A Bit of a Sensation

Steffi wrote to Liese on April 9, 1939: "We 2 German refugees are a bit of a sensation here, as compared to in L'don. The whole neighborhood knows that we are here." He then wrote about how wealthy the farmer was. When Steffi walked through the field he

> ...saw many *cattle* roaming freely.... What this Fisherwick consists of I actually do not know, I just asked: 20 *houses*, the next largest part is Elford, and then towards Lichfield to Whittington. Lichfield has 11000 inhabitants, aside from 4000 soldiers. The esteemed Mayor of Lichfield wants to see us. No, I will not put myself in that position and will also not hand over any *daffodils*. The only thing you see here are fields and animals, a river, streets, and in the distance a hill, 2 train lines where the *flying Scotchman* goes, that I saw when I arrived, and the line 2. to Birmingham, on a smaller hill there is a *Sir*, a captain i.P. (commander) who has a larger house, otherwise you see nothing other than still-life landscapes. The people are farmers, very uninteresting, what he does with his money I have no idea, but such a huge farm must bring in a lot for 1 family, aside from 1 lad to pay, he has only the two farm boys: 5[150] [of them] work for 3 sh *a week*.

Steffi was amazed at the simplicity of the people:

> That is the bad life of these people, who are satisfied and are not used to anything else.
>
> ...I would like to have 2 more positions, just like mine: 1 for my poor *Cousin* [Heini], with whom I have not been in contact for 13 years, but whom I met in Dachau, where he still is, the 2nd one for Hans Philippson, the sport student who is from the country (Mecklenburg) and for whom this monotonous work would be more appropriate.

Onkel Emil sent a quick letter from New York encouraging Liese to be patient. "For the meantime, be satisfied that since the time we saw one another in Zurich, much progress has been made, above all. Steffi is already in England and that is already something!"

At this point, Liese was completely exasperated about Steffi's visa and complained about the lawyer, Guthman "...who is probably a swindler. But if he manages to accomplish something, it is all right by me and the money is not important. But at the moment, he is not doing anything." [April 12, 1939]

In the same letter she wrote:

> Steffi, it will soon be a year since you did the "dumbest thing that can be done."[151] At the time both of us thought that so much would change to our advantage, that it would actually be worth it to be a year older. To me it seems as if 10 years have passed, and yet it does not seem worth being a year older. And who knows what we will think of it all next year....

[150] Unclear to whom he is referring; perhaps the farmer's sons are included among the paid workers.
[151] Liese was referring to their engagement, in June 1938.

> I do not see anyone, do not get together with anyone and am slowly forgetting how to talk. But I feel so terribly indifferent towards everyone, everything they say is meaningless. I have become egocentric for you and me. And despite all the things that come to mind, that you will forget me when you are in a new circle of people or would love me less. But do not take this wrong, it is the only thing I am fighting for, what I love and fighting is supposedly one of the necessary things in life.

> On April 12, 1939, Bertha wrote to Steffi announcing that she had finally gotten her visa. She and Käthe were going to go to the Jewish Community Center and hoped to obtain a ticket for a quick departure because Bertha's papers expired on the 21st and she did not want to have to renew them. Tante Gisi had given her RM 50.- "...as a contribution for a suitcase." But since Bertha already had gotten a wooden one from the Neumanns, she was going to use the money for freight. Then, naturally, she asked if Steffi would be able to see her when she arrived. She also wondered if the trip as far as Burley, where her prospective employer lived, would be paid, or perhaps Mrs. Mason would pick her up. Then Bertha also wrote that if she had time and money she would go to the doctor before her departure, but she did not have enough money to see the dentist. "Surely there will be a dentist in E[ngland]. I wish I were already there."

Bertha wrote to Steffi once again to inform him that she would be leaving for England on the 18th of April, on the same train that he took. "I have gotten everything from the K.G. Now I will say *How are you, Stepsi*?".

Ines Mandl wrote [April 13, 1939] to Steffi on her husband's stationery: "Manufacturers Agents and Importers, Oxford Circus House, 245 Oxford Street." Hans Mandl was a designer and manufacturer of knitwear. Ines wrote that as Steffi was the bridegroom of her friend, she certainly did want to help him, although she was uncertain if she could actually do anything. She also said that she had highly recommended Bertha's cooking to three or four women there and hoped something would come of it.

For the first time Steffi actually wrote to Liese [April 16, 1939] about Roosevelt's speech, telling her that even "...though the speech said the war would be delayed or perhaps it will be sufficient to find a peaceful way as they did before the *Sudeten* question [German aggression in Czechoslovakia]," Steffi thought that the war would be inevitable:

> ...*Germany* has put too much into it so that it will not disarm just like that; or, as it is said, they will once again achieve what they desire through armament. Now hopefully the war will be delayed until after our reunion, even though I have not heard a thing from the A.C. L'don[152] and absolutely nothing from the Viennese.

He went on to write that he was fearful because he did not have a "relative Affid."

> Other than in V.[ienna], relative affid. are requested and every affidavit giver simply says that it is his "*Cousin*," they still lie despite the oath, but I suppose one cannot ask the so honorable men like Leeb and Bateman to do such a thing.

[152] American Consulate in London.

Once again Steffi described the numerous meals he was given on the farm.

> Now I would really prefer to be eating more hygienically or less good and would be even modest if I were already with you. —Who do you know from Dachau, were some of them in Block 20, 2nd barrack room, namely that is where I was.

He also wrote that his mother wanted to send her feather bed or mattresses with Liese's things, "...if your father agrees, hopefully we will be able to use them soon." In the meantime, Steffi could not understand why he had to do the senseless and useless work there on the farm. And he began to wax sentimental:

> Thank God our love is more patient than our patience. If I think back on how little we have seen one another in the almost one year since our engagement, I have actually not suffered, during this time I have not become a burden to anyone, but that is something negative and I am grappling unnecessarily and I cannot think of anything in our future that I could begin to be able to support you, (the beginning will, unfortunately, be the reverse), and we have to get Mama and your parents over as soon as possible! During this senseless work that I have to do here, I can think of everything to make me yearn for the language [that I am used to]. I can say everything, but only, as I probably already told you, stuttering through the simplest thing. The fact that people have a horrible dialect is a poor excuse: instead of *no, nau*; instead of *much, motsch*... all I need to do is open my mouth and even the dumbest farm boy knows that he has a foreigner in front of him. Unfortunately I see the necessity of learning English, how will I be able to have an intelligent profession without. I could, however, work, but a worker finds satisfaction in his profession because that is the only thing that he can stand. But I have not been made to do (physical) work, thank God! And these 3 words tell you what a senseless gibberish I have just said, but I am happy to be as I am, that I do actually have other interests than a worker, who seems to be uninterested in most of the things, what can I speak about with the people: their monotonous *down with Hitler*, they have no idea about the Crusaders or King Richard the Lionhearted. I love you, even though you are an uneducated waitress, that is something else, right, my dear Lieschen?

On April 18, 1939, Tante Rosa and Käthe Neumann sent Steffi a postcard saying that they had just taken "your Mickerl"[153] to the train station. Tante Rosa wrote: "Mama was always courageous, hopefully she is traveling to a happier future!"

Among the letters that were found and transcribed and translated was a most moving one, written by Tante Rosa to Steffi on April 18, 1939, after having said goodbye to Bertha at the train station:

> Now dear Mama has also left and my heart was very heavy when I said goodbye, for she is, as you know, my only, best friend, and [my] advice-giver has left and I will miss her very much and so very often I will miss her suggestions. We were together today at the Westbahnhof Restaurant, Mama paid, as usual, splendid as ever and good and dear. Käthe and I accompanied her there and from the same spot as you, we waved to her until the train disappeared from our eyes.

Then Tante Rosa wrote that she and Käthe had given Bertha a goodie-bag to take on the train;

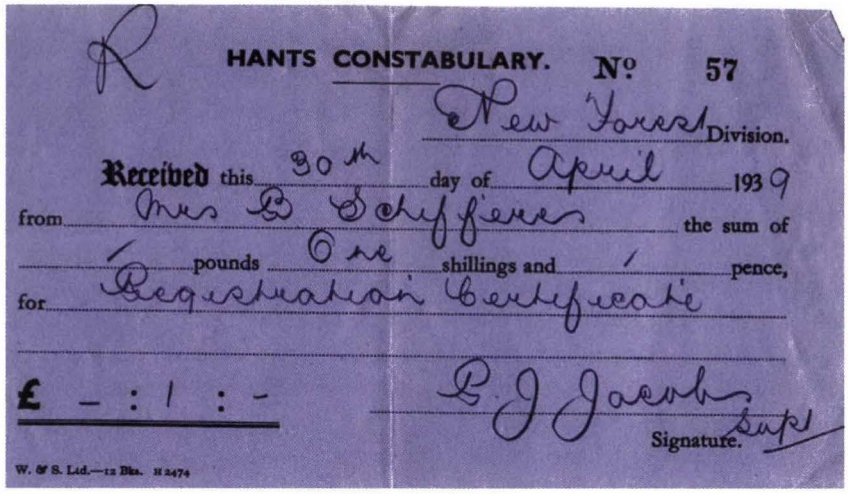
[153] Steffi's nickname for his mother.

...hopefully she will like the things; she would gladly send you something from it, she is always thinking only of you. She will be very lucky if she will be able to live with you, and you, dear Steffi, will certainly try to have this luck come true as soon as possible.

Tante Rosa reminded Steffi to write the letters she had asked him to

...because I have no options for Fritz and have a great fear what will happen to him. We are filled with worries and very sad; Onkel Dori can no longer go into his shop, that now belongs to a member of the party and he really misses the usual occupation; it will soon be liquidated; such a pity, for so long Onkel Dori worked and now everything is dissolving.

Mrs. Mason wrote Steffi saying that she had heard that his mother was leaving Vienna and she wondered if he would be meeting his mother in London. Bertha arrived in London, spent the night at a shelter, and had her baggage shipped to Brokenhurst. She then took the train from London to Brokenhurst and Mrs. Mason arranged for her to be picked up from there.


HANTS CONSTABULARY. No 57

New Forest Division.

Received this 30th day of April 1939

from Mrs B Schiffers the sum of

One pounds shillings and pence,

for Registration Certificate

£ - : 1 : -

P. J Jacobs Supt

Signature.

W. & S. Ltd.—12 Bks. H 2474

Bertha's Registration Certificate Issued by the Hants Constabulary, 30th April 1939

In a letter sent from Fisherwick Farm [end of April 1939] Steffi bemoaned the bureaucratic mess ahead of him and described the forms received from the American Consulate in London.[154]

My dear Lieschen!

Just yesterday the forms from A.C. L'don came. Form A) Explanation for me, B) I am including: C) was the registration blank that I filled out with A (so that they could figure it out). Ines' personal handing in or sending it in, together with a

[154] Steffi copied out part of the complicated language from Form A: "1) Financial Support from persons in the USA. Applicants who are to be in any degree dependent upon relatives, friends or other persons in the United States should send to such persons at their earliest convenience the enclosed Form B, with the request that their sponsors in the U.St. comply strictly with all of the requirements listed therein and return the necessary evidence to the applicant for presentation with his or her documents at the time of the formal visa application at this office." The forms also required "evidence of adequate financial resources in form of letters from the applicant's banker... affidavits in dupl. from each relative or finance guaranteeing support must be presented. Such affid. should be corroborated by statements from disinterested third parties such as the banker and employer of the affiant."

form and payment card for aff. transference was sent. And B) I have only notarized copies of the affid. from you, Simon, and Batesman [sic]; did Guthman at least tell you if the affid. requirement especially 10. conform, were the 2 copies with enclosures sent. Is, for example, the affid. from Batesman that I have a copy, or must I give it to the Consul, as No. 2. I received it with an accompanying letter from Mr. Guthman. Concerning your explanation of No. 9, there was a place in Form A where it says that women who are summoned by their fiancé.... I therefore do not know if your explanation 2) is even necessary, if you eventually prefer such affid. from relatives and fiancés, with consideration of your better job and should give a new affid. or not. Naturally I will try to not use your affid. so that I can give it to your parents, if that is necessary. But I believe that later you can go to citizens for your parents. In Form C under profession (occupation) that I want to be in, any I can get (Sporting Teacher, farm work) anything but just not this! If a position has already been found, I wrote No. Under Resources: None (German Refugee) but from American friends. Under present occupation: working on Fisherwick Farm. I have had enough of that because free-time here is 0 and I am thinking only of making free-time and looking for work but—I do not want to complain to you again, I did not take this whole thing on very intelligently, I should have really gone to a *Kibbutz*. You should really not have been so afraid of that, there I would have been much freer than here as an unpaid (that is what bothers me the most) work slave who is felt sorry for in writing by the *Chaverim*, that was not necessary and in the Camp, even with all the Germans, I could have learned more and spoken better English and would not have ruined my hands like this. But I could have actually had it worse, I could have been placed on a much smaller farm and therefore have to be happy about how things are. Hopefully it will get better soon, if I am already working, I want it to be for someone, not for my own food. But without you, everything I begin makes no sense. —I am complaining and complaining and have no reason: because Mama is already here. Still, I have not yet had a letter from her, she must have a lot to learn and is so conscientious. Poor thing, has to be working so hard and being almost 54 years old, work as a servant. As long as she is well, that is the most important thing—and that we 3 will soon be united!! Still I am asking you, is the farm boy, son of a cook not too beneath you?? The farmer told his neighbor and renter, the black-smith, that Hitler has stopped the emigration of Jews because he is concerned that they will go to the armies of these countries and they have to join the army.... Do not be angry that I have complained so much to you, I only have you, Lieschen, to whom I can open my whole heart and give my whole heart, and if only I could get to you soon, I would also work over 8 hours, at least. But sometimes it makes me angry that I am really living like a farmer, have no other interests, nor could I have any and hope, still hope for a quick decision through the A.C. L'don, which, unfortunately is not dependent on us and for which Mr. Guthman is also doing nothing—apparently cannot do anything; aside from getting money out of you, for that amount you could have probably picked me up yourself. That would be fine! But I would also like to come alone, but perhaps the war will cause everything to move along because otherwise things are just flat!? I love only you and nothing has changed—aside from getting stronger daily and longing more for you, I think of you and would like to hold you close to me again. Let my written kisses suffice in the meantime from

Your Steffi."

Chapter 41: Running Out of Patience

Lotte Landauer, a friend of Steffi's from Hamburg, Germany, whom he met while on a sports tour in the summer of 1937, replied to Steffi [May 9, 1939] about his inquiry on the dissolution (otherwise known as "Aryanization") of Onkel Dori's business. In this letter, Lotte described how quickly the Nazi vultures swooped in and confiscated her husband's business while he was in St. Moritz recovering from an illness. She also bemoaned the fact that all of her nice things and beautiful house in Hamburg were gone, but, in the same sentence, wrote

> [I]...do not feel sorry about it because all of that is superficial and not the most important thing. Unfortunately as a refugee and completely inexperienced in such things, I cannot advise you much, it is so tragic that all the decent modest Jews who did not bother anyone and lived quietly and diligently with their families, will be thrown out from everything, without any new possibility in their homeland.

In response to Steffi's inquiry about his Onkel Dori's tanning and hide business, Lotte wrote:

> If it would be advantageous for him to give a responsible Aryan acquaintance the necessary permission papers to take over the company and who could and would be permitted to pay is a matter of luck. In Germany we unfortunately have better experience with these things than you, for whom everything happened to all the poor people like a storm, which, for us, did not happen quite so quickly.

Lotte also suggested other countries that Steffi should try: Australia had "...many smaller cities with more opportunities and certitude." She also mentioned the French African Colony of Guadalupe, which had "...a favorable climate and is also called a friendly place. For me, that would be the first place I would inquire about."

On May 10, 1939, Walter H. Schwab from the Council for German Jewry Agricultural Committee at the Bloomsbury House sent Steffi a registered letter to the farm, Stubby Lees, informing him that they were going to be sending him from Fisherwick to a gardening post near Southampton. The letter noted; "You will see from the enclosed letter to Mr. Brunt why this is necessary." They enclosed the fare of 5 shillings and asked him to report to their office when he arrived in London.

The letter to Mr. Brunt said that they found that they had to "remove" [meaning transfer] Mr. Stephen [sic] Schifferes "for person [sic] reasons, and will be pleased if you will release him on Monday so that he can return to London." Apparently Steffi's complaints about the unhygienic conditions on the farm paid off. He was about to be re-settled closer to his mother.

Tante Gisi wrote Steffi from Ala Mor's in London, announcing her arrival and expressing hope to be able to see Bertha and him before her departure from Southampton, even though she did not know how far away they were. She said that although the matters in Vienna had not been resolved, Ala Mor suggested she come immediately "...since we never knew from one day to the next what could happen."

In a letter to Steffi [May 13, 1939], Liese reprimanded him about not having sent his documents by certified mail and said: "At the time, when I was at the Ransom's, I often had less money than you and never saved on postage." She wrote how upset she was with him because he perhaps caused a delay.

> If you are concerning yourself so little about your things (that means carelessness), why are you not more careful for my sake; I think you know that I have concerned myself with unchangeable and influential matters for you for months now.

For Hede's birthday every year Liese would buy her favorite fruit, "...the first cherries, in a bag. That is why I will ask Hans to buy her some in my name. I always send Hede $1 in every letter, she is always furious, but I still want to do it so she can have her favorite meals."

Liese corrected some of Steffi's mistakes in his English letter to her, although she explained that if he did not want to see her corrections, or was offended by her sending them, he should just throw the corrections in the trash. She also wrote that her pronunciation was still not that good, that she still mixed up all the different s sounds. "The other day a man let me read the whole menu and I, wondering why he did not read it himself, got the answer: because I like your accent. Funny world!"

Liese also bemoaned the fact that, for the first time, she and Hede were not with their mother for Mother's Day, as they always had been.

> There are so many children who do not feel this way and could make their mother happy, and we who would love to do it, cannot. Is this just? But, such is life and we have to go on and hope.

And at the very end of the letter, she wrote Steffi how the Americans could not pronounce her first name, "Lee zeh", but rather called her "Leesa". That is why she changed the spelling of her first name to the more American: Lisa.

In a Strauss family letter [undated] to Steffi, Sophie wrote that she had forgotten to put mothballs in the "Lift" of things sent by ship [the family used the term "lift" to describe a crate or container]. "I really cannot understand how I could forget that since I am usually so exacting. For that reason you must get to Liese soon so you can unpack the Lift soon." She also informed Steffi that Hugo was working once again as a consultant for 3 months and was working very hard.

The sports students sent Steffi a postcard to the farm Stubby Lees, which was then forwarded to Mrs. Mason's house. "Sport teacher" Peter [Meyer] wrote that they had made it through the six examinations and were having a farewell party. Rudi [Siegel] added that they missed Steffi's farewell poems and hoped Steffi was having fun with "your horses + rams." One of the instructors, Dr. Königsberg, sent greetings, as did other students: Trude Seligmann, Hannelore [Pels], Helga [Levin], Marianne Schlesinger, Albert Goss, and [Dr. Karl] Adler[155] wrote a music staff on which he wrote the musical interpretation of his name: the note A, D with a longer stem to also form an "L", an E with the stem forming an "R."

Tante Else wrote Hede for her birthday on Onkel Stefan's letterhead: "Lawyer J.U. Dr. S. Ringer, Vienna, II., Taborstrasse 21a," although the letter was first sent to Liese, who then forwarded it on to Hede. Tante Else was very encouraging and told Hede that their first jobs would not be the ones they wanted, that every beginning was difficult. She also wrote about Onkel Stefan's relative, a Dr. Stolper, with whom Mr. Huppert spoke in New York. He apparently got a very cool reception, which was not surprising to Tante Else since Dr. Stolper was "...a very hard and heartless person towards his relatives."

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[155] See Appendix A, *Stuttgart Sportschule*, for more about Dr. Adler.



Postcard from Steffi's sports school colleagues, dated 13 May 1939, signed by Dr. Karl Adler, Marianne Schlesinger, Peter Meyer, Hans Philippson, Rudi Siegel, Trude Seligmann, Helge Levin

On May 17, 1939, Steffi sent his ex-girlfriend, Friederike Stockhammer, birthday greetings and asked how everyone was and said that she should write to him. "You know that I always wanted to come here and now it seems that I am." (When Steffi finally arrived in the United States, he sent Friederike some care packages because he knew of the hardships in Europe during and after the war.)

Onkel Emil, who was still in New York City (601 West 137th Street, Apt. 63), wrote Hede about his brief and uncomfortable meeting with Herbert Muller at the Claridge Hotel. Everyone was desperately trying to get Hugo and Sophie Strauss affidavits so they could get out of Vienna. In the end, Herbert finally consented to provide an affidavit for the Strauss parents.

In her letter dated May 20, 1939, Liese wrote that she had received a nice letter from Tante Rosa and found that she had written "...courageously, I mean in that within the possibilities of censorship. I feel so sorry for her because of Fritz, also because she writes that she lost her best friend, your mother." Liese would have written a letter for Tante Rosa on Fritz's behalf, but asked Steffi for some background information. She also mentioned having received a letter from her father's cousin, Gerhart Loewenbaum, who was living in Argentina.

Liese did some pro bono translation work at the Library of Congress for an acquaintance of her two friends, Dorothy and Ruth. Liese had given up the idea of taking a civil service examination in shorthand and typing, but was thinking of taking an examination for admission to high school "...even though that does not make much sense." She wrote that she could not safely come back alone to Ingraham Street late at night: "There is quite a bit of white-slave trade and the like, so that it is quite impossible to go out alone, especially at night."[156]

Liese also wrote that as of May 11 [1939], Siegfried Held was paying for an apartment in Chicago for Hede and Hans, who still did not have jobs. And she was also always wondering about her and Steffi's future. She knew that she wanted to work with Steffi, but was thinking about Washington, remarking that it was very pretty, but she saw no advantage in staying there.

> Who would have thought that we would have such experiences a year ago? 1 year of separation, disappointments, hopes. Out of 365 days there were at most 15 happy ones. And they say that the time between getting engaged and married is supposed to be the nicest.

Steffi wrote his first letter from southern England, actually from Campden House, where he was visiting his mother, and since Mrs. Mason was away in Scotland, the butler let him spend the night in one of the many rooms. He wrote that it was sheer coincidence that he ended up being moved there by the Bloomsbury House. He was one of 100 garden workers at Hale Nursery, Woodgreen, Fordingbridge, Hants, and worked with the repotting of chrysanthemums. The advantages were being close to his mother (17 miles from where he was staying, in Downton, Wiltshire, which he did with his bicycle). He mentioned that he would be moving out "...because another person, a young German lad from Leopoldstadt, is not pleased." He also wrote that he was being paid £2 per week, one of which went for room and board." To get to his job, Steffi had to ride two miles, which took him fifteen minutes.



Steffi on his bike, Campden House, August 9, 1939

On May 22, 1939, Steffi wrote that, whereas before he worked on a "...farm with dirty farmers who had animals, now I am renting from a normal dirty engl. landlady. According to the hygiene here, one can say that the English are on a very low cultural step." He wrote that he was also ruining his hands there, "...but as an Engl. worker said: "it is play after farm work." Steffi also

[156] Perhaps Mrs. Edna Ellis Hilton instilled this fear into Liese.

bemoaned the uncertainty of finding work "...so easily and earn so much and work for kind bosses, in such good air and beautiful landscape in the USA, despite that, I will come only to you with the first and best opportunity."

Steffi had been told at the Bloomsbury House that the American Consul was getting more stringent with the affidavit-givers, asking them why they were willing to take on this burden, how they intended to "keep or support" the person to whom they had given an affidavit, as well as how many affidavits they had already given. Steffi was hoping that either Liese or Mr. Guthman would be able to answer these questions.

Campden House, where Bertha was employed as a domestic, was, according to Steffi's letter, "...a very nice house, in a very nice neighborhood, with gorgeous gardens, c. 30 rooms, but in a remote village, that is, no bus, no train." Mrs. Mason was "of nobility," and often had guests, which meant there would be a lot for Bertha to do, but thankfully Mrs. Mason also traveled a lot.



Campden House

According to a recent description [2009], [157]

> Campden House is a handsome property built in 1927, which occupies a private position only a short walk from the centre of Burley village, surrounded by its own gardens, paddocks, and woodland with direct access to the forest. It has red brick elevations under a tiled roof and an impressive pillared entrance porch, as well as a beautifully proportioned pedimented Georgian elevation overlooking the garden on the south side. The accommodation is well laid out, the main reception rooms are a good size and lead off the entrance hall. Like much of the accommodation over both the ground and first floors, the entrance hall displays a beautiful pine floor, as well as an open fireplace with a solid fuel-burning stove. In addition to the main accommodation, the ground floor has an unmodernised wing with a double garage and a number of store rooms that lead to a foaling barn, accessed through a courtyard. On the first floor there are four bedrooms, each with an en-suite bathroom and an additional bedroom/dressing room.

[157] http://www.prlog.org/10429068-country-property-for-sale-in-burley-new-forest-hampshire.html.

> The second floor has a guest suite with bedroom, bathroom, and sitting room as well as two further bedrooms and a bathroom. The kitchen has been upgraded extensively…

On May 24, 1939, Fritz wrote: "It pleases me to know that you finally are earning and working in a nursery with 100 workers. Could you not use 101?" Tante Rosa added how troubled and sad she was because Fritz was unable to leave.

Bertha sent Steffi a postcard saying that she would be going to Southampton to say farewell to Tante Gisi, who was going to Australia, and wondered if Steffi would be able to join her.

On May 24, 1939, Liese wrote to Bertha expressing her anger and dismay at Steffi for not having taken care of the transfer of his papers from Vienna. "I already wrote that Steffi should not rely on me, nor Mr. Guthman, nor anyone else (e.g., Ines) but rather only on himself." Despite having spent $120 on Guthman and wasting the past two months, Liese was upset with Steffi for not sending important correspondence by certified mail.

The following day Liese wrote that she had found out that Steffi's papers would remain in Vienna as long as he did not personally write to request them to be cabled. She asked that Bertha give Steffi the envelope and stamp. Liese was quite upset and running out of patience.

Onkel Emil was doing his utmost in New York to procure an affidavit from Herbert Muller, who, apparently, was unwilling to disclose his $10,000 per year salary on the document, but was willing to give Onkel Emil a power of attorney so Onkel Emil could procure a copy of Herbert Muller's life insurance policy from The Prudential Insurance Company. As to the income form, Muller referred Onkel Emil to his lawyer, Abraham Adelson, 570 Seventh Avenue.

Onkel Alfred was trying to come to the States from Switzerland and, according to Onkel Emil, would, after all, need another affidavit; he asked Liese to look around. Onkel Emil was advised by the Jewish Council in New York at his "resettlement appointment" to go to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Although there was no concrete job there yet, they felt his chances would be better there than in New York. "The Leitmotiv seems to be that New York is filled with emigrants...."

Bertha wrote Liese [May 27, 1939] that she and Steffi went to see Tante Gisi off in Southampton. Tante Gisi had

> ...also left us and I will hardly see her again in my life. The only good news is that Lisbeth and her husband are doing well and that now they will also have their mother there with them.

She also wrote that Liese's parents would be going to Pötzleinsdorf to see Tante Rosa "...in that garden, one practically does not know that there are N[azis]." Steffi added on, telling Liese how much he loved her and would always love her: "...we were put on this earth to be together."

Steffi moved into the Council House, which was "1.) somewhat cleaner, 2.) 2-½ miles closer to the nursery and to Mama, and 3.) the hope still remains that I will not have to wait very long." Steffi was worried that since he lived so close to his new job, the bicycle he was using would be taken away from him. But he wanted to keep it so he could ride the 13 miles to visit his mother.

On May 28, 1939, Ines wrote a most touching letter to Liese to wish her a happy birthday. She reminisced that when they both completed their *Matura* in 1935, that had been the last birthday for which Ines could personally wish her all the best. But, she wrote, this year was different from the last three times:

> It is not because you are further away and because you are apart from your parents for the first time—and celebrating, but also because you are at the cusp of a new phase in your life and therefore wishes have even more significance than before. You were able to set foot in a new country and found a new, free homeland and, as I wish, your siblings and also your parents and your bridegroom will follow....
>
> You have the most difficult, the beginning, behind you, but a lot still stands before you and much energy, courage, happiness, and faith will still be necessary before you reach your goal.

Then Ines wrote that they had wanted to spend the Whitsun holiday in Paris,

> ...but since we are still, thanks to Hitler's deeds, stateless individuals, we did not get a visa, same as for the USA and are staying stateless in Guinea, are happy that we are allowed to enjoy the sun and hope for the future.

On May 28, 1939, Hugo, Tante Stephy, Sophie, Fritz, and Tante Rosa all sent Steffi a letter. Hugo, in his indomitable fine humor, wrote that according to what he read in Steffi's letter to Tante Rosa: "They transformed the vault jumper into a gardener" (meaning that Steffi was no longer an athlete, studying at the sports school, but rather working at a nursery).

Billy Ostermann also wrote from Basel with birthday wishes for Liese [May 30, 1939].

> For the first time you will be spending this day with strangers and therefore will think of the past years with a bit of sadness—hopefully in the meantime you have found such good friends that you will hardly notice the difference.

Billy and her father were doing well in Switzerland, and even got to go play tennis, "...not at all emigrant-like...." She had decided to pursue medical studies in Switzerland, which she was enjoying immensely. Actually, she thought that perhaps it made no sense to be studying during such uncertain times: "...we have no idea what will be at the end of the year, what will happen with A.H.[158] etc...." Then she wrote: "Be happy that you are out of Europe's witch's cauldron! I am happy every day that Basel still lies in Switzerland!"

Peter Meyer, a sports colleague of Steffi's from the school in Stuttgart, asked Steffi to contact his cousin, Vera Woodward, Nottingham 9, Cavendish Crescent South, The Park, to see if matters could not be expedited so that Peter and his brother, Hans, could get out of Nazi Germany. According to Peter, Vera Woodward kept delaying matters by claiming that this and that was missing, which merely served as an excuse for her not doing anything at all.

On June 2, 1939, Steffi sent a registered letter to the American Consulate General, Immigration Department, in Vienna, hoping to clarify his own situation. In the letter he stated that he had registered for the quota on May 31, 1938, that all four affidavits [30.XII.1938, 3.I. 1939, and 22 III. 1939] had been received and were confirmed through the Consulate's forms, and that the payment card had also been sent in on April 7, 1939. He requested that they please deal with his case "urgently" since his stay in England was limited.

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[158] Adolph Hitler.

In his letter to Liese, Steffi wrote of his helplessness and exasperation with the London American Consulate, through which the transfer of his documents could take place [June 2 & 4, 1939]. He also wrote how he fantasized about riding "in the Engl. Style," on a tandem bike with her.

Hans Philippson, Steffi's sports school colleague, wrote on June 2, 1939, that the test was finished, and Steffi's "...former colleagues now have their diplomas...." He said that through the Quakers he was able to get agricultural training. In another correspondence that he sent c/o Hale Nursery, Hans wrote that he was on a farm an hour from London, near Oxford. There were approximately 120 people from Germany and two from Vienna who lived together in a barn, "...amazingly no one knew you." Then Hans wrote of the inevitability of war, but added: "Hopefully it will not really happen."

Liese's letter of June 5 and 6, 1939, expressed concern about the tremendous cost of shipping and storing the crates of furniture, etc., that had been sent from Vienna. And the other difficult question: Where should they be sent? Chicago? Washington? She also expressed delight that Steffi, as he had written, would even give up his earnings to go to America!

The letters seemed to be coming from all over. Friederike Stockhammer wrote Steffi from Rab, Yugoslavia, on June 4, 1939, where she was vacationing for three weeks. She informed Steffi that the *Buchkaufmannschaft*, where he had worked, had dissolved and nothing was opened in its stead. She also complained that their pensions were dissolved and that they had hired lots of inexpensive young workers. "So you see, you are already far away from these problems and I wish you a better future after all the suffering you went through. I heard that you were in D.[achau] Is that true?" She had also heard that he had gotten married and Friederike understood: "...it was your last salvation." She said she had been hurt when she heard about his engagement, but was now over it and could think of him as a friend.

Rudi Siegel, another of Steffi's sports colleagues from Stuttgart, sent a letter from Magdeburg, dated June 6, 1939, informing Steffi that he was awaiting his confirmation from the *Reich* agency so that he could go to England. He also described the sports examination they had taken: class exercise, then 17 questions, and then the second day again 17 questions, oral questions on Jewish history, and 10–15 minutes of prayer. Rudi wrote that there was no doubt that all of them would pass the examination. He had saved the questions and said he would show then to Steffi when he saw him in England.

Hugo wrote Steffi [June 7, 1939] that there was a real boom in his business and he was working until 10:30 every night. He was, with the help of his secretary, Frau Schüssel, working on getting Steffi's papers in order. Hugo said how thoughtful it was for both Steffi and Bertha to have each sent Liese £1 for her birthday.

> You will see how well we will all get along and I am looking forward to living in a little villa on Lake Michigan, surrounded by my children and grandchildren. I will gladly take over the position of master of the house.

Sophie was hoping that Mrs. Hilton would prepare a birthday table for Liese, with flowers and the usual *Gugelhupf*. "Hopefully the next [birthday] will be spent with all of us united." Meanwhile, Tante Stephy was busy with her sewing class, making nice children's clothes, and studying English.

Upon Peter Meyer's suggestion, Steffi had begun to correspond with Mr. Woodward, Peter's cousin in London. Mr. Woodward wrote that the guarantee money for their passage money to the U.S.A, was expected. "I am told that for young men of military age without parents here, the quite usual period between the first application and granting permission to land is eight months."

That is how long they had been trying to get Peter and his brother Fritz out of Germany. On June 10, 1939, Peter wrote that he had gotten a job as a gym teacher in a Jewish School in Hamburg, Talmud Tora High School. Peter also wrote that Bernd Hanauer had been sent to Amsterdam to recuperate from his meniscus surgery and was staying with his brother there.

Then Peter's father, Richard Meyer, wrote Steffi from Berlin thanking him for his help and asking if he could also try to help his other son, Felix Günther Paul Max Meyer, born in Berlin October 5, 1919, who was also a gym teacher.

Liese wrote Steffi [June 10, 1939] that Hans had gotten a job in a toy factory, earning $12 a week and more if there was overtime. Hede occasionally had baking commissions and was working at a store. As for Liese, she was happy every day that she had a job, and delighted that she got to see President and Mrs. Roosevelt and the King and Queen of England in a parade in Washington.

Pepi wrote Liese that they were expecting Grete's arrival on June 19 and that there was still no progress in getting his parents out.

Steffi wrote [June 13, 1939] that the workers changed often at the nursery because they found better paying jobs in war preparation in the city. He also described the small-town atmosphere:

> Woodgreen is 88 miles from London, 20 miles from Bournemouth, 8 miles from Salisbury, next is Breamore, it is larger and is on the main road, the next bigger place in Hampshire [Hants] is Fordingbridge; nevertheless I informed Mama that when I go through F. on the way to her and want to put a letter in the letter-box of the post-office, I have to brake very hard otherwise I am already out of the town.

In a letter to Steffi and Bertha [June 12, 1939], Hede wrote about Hans' job at the toy factory, "which was neither intellectual nor well paid," where he had "...to fill a few thousand bottles with red or black oil paint so that the children can paint their tin soldiers, and other such things." He worked six days a week, from 8:30 to 6:00 with a half-hour break, and earned about $15. Hede also wrote that she was trying to go to see Mr. Leeb, one of Steffi's affidavit givers, who apparently lived in a "...fabulous house, even though one rarely finds such a thing in America."

On June 13, 1939, Wilfred O. Woodward, the cousin of Peter and Felix [Fidi] Meyer, wrote Steffi that it was his understanding that he was going to put the boys up for a few months on their way to the USA. He had just been informed by Woburn House that he would be responsible for paying for their passage to England, as well as putting them up during their stay. He wrote that he was not in a financial position to do this; furthermore, the boys did not have jobs. Then he asked Steffi to see if his employer could do something for them. Then, on June 16, 1939, Woodward wrote that he had been unable to get a reply from Woburn House. He was happy that Steffi's contact, Captain Dodgson[159] might help, but thought

> ...that he can hardly be expected to because he is no relation to the boys, but does it occur to you that the same reason also applies to me? They are distant relatives of my wife's and there is really no obligation.

He wrote that if Dodgson were willing to guarantee for one boy, he would do the same for the other.

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[159] Captain Dodgson was one of the heads of Hale Nurseries in Fordingbridge, where Steffi was working.

Bertha sent Steffi a postcard announcing that she would be off the whole day and that Mr. Richardson, the butler, had suggested that Steffi come to spend the day with her. She knew Steffi would be reluctant to forego earning the money, but she felt that this was such a rare event, her having the day off.

Rita, from the Council for German Jewry Agricultural Committee at the Bloomsbury House, wrote Steffi at Hale Nursery in Woodgreen [June 16, 1939] to say that she was interested in Steffi's suggestion of possibly "...placing boys under 18 at the Nursery..." and she would be writing to Mr. Dodgson to see if he would, in fact be interested in doing this. Rita thought that several Youth Aliyah children could be sent. It "...would not only give them an opportunity to learn something about horticulture, [but also provide the opportunity] to meet together and study in their spare time."

Chapter 42: I Love the Freedom and I Like to Fight

Liese wrote [June 17, 1939] that Hede had gotten a job as a pastry chef and Liese was supposed to send her recipes! But the most important thing that Liese described was how she felt about her new homeland:

> ...I love the freedom and I like to fight. I mean that there are innumerable possibilities for people who are ambitious. The relative youth of this land is what causes this. Everyone whom I have gotten to know until now was nice and ready to help.

She said that she did not like England as much as America and would have preferred France. She imagined that in five years Steffi could begin something on his own. "In England there are not these possibilities other than to be a servant and I do not want to spend my life like that."

In the same letter Liese wrote that Mrs. Hilton was going to France on the SS Normandie and would not be returning until September. She expected Liese to stay in the big house all by herself, without gas light or radio. Liese hoped that Steffi would be there soon and suggested that he go to see

> the very influential Mr. Basil Henriques, St. Georges Settlement, London, upon the recommendation of Mr. David Simon (son of Rabbi Simon) with the request to help expedite your thing... Mr. Simon is certain he can do something.

Fritz wrote [June 17, 1939] about the various items that Steffi and Bertha had forgotten and thought that if Dr. Strauss would not include them in the "Liese-Lift," then perhaps he would do so if Steffi asked him. Among the forgotten items was a yellow knit pillow and two lamps of which Bertha was very fond. Fritz also wrote: "Is there nothing to do with the 101 workers?"—Meaning, could they not use just one more worker at the nursery, namely Fritz? Both Fritz and Tante Rosa wrote that they did not get into the city. Who knows what life in downtown Vienna was for the Jews at that time? And there were the worries of getting Fritz out. Tante Rosa wondered if Liese could do anything for him.

On June 18, 1939, Steffi and Bertha wrote to Liese. Steffi was visiting his mother on his day off and Mrs. Mason and the "butler couple" were away. The American niece of Mrs. Mason and her three children and "black nurse" were visiting from New Orleans, which meant there would be a lot of work for Bertha in the next two months. He wrote that his poor Mama had to work fourteen "long and hard hours "and that he was also working hard. He was not looking forward to his third trip to London for his appointment with the U.S. Consul General to straighten out the emigration matter. London, according to Steffi, was a "dirty huge city."

In the same letter Bertha thanked Liese for her birthday wishes and wrote her how pleased she was with her letter. "I can remember exactly all the days a year ago, since then so much has changed. Even though I had a very lonely birthday, still it was somewhat quieter and worry-free." Everyone was concerned about Fritz's future and everyone was presuming that his wife would be leaving him soon. "One cannot really hold that against her," Bertha said.

Finally, on June 18, 1939, Onkel Emil wrote Liese that he had just sent Hede the Muller affidavit and was still searching for Herbert's sister, Emilie,[160] who was not listed in the telephone book.

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[160] Herbert's sister was Emilie (Millie) Goldberg, born November 29, 1891; she died in Miami Beach in July 1969. She lived at 541 13th Street and her husband's initials were A. L.

Since Herbert Muller was the owner of the Claridge Hotel in New York City, Hede thought that Onkel Emil should inquire at the hotel.

In the meantime, Herr Richard Meyer wrote from Berlin-Wilmersdorf [June 18, 1939] about his sons and the business of getting them out. He had gotten a guarantee for passage to America for both boys from a childhood friend of his wife who lived in New York. The woman had contacted her bank in London and was awaiting news from the Woodward cousins in London that they had received the receipt. Herr Meyer asked Steffi to go to the Woburn House to make inquiries on the boys' behalf and that a certain Mrs. Eva Jaffa knew someone at the Bloomsbury House "...who could do things quicker at Mrs. Jaffa's behest and would be more interested in taking care of the matter." Her brother, Herr Günther Danielsohn, who was living in Berlin, had also written her a letter about this.

Everyone elicited help from anyone so that they could get out. Such was the desperation being felt already in June of 1939.

On June 19 the German Jewish Aid Committee sent Steffi a letter informing him of his appointment with the American Consul on Friday, June 23. A postal order for 16/ was included in order to cover his expenses for a return ticket to London, and they had also arranged for him to stay at the "Jews Temporary Shelter, 63, Mansell Street, Aldgate, E.1." for the night of June 22 to June 23. He was also told to show the letter, which had been signed by Stephan Jacobi, when he arrived at the Shelter.

On the same day the Council for German Jewry Agricultural Committee sent Steffi a letter, which included 6/3d for his bicycle "tyre" and requested a receipt from him. It had been my father's idea to have some boys from the Youth Aliyah come to Hale Nursery to work, and Rita wrote that it would be best if Erich Duschinsky of the Youth Aliyah office would go to speak with Mr. Dodgson. Rita asked if, in the meantime, they could take one boy named Harry Szmetena, aged 16, as soon as possible because he had "...to leave his present place. I am sending him out next Thursday, if Mr. Dodgson agrees." There was also some question about a young man named Fritz Korn, who apparently had had some problems with his passport.

The Board of Education of the City of Washington, District of Columbia, issued Liese Strauss a certificate on June 21, 1939, which stated that she had "...satisfactorily completed the course of study for elementary schools... and is entitled to admission to one of the Washington high schools." There were Closing Exercises for the Day Classes of the Americanization School on Wednesday, June 21, 1939, and the program stated that Liese Strauss received her eighth grade diploma. Imagine that, after my mother had just about completed the course of study at the Commerce School in Vienna. Apparently immigrants had to be satisfied with whatever they could get. The songs sung at the ceremony included "America," "Old Folks at Home," "Old Black Joe," and "The Star Spangled Banner."

Steffi made an appearance at the American Consulate in London on June 23, 1939, and explained that Liese was already earning $100, to which the official asked why Liese had not written that herself. The Bateman affidavit had gotten lost, but Steffi had a duplicate, which he gave the official. It was unclear why things were taking so long.

On June 25, 1939, Steffi wrote Liese telling her how hard his mother had to work, that "...the butler-married couple, who seem to be jealous of her and treat her badly, practically do not speak with her so that she is all alone and has no opportunity to learn English any better; Mrs. Mason speaks German and is an unapproachable engl. lady."

Steffi was so frustrated by all the delays and uncertainty of even being able to gain entry into the United States that in his letter of June 26, 1939, he asked Liese if she would be willing to go to another country if they could get permission. "We are wasting all of our nerves on this thing and I do not know if this is so bearable for us."

Liese's letter to Steffi [June 25, 1939] again expressed frustration and uncertainty about the visa, Steffi's coming, etc. She asked Steffi to immediately begin working on getting a boat ticket and to please come, if at all possible, on an American ship, "...that would make me feel better and would make our getting married easier." Hede, the good big sister that she was, had asked Liese to write her a postcard every day so that she would know that Liese was fine, "...she does not want me to live alone." Grete Deutsch, Hans' sister, had arrived in the States and was staying with her brother in Newark. She would then be going to Chicago. Liese also wrote that she had found a job and an affidavit for Tante Stephy as a domestic to three small children in a very nice house. Then she wrote that she had taken the test at the Americanization School "...which entitled me to go to high school. *Nebbich.*" [Yiddish for ridiculous.] Apparently the quota number for her parents would just come up in 1940.

On June 26, 1939, Millie [Emilie] Muller Goldberg wrote Liese a letter on Hotel Astor stationery informing her that it would be impossible for her to issue an affidavit because she was a widow and had neither bank books nor property to show to the American Consul. She was living with her brother, Herbert Muller, in the Claridge Hotel at 44th and Broadway.

The German Jewish Aid Committee Immigration Department sent Steffi a letter concerning Fritz and Peter Meyer which said: "...in view of the high waiting number of Mr. Fritz G. Meyer, you [can] bring him to this country for a position with the Hale Nurseries, while Mr. Hans P. Meyer comes over under a guarantee."

In Steffi's letter of June 27, 1939, he wrote that there was a new "calamity": "...the director is asking me and the other refugees... to buy a bicycle." Apparently Steffi was asked to return the bicycle he had been using. Steffi did not want to give up his savings on something that he would not be needing that much longer, but also realized that he absolutely needed a bicycle to go to visit his mother in Burley. He wondered if he should either "*schnorr*"[161] a bicycle from Bloomsbury House,[162] or buy one and then bring it over to America: "Engl. bicycles are prima." Steffi was also very concerned about the 96°F weather awaiting him in Washington.

Liese's employer at the soda bar, Mrs. Crete Hutchinson, wrote a letter of recommendation [June 27, 1939] saying that Liese had worked there as a waitress since March 13, 1939, and that her weekly salary was $21.90, plus tips.

The Strauss family wrote that Tante Rosa and Onkel Dori were having "unpleasant problems" and that Hugo was speaking with them often on the telephone and they were coming to his office frequently. Hugo wrote that working with them was not easy.

On July 1, 1939, Steffi's acquaintance, Lotte Landauer, wrote suggesting that he might be able to get a position as a caretaker of an older person.

Marianne Gerstenfeld, who knew the Strauss Family in Vienna, wrote Liese [July 2, 1939] from England and told her about her and her husband's life in Llanwddyn, England. They had received a household permit and were living 5 hours away from London by fast train. She was employed as a housekeeper, her husband as one of two gardeners, for a "managed hotel business" in a

[161] Yiddish word meaning "beg for."

[162] Bloomsbury House in London became a clearing house for Jewish refugees during the Hitler Era.

beautiful area. They were each earning £1 a week. Her husband had been at Dachau with Steffi. She wrote: "Praise God that all of us, though I do not know about your groom, are out of the hell and can breathe properly." After her husband was arrested, Marianne sent twenty letters seeking an affidavit and finally a guarantor from Washington "...took us under his wing.... It was a wonder of God."

Marianne also wrote that the regulations were now much more stringent for entering the United States from England than from Vienna. In fact, their turn had already come up when the local Consulate inquired about financial backing from the guarantor, a Mr. William J. David, 1347 Saratoga Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C.

In conclusion, Marianne asked how things were for Liese, whether she was satisfied with her job. "Yes, you are to be envied because you know the language and everything is much easier because of that."

Liese was becoming increasingly frustrated with all the bureaucratic nonsense with the various consulates in London and Vienna. She was still alone in Mrs. Hilton's house, though she did have friends: Dorothy [last name unknown] and Mary [Goldwater], who had lived in Vienna for one year and studied graphics. Mary wanted to help Liese by obtaining a supplementary affidavit for Liese's parents. Tante Stephy received an affidavit as a housekeeper, although Liese was certain that Tante Stephy had registered her profession to be "language teacher." Liese took pride in her own *chuzpah*[163] in doing this! She also wrote that there would be no chance that her parents would get out in 1939. "Only through a miracle."

The pace of work at the soda bar had slowed down in the summer and Liese's income was therefore reduced because there were fewer tips. Luckily she was able to supplement her income with teaching someone French twice a week for fifty cents each time. Then she wrote how men wore suits even in the summer heat. "Just imagine...."

The loneliness was also getting to Liese. She wrote that "...it would have been better (even with the babies),[164] than to be completely alone in a big house. But that does not matter. If only your thing would go forward."

In response to Steffi's suggestion of perhaps going to another country, Liese wrote: "I do not think that your situation is so hopeless so that I think your plans to go to another country are selfish. But in the end I am.... Let us wait a little bit—let's wait to see what happens in the end."

Liese praised Steffi's diligence in writing and told him that she really felt close to him when she read his letters. "On the other hand, I realize that I am far away, but do not have time to think about how far." She was trying to keep busy and was even learning how to drive from one of the cooks. Always the concerned young woman, she wrote that Steffi should tell his mother to "...carry on, we will find her something here just as quickly as we did for Tante Stephy, in case you are not earning enough money to take care of her by then!"

On July 3, 1939, Richard Meyer wrote to thank Steffi for all his efforts on behalf of his two sons, Peter and Fidi. He was now in touch with people at the Bloomsbury House and somehow his cousin, Mr. Woodward, was able to get a lower number for Peter as well as the opportunity to work at the Hale Nursery where Steffi was employed, provided the other son would also be taken on. Both Herr and Frau Meyer were very grateful for Steffi's intervention.

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[163] Yiddish word meaning nerve, gumption.

[164] Meaning Dr. Ransom's baby clinic, where Liese had helped.

The mood in Liese's letters was becoming more hopeful [July 4, 1939]. Mr. Guthman, the lawyer, "...was visibly happy with the news.... He was convinced that not many days would pass before the visa would be received, and I hope for the same thing." As to what Steffi should do upon its receipt, Liese wrote that he should telegraph his date of arrival and "come as quickly as possible." She said that it would make no difference if he traveled with an English, French, or American ship, as long as it was a fast one. September 12 was the date when lowered, after-season prices began, and Liese wrote that he should not delay his passage because the Bloomsbury House might want him to travel after that date. She also informed Steffi that "...Chicago is the most important city in the U.S. for sports," and said that Steffi might want to look up Dr. Hugo Haas, a relative of Hans Deutsch who had been in Dachau at the same time as Steffi. Hugo Haas was now living in London. It was he who gave Steffi his "illegal" cloth when he was released from Dachau. Liese also wrote that Steffi should bring all of the money he had out of Europe since the Committee would not give him money in America and it would also be more secure than in Europe.

Without even knowing the exact arrival date, Liese was already trying to arrange picking up Steffi at the pier in New York. She wanted HIAS and Bateman[165] to be waiting on the pier. "Guthman wanted to go to New York to meet you, but I cannot afford his luxury."

Liese was also thinking about getting married and making inquiries about obtaining the marriage license in either New Jersey or New York. She sent greetings to Bertha and told her not to be sad when Steffi left because she would soon be following. "To you I not only wish a quick, but also good and pleasurable crossing of the ocean, which will bring you to a new life that we will spend in love and happiness."

On July 4, 1939, the German Jewish Aid Committee sent Steffi a letter to Woodgreen, Fordingbridge, Hants, stating that they were now able to inform him that all of his documents were at the American Consulate in London and that his USA quota visa would come up in the next weeks or months. They also wrote that there would not be any chance of them being able to intervene on his behalf; that that would be up to the American Immigration and any intervention would do more harm than good. The letter ended, "We hope that you will soon be able to begin your emigration" (signed by Stephan Jacobi).

Alice Ferber, who worked in London for the Trainee Department, had seen Steffi's letter in which he mentioned that the Hale Nursery would perhaps be ready to hire a few more young men under the age of eighteen to work there. She wrote about her sixteen-year-old cousin in Cologne who, at the moment, was working for a company that made military railways. "His parents are of very modest means and, naturally, have absolutely no possibility to earn anything anymore." Surely Steffi understood their predicament. As much as he tried, he could not even save his own uncle, Karl; his cousin Fritz; his cousin Heini; etc. Perhaps by trying to help others he would somehow assuage his guilt and frustration.

Wilhelm Fleischmann sent Steffi a postcard from Hoyland Common in Yorkshire informing Steffi that he had been there for about a month and unfortunately still had no work. He also wrote that the people were very nice to him. It is uncertain how Steffi knew Wilhelm.

Norman Keates, a choral director who was also a piano and dance teacher and lived at Rose Cottage, St. George's Road in Fordingbridge, wrote a letter to the group at Hale Nurseries on July 6, 1939, inviting them to tea. He also wrote another time to invite them and said that the invitation was "carte blanche."

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[165] One of the affidavit givers.

Richard Meyer wrote again from Berlin saying that he had just heard a request on the radio for emigrants to come to England to help with the harvest. He thought that would be a good idea for his eldest son, Gerhard Meyer, born July 13, 1908. "Above all else, Peter and Fidi must go abroad." For some reason, everyone thought that Steffi could solve their problems, when, in fact, he could not even solve his own.

Herbert Muller, who had finally consented to give Hugo and Sophie Strauss an affidavit, apparently had refused to fill out the amount of his fortune from his Income Tax return and because of that, Liese was very concerned. She had even thought of traveling to New York to talk to him, but Onkel Emil promised he would do it and was, in any case, going to Washington to visit Liese on his way to Chicago, continuing on to Minneapolis. Liese was very happy not to be alone for three days and to have someone for whom she could cook breakfast.

Steffi's letter from July 9, 1939, once again expressed his frustration with the American Consulate. He also wrote:

> There is no happy news to report about Tante Rosa. Mary is deserting the "sinking ship;" she has a relationship with a half-Jewish colleague from her office who lives in the same building—this has been going on for over 8 months. Karl is still in Amiens, again without work (musician), but can live off of the support of the Committee. Tante Gisi should already be in Australia...

Tante Rosa wrote Liese [July 10, 1939] to thank her for her birthday letter, which made her very happy, even though it arrived too early! Tante Rosa said she would put it in a safe place and read it again at the appropriate time. She expressed her concern about Fritz: "...if only he could go somewhere!" She was very happy to hear about the accomplishments of the various extended family members. "Yes, you, you young ones, the world belongs to you, far and near.... I cry when I think that I will never ever see any of you again."

Bertha wrote to the American Consulate General in Vienna on July 11, 1939, Lustig Preangasse 9, to inform them that she was now in England and was in the process of registering at the London American Consulate General on 38 Grosvenor Street. She also requested that her forms be transferred there.

The Council for German Jewry Agricultural Committee, 233-237 Bloomsbury House, wrote Steffi on July 11, 1939, informing him that they could not pay for his bicycle since he did not need it for his work, "...but rather only for personal reasons." They also thought that he should "...put an advertisement in the *Times*, but I am afraid you will have to pay for this yourself. I think you ought to be able to manage it out of your wages."

In a letter to Liese [July 15, 1939], Steffi wrote that his visits with his mother were his only diversion and joy. He also said that being in the country was "impossibly boring." Then he asked Liese to look around for another affidavit for Bertha so that she could come over more quickly as a housekeeper or a cook.

> Ultimately I do hope to still come over this year and poor Mama has only me. If I were not able to be with her every Sunday, then her job would be unbearable since the butler makes her do a lot and his wife no longer works there and he is also leaving, as we hoped.

The frustration was building. Steffi wrote:

> You cannot imagine how anxiously I await news from the A.C. in L'don, the whole time I am working, I long for the end of the day because of this letter and it does not come and does not come. I believe neither of us can do any more, other than accept our fate, but what does the State Dep. say to my hurt. We cannot ask for preferential treatment, but there is no reason to let me wait longer than the people who registered in Vienna in June and July. Oh I am so impatient and would rather find another way out if you were not so satisfied with your job and the whole USA. You will also remember the day last July (22.VII.) when you came to Stuttgart, the nice walks through the hills and forests, Geroksruhe, Weissenhof, Ludwigsburg, and the beautiful Neckar city, Marbach, with the baths in the river; that was really our nicest time. Hopefully we will not have to think back with nostalgia much longer and hopefully we will always love one another as we did then and how we long for one another.
>
> I am compelled to write you something else, how happy I am that I found you, not only the dear person, the beloved, and hopefully soon my wife, but also your capable, clever, and sensible creation, who cleverly mastered life and also does a lot for yours (me and your family).

On July 17, 1939, the Woburn House informed Mr. W. Woodward that Fritz Meyer's waiting number was too high for them to be able to help him and that it would be better to seek a "Trainee" post through the "Trainee" Department at Bloomsbury House. As to Hans Peter Meyer, his case would be expedited if Mr. Woodward would complete a guarantee form. Since Peter would have had to stay in England three years, it was suggested that a training post also be found for him.

Liese wrote to Steffi [July 18, 1939] that she herself was also wondering why she was still clinging so to Guthman. She still, for some reason, believed in his ability to expedite Steffi's emigration. Liese also said that the letter from the Committee that Steffi had sent her was very upsetting because it showed a lack of comprehension of the situation.

In the meantime, Onkel Alfred was still "stuck" in Switzerland and, realizing the difficulties of prolonging his stay there, attempted to obtain a permit to go to England so that he could wait there for his American visa. "*But*," he said, writing in English, "*the Jewish Committees are the greatest enemies of the Jews*." Apparently he had had promises from the German Jewish Aid Committee in London in support of his application. And therefore he submitted proof to the police authorities in Bern so that his stay could be prolonged another two months. Despite all of this, he said, "*...the corrupt Committee sent me a definitive refusal and embarrassed me extraordinarily before the Swiss Authorities. I am afraid no further prolongation will be granted to me.*"

Then Onkel Alfred continued the letter in German, asking Liese if she could get some influential American to speak about his situation at the American General Consulate in Zurich. The reason for his difficulties was that he had been born in Czechoslovakia,[166] and therefore fell under the Czech waiting list and quota number. He had registered in Vienna on May 13, 1938.

He also wrote that he had received some jewelry for Liese (from her mother) from a woman named Frau Trennschitz who was in Switzerland temporarily. This included Sophie's engagement

[166] Onkel Alfred came to Vienna with his family when he was quite young.

ring and three things from Liese's deceased grandmother Kurz.[167] Onkel Alfred wrote: "You can imagine how I would like to be able to deliver these things to you personally."

At last, on July 18, 1939, Steffi received a summons for August 12 at 9:15 AM. "A German quota number has been received at this office for your use during August." Then Steffi wrote Liese that she should not be angry that he was not sending her a telegram informing her of this. She would have surely received his letter well before that date. Steffi thought that he would obtain his visa two or three weeks after the second appointment,

> ...but perhaps I can arrange it so it will not take so long.... Now just patience, to persevere until the last weeks, and give me advice as to what I should buy here for the few pounds that I have. Perhaps I will leave it all for Mama.

In order to bring furniture and other household belongings into the United States, Hede advised Liese to tell the officials at the Custom House that she had had the things since she was a child, and in honor of her engagement she got new furniture and used it before her departure.

[167] Eugenie Müller Kurz.

Chapter 43: War Work

Peter Meyer wrote from Berlin [July 18, 1939] to tell Steffi that he was still having difficulties getting out because his cousin, Vera Woodward, was not being particularly cooperative. Furthermore, although he had received a diploma in healing and sport massage from the Sports School, because of his work in the sand his hands were "...hardly appropriate for massage (scraper!)." Then he wrote that if Steffi wanted, he could probably obtain a certificate of Steffi's participation from the healing massage course for him.

The sad saga of Peter Meyer continued when his cousin's husband, Wilfred O. Woodward, sent Peter's father, Richard, a letter stating that the Woburn House was willing to grant Peter a permit, but not Günther, even if he signed a guarantee for both of them. He explained that it would be three years before Peter's number would be called in the USA. But it could be six years before Günther's number came up. He asked,

> Is it wise for any young, able-bodied man to be idle for all that period? Wouldn't it be better for him to remain in his own country? Furthermore, if war should be [sic] break out, my wife, my daughter, and I would all be doing war work—the house would be closed, and I fear that the boys would be interned in this country.... When you first asked me to look after the boys, we all assumed it was a matter of three or four months—not a matter of three to six years, but in spite of this I am not going back on my word....

The Woburn House suggested that Mr. Woodward find Günther [Fritz] as well as Peter a trainee post through the Bloomsbury House. Peter elicited Steffi's help in arranging for both him and his brother to get trainee jobs. Richard Meyer, the father of Peter and Fidi [Fritz Günther], tried to explain the reason that his boys needed to get out of Nazi Germany. But since he could not write this in the letter, he asked Wilfred Woodward to ask Dr. Schifferes or Mrs. Jaffa to explain.

> I don't see any danger of war, no country in the world wants this terrible scourging and no town or other things in the world are worthy of such a bad undertaking. The great difficulties for the boys lie in quite another sphere as I can assure you and are of a manner concerning the experiences we have made. [Herr Meyer's English]

The German Jewish Aid Committee's letter to Steffi, dated July 19, 1939, informed him that there was absolutely nothing they could do to help him obtain his American visa any faster "...as we have no power whatever to intervene at the American Consulate."

A postcard from Bertha [July 19, 1939] expressed mixed emotions on the news of Steffi's summons. "Naturally I am very happy to know about your summons and am, at the same time sad that I will not have you nearby." She also wrote that she had received a card from Karl and "...he is not doing well." She wrote that she was going to send Karl 10 sh[illings]. "He does not even have decent food to eat."

Hugo Strauss wrote a letter to the American Consulate General in Vienna, Germany, on Bertha's behalf, requesting clarification on her German quota number, which she had been given on August 25, 1938 (No. 44279), whereas now she had been told that she had been put on a waiting list on May 31, 1938, with the number 27783.

Onkel Emil was wheeling and dealing with a few Zeis cameras that he had brought into the United States. Apparently there were numerous advertisements in the Jewish refugee newspaper,

Aufbau [*Reconstruction*], of people looking for such cameras, probably because they knew they could get a good price from the very needy refugees.

HIAS wrote Liese on July 22, 1939, indicating approval of her parents' Form 575. They hoped there would be no difficulty or undue delay in obtaining visas.

Apparently Bertha called Mandy Senior from England because she was worried about her brother Karl. This was according to a letter from Fritz dated July 25, 1939. He wrote that if Karl's transfer had been in order, Tante Rosa would have gladly paid the fees. Tante Rosa wrote that she felt so bad about Karl and hoped he would find something soon. She also remarked that it had been three months since she last saw Bertha and spoke with her and she also wondered when that would happen again.

The German Jewish Aid Committee at the Bloomsbury House wrote to Steffi [July 26, 1939] at Woodgreen, Fordingbridge, Hants, stating that they were sending him £3, of which £2/40 was for his visa at the American Consulate and 16 shillings for the trip from Fordingbridge to London. Furthermore, they wrote:

> We cannot say with certainty that you will be able to obtain your "quota-visa" on the same day as your summons. We presume that you can count on an immediate visa since, as you have written, your quota number from Germany has arrived here.

By the end of July [July 27, 1939], Liese was getting increasingly frustrated and impatient.

> The letter from the 13th was very sad, just as sad as our past and the outlook for the future. In spite of that, even though we are at the end of July already, we have to be strong and not give up hope.

Liese still had to justify why Mr. Guthman had been helpful, saying that it was he who had taken care of Leeb and Bateman's affidavits and that is why she trusted him and felt obligated to him. In the meantime, Liese's parents were "...having problems with housing and other things." And Liese thought that Steffi was doubting her love, but reassured him that there was no reason for him to feel that way. Occasionally she would go out with friends, and even went on a moonlight cruise, but did not dance and merely enjoyed the cool breeze. She also wrote that being late in America was considered a "character fault" and that she was certain that Steffi's spoken English would be different from hers: "... that will be funny." In conclusion, she told him to come as soon as possible and that she was doing her utmost to obtain an affidavit for his mother, but had not yet had any success.

In a postcard to Steffi [July 28, 1939] Bertha asked him to come to see her on Sunday and informed him that Mrs. Mason was probably going to visit her son in August and that the butler was getting worse and worse; therefore Mrs. Mason was going to hire two girls and would not have a butler anymore. Bertha wanted to write to Vienna to inquire about her situation, but did not know to whom she should write.

On July 29, 1939, Steffi wrote Liese that at the moment he was "...the provisional leader of the *Kibbutz* Wood-Green of the Youth Aliyah, 7–15 young people are here now, poor children, whom I will take to the movies in Fordingbridge." He was expecting to be reimbursed by the Committee. He also wrote that he was going to write to Liese's father

> ...that we want to get married right away. Do you want to? He will hopefully give us his blessing, and I will save proclaiming my love for you for when we are

> actually married, although you will also have to frequently hear this in private. England is too near Europe, otherwise I like it here so much, since I have received the 2 summons, that I am almost sorry to leave, still the only reason I am going to the States is: You! Yes, here there are also paid bomb throwers and terrorists from a "foreign power," but no explosion reaches Woodgreen near Fordingbridge, Hants, and the few Fascists that are here will hopefully soon be silenced and killed....

Erich Duschinsky from the Children and Youth Aliyah wrote to Steffi [July 31, 1939] asking him to get the enclosed questionnaire filled out by a list of boys in the *Jugend Aliyah* [Youth Immigration to Palestine]: Heinrich Friedmann, Laszlo Goldberger, Sigmund Grunberg, Moses Jacob Hoffmann, Paul Klein, Adolf Leitner, and Hersz Szmetana.

Chapter 44: Long-Awaited News

Finally, on July 31, 1939, the "...long-awaited news" from Bloomsbury House arrived. Steffi wrote that he "could count on an immediate visa notification." But the doubts about how his life would be in America persisted. Steffi wrote: "Here I would have a 'secure' job: Hale Nurseries Ltd. Over there the troubles will begin, how to start, what chances, which profession: only one thing is certain and that is you and hopefully all of your love, that is a lot for me: Everything!

Upon receiving the news, Liese was obviously overjoyed, so much so that everyone at work asked her what the matter was, "...you look so happy." In her reply to Steffi she wrote:

> As you correctly wrote, we still have to live through the last weeks in peace and patience. This month will be the longest of our lives... every day is lost because now the last calm before the storm is upon us, but I hope that you get out before the first cannon shot.

The letter also included advice, "*Ezes*," on what the Committee would pay for and what not. Liese said there was no way that Steffi could count on financial support in the States. "For that reason your questions if you should buy Engl. cloth or a nice suitcase seem so 'funny.'" Furthermore, she advised Steffi to have money for when he landed,

> ...so that you do not have to stop at Ellis Island, it is certainly not a disadvantage to have a few $ instead of a suitcase or suit. Absolutely make sure you leave enough for Mama. The rest will be safer here and will come in handy for you.

Liese was going to ask Mrs. Hutchinson for some time off to meet Steffi in New York. She wrote that the round-trip ticket was only $4 "...because of the opening of the World's Fair." In response to Steffi's question about what he could bring her, she replied that

> ...the times are much too difficult for presents and we will, unfortunately be needing the little that we have and what we earn for daily bread. At least in the beginning... there is no "support committee" here as there is in Europe.

And, since my father was always late, she asked him to be at the train to Southampton at least one hour early so that he would not miss it.

> I send warm greetings to your dear Mama, she should stay at Mrs. Mason's for a few more weeks. I am sure that it will not take longer for her to follow us. I am sure her parting from you will not be easy, I know that already, but the hope of her seeing you again soon will help. And perhaps also the thought of your chances being better here...

Edith Skall, the daughter of the Strauss' friends, wrote from Brazil describing the hardship of her and her mother's life there. And Edith wrote about Liese's friend, Trude Willheim, whose mother and brother were in Cairo, "...suffering terribly from the climate, which is no small thing considering her health and age. It often hits hard, to actually find happiness in [a] successful escape." [August 1, 1939]

On August 2, 1939, the Council for German Jewry Agricultural Committee wrote a most interesting letter to Steffi at the Hale Nurseries Ltd.:

Dear *Chaver*,

> We heard from the Director of the Hale Nurseries that Himmler is preparing to come to London for the second time. The Director wrote very nicely that he does not want to prevent you from tending to important matters, but that [he] would rather not let you go if it is not absolutely necessary.
>
> We wrote to the director that under no circumstance should you be allowed to come here without our consent and that you must contact us beforehand. We have made the same arrangements with all the *Chaverim* so that you do not have to feel that we are singling you out.
>
> We would like to ask you to really abide by these rules so that there will not be any unnecessary troubles, so that we do not anger anyone and so that they will continue to take other *Chaverim*. So it is up to you. (Signed by R. Öttinger)

Other correspondence from the Children and Youth Aliyah addressed to Steffi confirmed the fact that he took on the role of "leader," as he had done in Dachau. In the concentration camp my father slipped into this role because he had figured out that the Nazis respected "leaders." Perhaps it was Steffi's involvement with Peter and Fritz Meyer that brought about his involvement with the young refugees in England.

Frau Cohn from the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* [Reich Assembly of Jews in Germany] wrote to Steffi [August 4, 1939] at "*Kibbutz* Wood Green," thanking him for having written and clarifying the forms that both Meyer brothers had filled out.

Hans Philippson managed to get out of Stuttgart and wrote to Steffi [August 5, 1939] from Kingsey, England, where he was working on a farm.

Käthe Neumann, Bertha's friend who was an elementary school principal in Vienna, wrote to Steffi [August 5, 1939] telling him that she had heard from "Mickerl."[168] Käthe, who was apparently still allowed to work, was still living on Grünentorgasse, where Bertha had stayed to help Käthe with her mother before Bertha's departure from Vienna. Käthe wrote that she had told Fritz about Steffi's "tip," but that the Allinas had other plans and wanted to wait for an affidavit from Yugoslavia. She also wrote that it was "...terribly hot here, the temperature is just as oppressive as the current situation: my poor old woman is suffering both physically and mentally and I with her." She ended by saying: "Perhaps I will once be there as well, how would it be as shepherdess in the Rocky Mountains?"[169]

Onkel Emil wrote Liese on August 8, 1939, confirming his arrival by train from New York, with a stopover in Washington so he could visit with her. He would then travel on to Minneapolis.

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[168] One of Steffi's nicknames for his mother.

[169] Bertha's school friend, Käthe Neumann, born July 23, 1885, was deported to Maly Trostinec, Belorusse, on September 14, 1942 and was murdered there on September 18, 1942. Bertha's friend, Clara Wohlmuth, born February 21, 1885, was deported with her husband Richard [born May 30, 1878] on November 2, 1941. The listing was on www.doew.at/cgi-bin/shoah/shoah.pl. I can only imagine Bertha's horror when she no longer heard from her dear friends Käthe and Clara, from her sister-in-law Rosa, her brother Karl. Now, with the computer, which provides accessibility to information from all over the world, so much information can be conveyed. And yet, nothing would change the horror.

Tante Rosa, Onkel Dori, and Fritz wrote to Steffi on August 8, 1939, to wish him well on his journey:

> Before your journey to the New World and to your new homeland, I want to write you once again and wish you luck and all the very, very best with all my heart; may God watch over you and protect you and let you approach a happy future with health and joy. See that you bring your dear Mama over, your dear Mickerl, and also do not forget us, how often we will be thinking of you.

Bertha was hoping that Steffi could spend his last few days in Europe with her because Mrs. Mason was going to be out of town.

Hugo wrote Steffi [August 9, 1939] with his approval of Steffi and Liese getting married immediately upon Steffi's arrival.

> I am granting that not just because Liese wants it, but also because I have learned to treasure and love you. A son who is so delicate and good to his mother will also make our child happy. And I am not anxious about your future. These are different, intense times in which we are living. What formerly was capital, knowledge, knowing how to earn money, a life appointment is not valid over there. Liese managed to make the big jump, took all the values that had been given her, and it was not little, [she] was first a governess and now a waitress. And materially things are going terrifically for her, the best among the emigrants and because of that has remained a magnificent *Mensch*,[170] just as she was before. And so you must also do it, forget about everything that you were here. You are not a doctor, not a secretary anymore. But [you are rather] an educated sportsman, and a good musician on an unusual instrument. A master of both abilities, or you must awaken another over there, which is perhaps slumbering within you, Liese, with her capabilities, will surely bring you to that right circle. —You just have to want one thing, and see to it your whole life, to make her happy. You are getting from us the most beautiful, best, and capable being, always be a good husband to her and a good son to us. —We have learned to love you like a son during the short time that we got to know one another, if God still grants me the luck to see both of you over there, I know that I have <u>two</u> children over there.

Sophie wrote Bertha [August 10, 1939] to tell her:

> [I feel] ...with my whole heart, dearest Bertha, that the departure, the farewell from Steffi hurts you very much. All of us must give our children away, but I am convinced that they will be sending for us, and you, dear Bertha, very soon. Hopefully the English will be twice as nice to you.

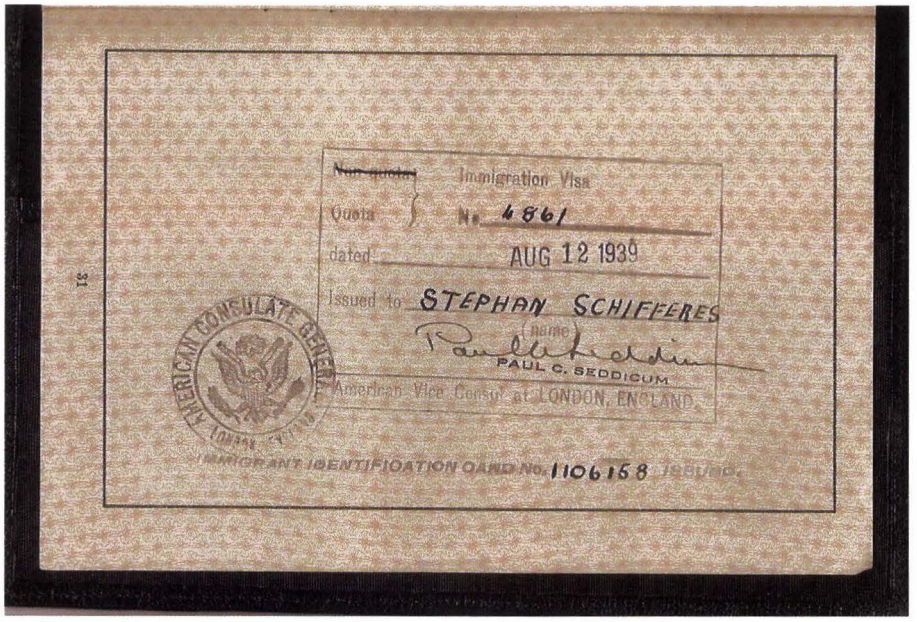
She also wrote how touched she was that Steffi wanted to bring Liese something from England, but Sophie felt that he should rather save his money for their new home.

Peter Meyer wrote to Steffi from Berlin [August 10, 1939] to fill him in on all the sports students from Stuttgart: Helga was in Edinburgh, working in a house, but in a half a year would be able to work in her field; Lorelott and Rudi visited Bernd Hanauer. Trude was also in England. "Only Hannelore [Pels] is (and me, too) still here, but is waiting for her permit." Marianne Schlesinger

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[170] Yiddish for good person.

got a position as a gym teacher in England for September. Julius Baumann was already in America. "But I also hope that ALL of us will be there soon."



Steffi's Visa, dated August 12, 1939

At 10:50 AM. on August 12, 1939, Steffi finally actually received his visa. His immigration visa number was 4861, his identity card 1.106.158, his application form had the number 119, and the fee was paid with 24648 ($10=£2-3/4). He wrote to Liese, "I feel sorry that this letter and not I will be going on the Queen Mary nor on the 16th (not Normandie...)" [but rather on a ship that was departing on August 18]. He advised Liese to keep her waitressing job only until she found something else, possibly through her many acquaintances in Washington. Steffi said it made no sense to start over in a new state, and there would probably be more possibilities in a smaller city like Washington. On August 12 Steffi already knew that he would be leaving on August 18, going with the SS President Harding, arriving in New York on August 26. "I am so happy despite the fact that I do not know what will be, other than we will always live with one another in love, but not from love, that consumes and feeds us."

Bertha wrote to Liese [August 13, 1939] about the first time she saw them together at the Merchants Association,[171] where Steffi worked in Vienna.

> For one moment I thought to myself, these two really suit one another. At that time I really was not thinking of a connection between the two of you. Now it is really true and you really do suit one another and I have come to really love you and am glad to also have a daughter who will also treasure my dear Steffi. He is such a good, true person! Everyone likes him and I am happy that he will soon have a home for which he had to wait so long.

The news about Tante Rosa and Karl was not very good. In addition, Bertha had mixed emotions about Steffi's departure. She was sad about Steffi's departure from England and happy at the same time that he would be able to begin his life anew in America with Liese.

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[171] *Gremium der Wiener Kaufmannschaft.*

Now I am all alone in the isolated Burley. No one comes to see me. But I do not want to complain. I knew that Steffi would not stay in England and also cannot stay here. But you should not be angry that I am sometimes so sad and it is hard for me to be separated from my dear Steffi. You know, though, how attached I am to him. I can tell you: the best and dearest son! I have gone through so many difficulties in my life and had so much bad luck. Now my happiness will begin, I will take pleasure in your joy. Take very good care of my good boy, it is the dearest and best that I have. Love him a lot and also me a little....

At long last, Liese received the following telegram on August 14!


FAST

RCA

DIRECT

RADIOGRAM

R.C.A. COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

A RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA SERVICE

TO ALL THE WORLD — BETWEEN IMPORTANT U.S. CITIES — TO SHIPS AT SEA

RECEIVED AT 1112 CONNECTICUT AVE., WASHINGTON, D. C. AT RCA - 3 STANDARD TIME

1939 AUG 14 AM 9 49

WN26 BC LONDON PO 8 14 1452

LC STRAUSS

1224 INGRAHAM ST WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT HARDING

Telephone: National 2600

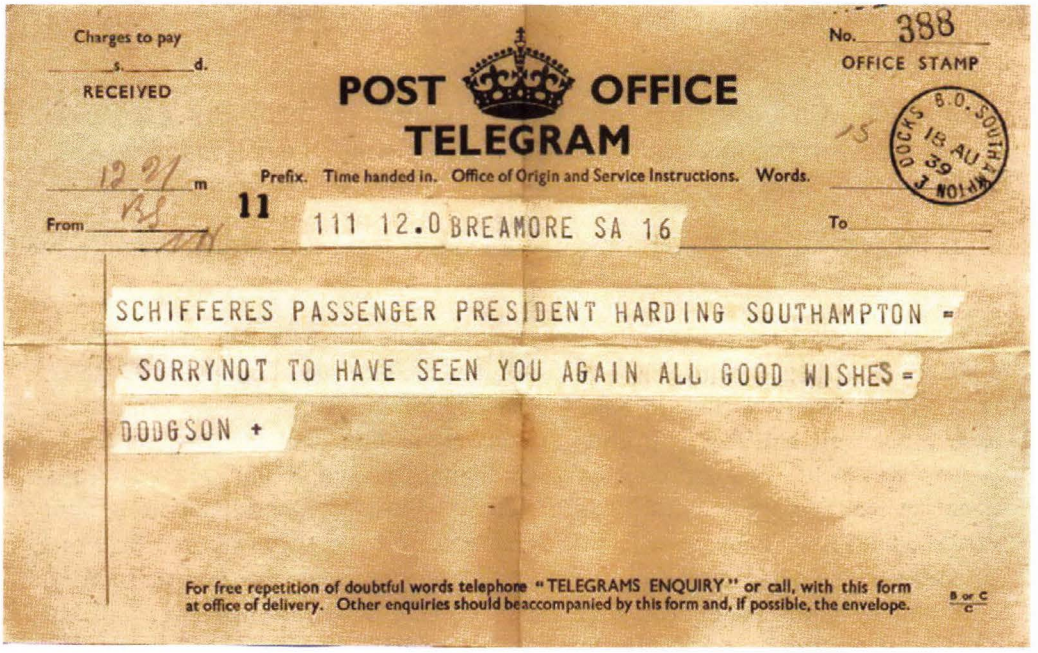
RCA Radiogram announcing the name of the ship Steffi would be on

Since Liese and Steffi wanted to marry immediately upon his arrival in the United States, Liese inquired through Pepi, who lived in Newark, New Jersey, about the local laws. Pepi informed Liese that the New York and New Jersey laws for marriage included a blood test and the formalities would take at least four days. He thought that the fastest way would probably be to get married in Pennsylvania.

In the meantime, the health of Onkel Stefan [Ringer] was deteriorating and he needed to have an operation on his prostate, but apparently was unaware of his grave illness. According to Tante Stephy, at least he and Tante Else did not have worries about housing, as opposed to Onkel Gustav [Müller], their cousin.

The International Student Service, 8 West 40th Street, New York City, sent Liese a letter and a questionnaire to fill out. The letter stated that they could not promise her anything "...since the number of applicants far exceed the number of openings now available." Liese was at least thinking of continuing her studies in the United States.

On August 18, 1939, Captain Dodgson, one of the directors of the Hale Nursery where Steffi had worked, thoughtfully sent Steffi a telegram on the ship wishing him well.



Charges to pay
s. d.
RECEIVED

POST OFFICE
TELEGRAM

No. 388
OFFICE STAMP

12 21 m
From

Prefix. Time handed in. Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words.
11 111 12.0 BREAMORE SA 16

To

SCHIFFERES PASSENGER PRESIDENT HARDING SOUTHAMPTON =
SORRYNOT TO HAVE SEEN YOU AGAIN ALL GOOD WISHES =
DODGSON +

For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should beaccompanied by this form and, if possible, the envelope.

B or C
C

Telegram sent from Captain Dodgson to Steffi on the SS President Harding

Interestingly enough, my father also saved the newspaper that was given out on the ship, called The Ocean Press, World Wide News of United Press, Transmitted by Radiomarine Corporation of America, Volume 125, Westbound – No. 1, SS President Harding, Sunday, August 20, 1939. The headlines on the front page were: "POPE APPEALS FOR PEACE" and "BRITAIN AND FRANCE STRENGTHEN FORCES." There was one other newspaper that Steffi saved, Voyage 125, Westbound – No. 6 from Friday, August 25, 1939, with the headlines: "HITLER CONFERS WITH GERMAN GENERALS" and "CHAMBERLIN GETS FULL POWERS." The article under the heading "BERLIN" states that:

> The British and French embassies and consulates on Thursday destroyed all confidential papers in their possession, so grave was the imminence of war, and nationals of both countries as well as United States citizens were advised to leave Germany.



A very happy Steffi (second from left) on board the SS President Harding, August 1939

I cannot imagine the elation my father felt upon leaving Europe, but also how worried he was, knowing full well that his mother was "stuck" in England.

The German Jewish Aid Committee wrote Bertha [August 22, 1939] that the transfer of her American registration to the American Consulate London would be delayed if she did not send them £2/4d.

Sophie wrote [August 22, 1939] a most moving, motherly letter to Liese on the occasion of her wedding:

> You can imagine, my good child, how my thoughts are with you. Be so happy, my Lieserl, as you deserve, and I hold you close to my heart and hug you tightly, fervently, fervently. I pray to dear God that you and Steffi always understand each other well and that you always love one another and that you above all always stay well. You are both capable, thoughtful people and you can really count on that as well as your great love. You had a very good example in your parents, who have kept close to one another in joy and suffering and love one another just the same as at the beginning. I am very happy that you will have a civil and religious ceremony; may the protection of God's blessings and our blessing protect you and shelter you, give you much luck and well-being. We parents will be standing by your side in spirit, I would have never imagined, my good and beloved Lieserl, that we would not celebrate your wedding day all of us together.

In the same letter Sophie also wrote that Dr. Ransom had sent her

> a wonderfully moving and nice letter... He writes so delightfully nicely about you, that he had completely different plans for you, but unfortunately his illness interfered, that you were so good to his children and that everybody likes you so much. He assured us that as long as he lives he will concern himself with your well-being and will always worry that you have a comfortable life.

Hede warned Liese that

> ...in general you should be very careful with your letters to Vienna, in case, God forbid, there really should be a war, everything would be censored. Today it looks rather bleak concerning that, but we must only hope that everything will pass and our parents will not have to suffer too much.

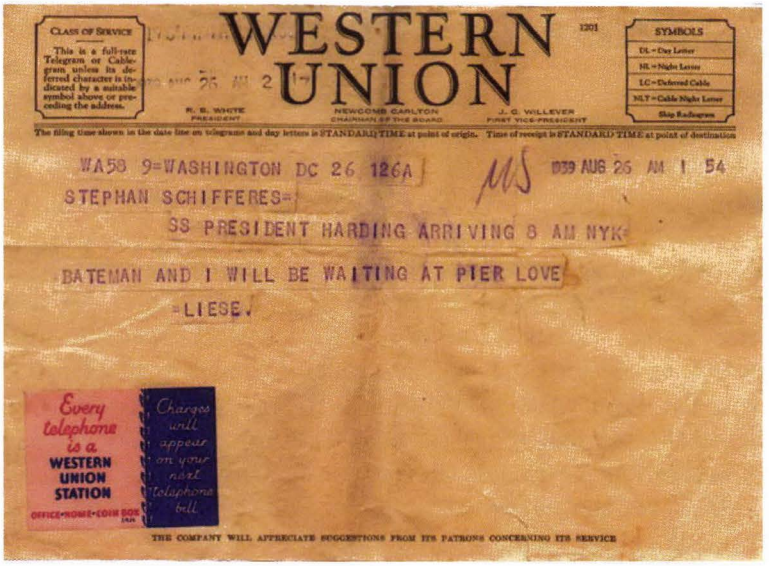
She also told Liese that Grete Deutsch was going to marry the Dutchman,[172] but that was to be kept "secret." Hede expressed her delight that Liese and Steffi were getting married and said that their wedding present would have to wait until they earned some money and Liese and Steffi had a home. "But I wish for a wedding present from both of you, costs $1.85 from Washington and that is to call me."

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[172] The "Dutchman" was Philip Van Blankensteijn, who, according to the www.yadvashem.org website, was born on February 21, 1886, in Ouderkerk aan den Ijssel, Holland. He was a Dutch radiologist who met Grete while he was working in Vienna. According to Ruth Dewton, they were married by proxy. He worked for the underground in Holland. He was deported from Westerbork Camp with Transport XXIV/4 to Theresienstadt on February 27, 1944. He was murdered by the Nazis at Auschwitz on October 15, 1944.

Chapter 45: Steffi Was Very Lucky

On August 26, 1939, Liese sent Steffi a telegram:



WESTERN UNION

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cable-gram unless its de-ferred character is in-dicated by a suitable symbol above or pre-ceding the address.

SYMBOLS

DL = Day Letter
NL = Night Letter
LC = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter
Ship Radiogram

R. B. WHITE, PRESIDENT — NEWCOMB CARLTON, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD — J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

WA58 9=WASHINGTON DC 26 126A MS 1939 AUG 26 AM 1 54

STEPHAN SCHIFFERES=

SS PRESIDENT HARDING ARRIVING 8 AM NYK=

BATEMAN AND I WILL BE WAITING AT PIER LOVE

=LIESE.

Every telephone is a WESTERN UNION STATION

OFFICE • HOME • COIN BOX

Charges will appear on your next telephone bill

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

SS PRESIDENT HARDING ARRIVING 8 AM NYK= BATEMAN AND I WILL BE WAITING AT PIER LOVE LIESE.

Hans Deutsch and his sister, Grete, sent wedding wishes from Chicago. Hede wrote that although she would not be at their wedding at 5 o'clock on August 27, 1939, in a "sister's wedding dress, as Liese was at our wedding, but rather in a bathing suit at the beach." As to Liese's desire to send her parents a telegram after the wedding, Hede thought she should not do that

> until the European worry is cleared up. Write transatlantic airmail. Today the situation with reference to war seems less threatening. When I read in your letter: "Hopefully Steffi's ship will arrive," I thought that is a typical Liese worry, but today I read that at the moment ships are not leaving and the German ones are going back. So Steffi was very lucky.

Mrs. Crete Hutchinson, Liese's boss, provided a dinner and let Liese and Steffi use her apartment. Hede wanted to bake a wedding cake, but bemoaned the fact that she would not have known how to send it from Chicago to Washington. Hede also wrote to Liese that if war should break out, then Liese should try to get diplomatic preference for their parents.

The Strauss parents and Tante Stephy sent a postal telegraph congratulating Liese and Steffi on their wedding and "a quick reunion with everyone...." And the wedding letter included this message:

> You were always such a dear sweet child, such a wonderful niece and sister who was spoiled by her parents, and now through your wonderful abilities and energy have come through for us.... God should grant you sunny and happy days and give you both strength that your new life should be filled with luck and joy. Lieserl, we are there with you, in spirit, at your wedding even if you do not see us, we are with you and have joy in your happiness.

And Hugo wrote:

> By the time this letter arrives you will already be a lucky wife! Who would have ever thought! Our Lieserle married and we are not even present! How lucky that we at least got to know Steffi before and know how well he suits you. We know he will make you happy and you him and we only have one more desire—to be witness to your happiness! —Anyone as good and precious as you deserves lots of luck! We also thank you for all your efforts for our pending departure. I hope the current documents will suffice, but better is better, and the more you are able to do for our being reunited, then the more likely it will actually occur. This is the sole thing I wish for in the future!

The following information was taken from an undated letter written by Steffi to an unknown recipient. Steffi's first job in the United States was as a "day" laborer. He worked for one day weeding a strawberry patch. Then a friend got him a job working for an insect extermination company where he was to sell the product. Then he worked as a brick carrier for a construction company. The owner then used Steffi's typing skills to write out contracts. Since there was not always work, he began as a masseur at a health club. The club did not do well and Steffi could not be paid, so he found a job at the Health Club of the Ambassador Hotel at 14th and K Streets N.W., Washington, D.C., which was owned by Morris Cafritz, a very wealthy developer.

Liese continued working as a waitress (at the Connecticut Avenue Soda Bar, 1511 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.) and her tips provided extra money; they lived off of Steffi's salary.

HIAS (Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America), 425 Lafayette Street, New York sent my father a welcoming letter:

> We know that your reunion with the members of your family in the United States has been a happy event in your and in their lives. We hope that under the institutions of the great American democracy, you will enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness which are granted to all Americans.

There was also the offer for further assistance from them.

Liese's employer, Mrs. Crete Hutchison, sent Liese a letter to Apt. 501, 1916 R Street, N.W., saying there was some information for Steffi in the *Evening Star*. It was actually an ad for tutoring German, Latin, and mathematics. Steffi scribbled a response to the ad that appeared in the newspaper, dated August 28, 1939.

The German Jewish Aid Committee at the Bloomsbury House in London sent Bertha a letter [August 30, 1939] requesting the address of her son in Washington so that they could include it in her application form for transfer of her American papers.

On September 1, 1939, Pepi Deutsch sent Steffi a postcard saying that his briefcase, which Steffi had forgotten at Pepi's house, was accidentally hidden by the cleaning lady. Pepi was going to send it to him registered and insured. He added: "I hope you are having a nice honeymoon despite the war."

Bertha wrote a congratulatory letter to Liese and Steffi, saying that she had received their telegram towards the evening of the 30th

> ...and was absolutely with you in thought every single minute on your wedding day. With all my heart I wish you happiness and health. I wanted to send a telegram, wanted to write airmail, but in the end have only sent a normal letter

> since everything here is a bit disorganized because of the pending threat of war. I also did not know where to send it. The whole time I was uneasy and finally the telegram brought me joy and peace. I thank you for it, my Liese, for certain it was you who decided to bring me the joyful news in the quickest way and I was with you both in spirit every minute.

She hoped that at least Hede and Hans were at the wedding [which they were not].

Bertha also wrote that she had read about the arrival of the SS President Harding in the *Times*, therefore she had known that Steffi had arrived in New York. Mrs. Mason had everything prepared to leave for Japan, but in case there was a war, she would not be going. Bertha also wrote that "...protective measures are already in place here..." Bertha said that she had had no news from Karl even though she had written him. And Papa Strauss wrote such a kind letter, "...just as only he can write."

Precautionary regulations were being implemented in England: "That is, in the next few days children and the sickly will be sent from the big cities to the countryside... hopefully there will not really be war."

Hede suggested [September 2, 1939] that Steffi change his English pounds sterling

> ...sooner or later, but do not send them back to England since England has declared a foreign trade embargo. We know that from the newspapers, or from the radio, one even has to write to England in English. Yesterday a post card came from Onkel Alfred saying that he will probably be called in October. But how will he get over here?

Onkel Emil was living in Minneapolis, 423 E. 16th Street, which is now a freeway. From there he wrote a congratulatory letter [September 8, 1939] to Liese, which included: "May you both, your husband and you, also have both mothers-in-law, the husband also his father-in-law, and his first namesake aunt-in-law [Tante Stephy] at your throats!"

Onkel Emil also acknowledged the difficulties that were facing his brother, Alfred.

> But will Alfred be able to make use of the affid. at the same time as his visa? How does one get a place on a neutral ship and how does one get to the harbor? Even in the quieter days the Belgians and the Dutch gave the emigrants difficulties with the trips, the French even took them in transit. Preliminarily it seems that the trip out of Switzerland to America is possible through Italy, but for what period? —I hope the matter of Alfred's visa will satisfy the Swiss Foreign Police.

He added:

> It is a paltry satisfaction for people like us to know that we in America are here with personal security. One thinks about our relatives and friends over there, about *Kol Jisrael* [all of Israel] and especially about the innocent people who are living under the damn Nazis and have to suffer from this raging war.

Interestingly enough, Onkel Emil got Hans and Pepi's cousin, Siegfried Held, to write regarding Onkel Alfred to his State Senator, who in turn contacted the Zurich Consul and received a friendly answer. "That hardly expedited Alfred's thing, but the Consul visibly wanted to do something."

In the meantime, Onkel Emil was still unemployed, but was pursuing one recommendation after another that was given him by the Jewish Employment Service and various other places. According to Onkel Emil, the search was a bit like a chain letter. "Here and there I get a (realized or "prospective") dinner invitation out of the suggestion." He wrote that he had worked briefly as a salesman "...with a rather bad result." He was trying to sell a relatively expensive Belgian glowing lamp, but an emigrant in St. Paul had taken over the general representation of the northwest.

Onkel Emil wrote that he had

> ...waited a long time to hear about your marriage, I diligently looked in the court and Personal news in the *N.Y. Times* to see if I could see your picture under the youngest brides. I did not find it, but still, I was not upset; first of all, because I do not read the *Times* every day, and also, the other possibility was that the picture, with myrtle and veil, would appear under "social activities" in another paper, such as the *Washington Post*. But now I am completely calmed and satisfied and once again wish you young married people all the best: *Lechajim ul'scholaum, Lesimche ul'sosaun* [To life and to peace, to happiness and joy]. Hopefully at least one of you would understand *Amzarim* [sic]. If not, then go to the decoding division of the State Department.



Steffi and Liese Schifferes, August 27, 1939

Chapter 46: Dark, Unproductive Engagement

After Liese and Hede and Hans left Vienna, the rest of the families seemed to really cling to one another. The Strauss parents were hopeful that they would get out. Tante Else and Onkel Stefan, who was rather ill, had probably applied too late or not at all. The same held true for Tante Rosa and Onkel Dori, though Tante Rosa desperately wanted to be able to "save" Fritz. But it was not meant to be because Fritz was mentally impaired. The Deutsch parents were supposed to be able to leave. But everyone who was left, it seemed, visited everyone else. The Strausses and Tante Else went to see the Allinas in Pötzleinsdorf.

On September 18, 1939, the Deutsch parents wrote to Liese:

> You have truly been tested during this difficult time. You can imagine that ever since your painful experience in Stuttgart we have followed your very dark unproductive engagement with great interest and feel with you, knowing that your fiancé was held back, our and your joy as he found a provisional stay abroad, and celebrated when we heard of his departure to [join] you in the new homeland. This was our joy, to know that it was the pinnacle, since we know that we could send you our heartfelt wishes, may the coming time repay you for all that you have had to endure. We have no concern for your future; whoever took on the fight and has taken on life with such hope and has accomplished as much as you, we need not worry. And so we turn our further wishes to the young groom because his happiness is your happiness! May it be granted to him to find a job quickly which is suitable to him and fits his abilities and knowledge so that you can soon write us about your mutual household, and may this household bloom and prosper with satisfaction and be filled with luck, this is what is wished you by…Dr. Deutsch

And his wife wrote:

> This is surely the first time I am writing you, but I did not want to miss this occasion to express my fondest heartfelt greetings to you and best wishes on your marriage. You are a courageous and such a capable dear so that everyone, including me, can be proud of you and mostly your husband!! I am so happy that I got to know Dr. Schifferes and even if the time was short, I still could see that you two are suitable for one another. In addition, the difficult times had a detrimental effect on him, and so we want to hope that both of you finally have a quiet, happy existence. This is my fondest wish and my prayer. Affectionate greetings and hugs from
>
> Your Elsbeth Deutsch

Hede was writing weekly to the Strauss parents in Vienna. She also sympathized with Liese that some of their furniture was broken in shipping. "But let us say that that is the least of our problems." Hede encouraged Liese to get a confirmation from their parents as to the payment of the freight so that Liese would not be taken advantage of in the U.S.

The following is Steffi's Curriculum Vitae, written shortly after his arrival in the United States:

> *SHIFFERES Stephan is my name and I was born on November 21st 1909 in Vienna Austria, and am of German nationality (annexation). I am jewish* [sic],

married and have no children. I have taken out first papers. My height is 5' 11", my weight is 162 lbs, I do not drink or smoke and my health is excellent.

I went to Grammar and High-School in Vienna XVIII. and am graduated from the Faculty of Law and Political Science of the University of Vienna (Doctor's degree). Besides I studied there commercial subjects and attended a one-year program for the education of turn [sic], gymnastic, and sport teachers. About my credentials Mr. J. F. Abel, Chief of the Division of Comperative [sic] Education at the Department of Interior stated that my education is "about equal to that required for a master's degree in the United States"(Case No. 9099-G).

Already during my college years I used to coach younger boys in different kinds of athletics and ball games and during my spare time in the afternoon and during the vacations I used to be a tutor.

After my graduation from the University of Vienna I go a job at the Commercial Schools of Vienna where I taught Gymnastics, Latin, German, and World History for five years. In the last two years I specialized in Gymnastics, Coaching, and premilitary education for boys. I am perfect in coaching of football, basketball, track, swimming, gymnastics, field hockey, handball; here in the United States I soon picked up baseball and golf, which I practice almost dayly [sic]. I have always been a sportsman of good reputation, as a soccer [and] handball player known far beyond Austria, Hungary, and Germany, I used to play for the world famous S.C. "Hakoah" *Vienna.*

Three summers I spent in beautiful Austrian camps, where I supervised about 80 boys from 13 to 18 years. As gymnastic teacher I had to lead the children on their hiking trips in the famous Austrian Alps.

I always used to be with children especially in my Sporting Club also, where I watched the training and development of the youngsters. As I like them and try to understand them, they liked me and I always had best contacts with boys and girls. My method to educate is bare [sic] of any punishment, only by asking to do me and themselves a favor, I succeeded. In spite of their respect, they thought me their playmate and not their schoolmaster.

Grown up among the youth, I know to arrange folks [sic] dances, to organize choirs as I love music and blow [sic] clarinet.

I am especially interested to teach the gay American children and am equipped to teach physical culture and coach high school, pepschool [sic], or college teams. Besides I am able to teach Latin, German, World History, or commercial subjects.

References: Dr. C.S. Marsh, Civic Education Service, 744 Jackson Place, Washington, D.C.; Frances Newman (Mrs.), Central High School teacher, 1622 North Highland Street, Clarendon, Va.

Bertha wrote on September 19, 1939, that she had had no news from their homeland and did not know if it made any sense to write because she was told that the letters did not arrive. Mrs. Mason had told her that she could write to Steffi and Liese in German, just that she should put her name on the back of the envelope and put "written in German to my son" and, therefore, Bertha thought that Steffi and Liese could do the same.

Mrs. Mason had hired a "parlour-maid" and had a woman come in every day for three hours, and she had also hired a man to wash the dishes. Still, Bertha had a lot of cooking to do, but was somehow able to get to bed at 9:30 or 9:45. Mrs. Mason enjoyed "...accommodating her guests with an abundance of food" and Bertha ended up working 14 hours each day. Bertha described the visitors. There were four guests: two women and two caretakers.

> One of the women is partially crippled and has a day and a night nurse. These caretakers make a lot of work for me since the night nurse needs dinner at night. Otherwise you do not need to worry about me. If I can arrange to do the work physically, that is for the time being, then everything is good. But one is getting older and I am afraid of getting very old before I see my loved ones again. Sometimes when I go to bed I am completely despondent. But hopefully in my lifetime there will be other times. Mrs. M. is very nice to me and the parlour maid is quite nice and naturally speaks only English with me. Dearest Liese, I thank you for your dear letter and am convinced that my good Stepsibub, whom you love very much, also has a nice home there with you. I certainly had enough opportunity with your dear parents to observe the nice family life you had. From such parents and also from such a circle of relatives, I see that you can be nothing but a dear and caring woman. May God grant both of you happiness! I know that you are both fine, dear, and good children. Just do not be such spendthrifts and do not deny yourselves anything to eat. When my teeth are fixed, or at least when I know how much it will cost, I should rather send you my money. I know it will be in better hands there with you, and I hope to be earning more with all these guests here. They make so much more work.

Bertha also wrote that she had had no news from Karl, but heard that she could write him through the Red Cross in Geneva. Bertha wished Liese and Steffi well for the New Year, said that she had no idea when the Jewish holidays were, and asked if they could send her a Jewish calendar.

David R. Simon, the son of Rabbi Abram Simon, who had given Liese an affidavit of support for Steffi, dealt with real estate, loans, and insurance in the Woodward Building, Washington, D.C. He wrote to Dr. Schifferes at 2377 Champlain Street, N.W., on September 22, 1939, and apologized for not having been in the office when Steffi had called. Apparently he had suggested that Steffi contact a Mr. Rosenblum of the Community Center. Mr. Simon said that Steffi should come to his office so that he could introduce him to the owner of the Health Club in the Woodward Building. "Mr. Peterson told me that while he had no definite opening at present still he would like to interview you and maybe some connection could be made."

Chapter 47: Deauville Food Shoppe



Liese in her waitress uniform, 1939

Liese wrote down her feelings on guest checks from the Deauville Food Shoppe, 1629 Connecticut Avenue, where she had been working. Apparently the newlyweds had had a misunderstanding. Part of the note said:

> I cannot be angry at you. Now you can sleep 2 hours later than usual, not because it looks rainy, but rather because you wanted to scare me. But you were nice and good and brought me back to my senses quickly and cuddled me with well-intended love. You seem to be surprisingly happy about my decision. You spoke like before, "about evenings spent together, about love and kisses." You promised me the best possible happiness. But will you keep it? But won't you again go against what we have said after a few days? And then you will once again get furious about our fortune, the tower of our love, and try to shatter it with one strike. And I will once again try to protect it from disturbances and defend it with all my strength, but many of your weapons will strike me and hurt me... And I want to love you warmly and intimately and you will accept all the bad characteristics that you have already found in me. And your peace and goodness will once again give me a beautiful good feeling of security, refuge and rescue me from the whips of the storm that life offers.

Crete Hutchinson, who had loaned Liese and Steffi her apartment at 1916 R Street, N.W., so they could have a honeymoon, sent Liese a postcard, telling her that she should try to find another job by October 1 because she (Crete) was going to be fired as manager.

Mrs. Edna Ellis Hilton, who had been instrumental in getting Liese out of Austria, sent a scathing note to her [September 23, 1939]:

> Dear Mrs. Liese Strauss Shifferes,
>
> About two weeks ago I asked you to take your trunk from my home. I am repeating the request and informing you that storage charges are now accruing.
>
> In America, among the best people of high integrity and principles, one keeps his word, his contract, and does not break it because some unforeseen incident transpires and looks, on the surface as if it might be a "money saver." Please, in America, adopt our American ideals of honest business methods, free from trickery, deceit, or unfair play. It is the best method of success.

> Your letter is full of mis-statements. Several people can prove it. That is no way for a newcomer to try to get along. Lies are hideous things and work no one permanent good. Honesty is always the best policy. Unscrupulous methods might obtain for one, a few pennies, but loses spiritual, social, and moral benefits. Tricks on "friends" are lamentable and become boomerangs.
>
> For a "few" dollars you have tried to break your contract with me, and have broken your word, and wrote untrue statements—and—lost the best friend you'll ever have in America.[173]

Liese and Steffi were doing their utmost to better their situation. She and Steffi were sending out letters offering their services to hotels as a "waiters couple." By September 25, 1939, Steffi was working part-time at a health club in Washington, but wanted to be able to work with Liese. According to one of his resumes, my father had worked for three seasons at the Salzburger Strandbaddirektion Zell am See as a water resort director. To earn extra money, he would go into people's homes and give them massages. At the end of this letter, he described himself and his wife in this way: "Both of us are tall, of smart shape, and pleasant."

Among the "treasures" in the straw suitcase was a handwritten slip of paper, apparently the draft of a business card or advertisement, written by an acquaintance.

> $3 per treatment
> 5 treatments for $12.00
> reducing massage
> Have your aches and pains and fat massaged away
> by a skilled and trained Physiotherapist.
> Stephen [sic] Schifferes
> of Vienna, Austria
> Treatments by appointment only
> 2377 Champlain St., N.W. phone: ____

On September 26, 1939, Steffi wrote a letter in English to Mr. William A. Leeb, 3300 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois, thanking him for having saved his life twice. Steffi wrote that Mr. Leeb's

> *...papers arrived at the Viennese American Consulate General and the photocopies were shown to the Gestapo Secret Police, which finally forced me to emigrate, I was released from the concentration camp. By chance I then received a Permit to enter the United Kingdom...*

When Mr. Leeb then signed a statement, the American Consul gave Steffi the immigration visa. Steffi was able to get out *"just in time before the war started."*

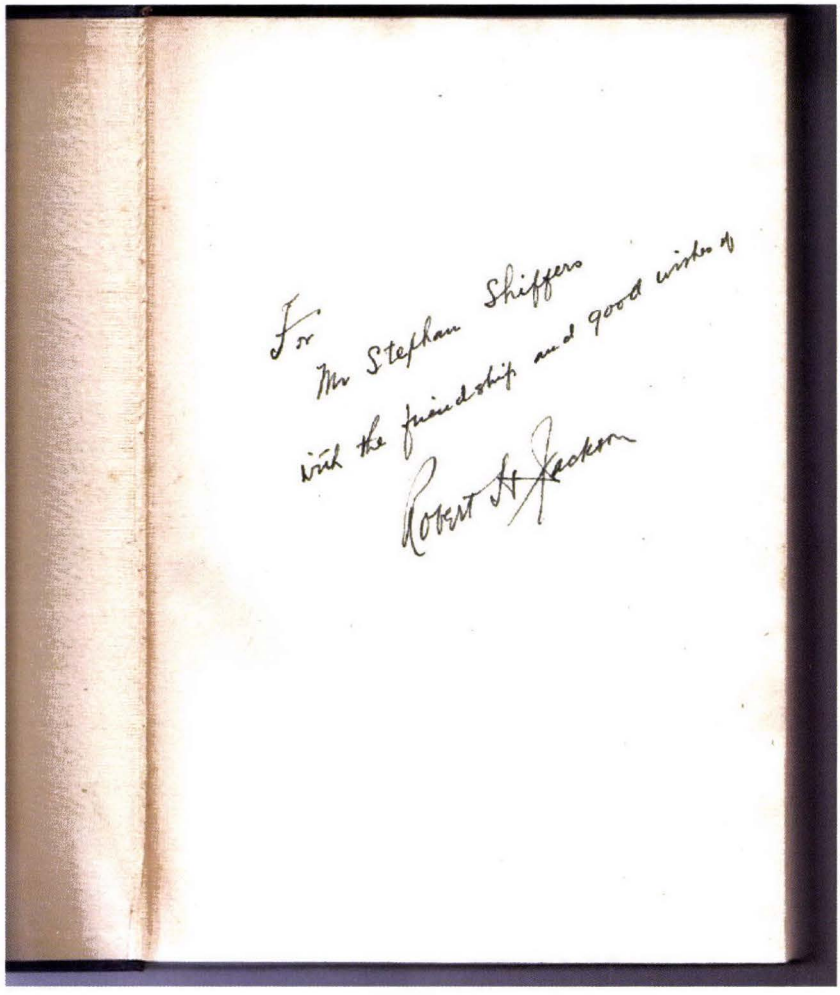
Then Steffi wrote how he should not really dare to ask Mr. Leeb for more help since he had already done so much for him, but Steffi had been unable to find a job in Washington because, as an alien, he could not teach in the American public schools, and since Washington was a government town, he could not obtain a job. In any case, he was very grateful to Mr. Leeb and hoped he would have a chance to thank him personally.

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[173] Steffi had no recollection of what brought on Mrs. Hilton's scathing note, but I surmise she was jealous of my father, who had just arrived. Liese no longer had need of a mother figure.

A letter from the Strauss parents [September 26, 1939] informed them that Onkel Alfred would be getting his visa at the end of the month. At the end of the letter, their friend Anna Follender[174] wrote a few lines.

After having been employed at the Health Club of the Ambassador Hotel, located at 14th and K Streets, N.W., for only three months, Steffi composed a letter to Mr. Morris Cafritz, who was the owner of the hotel, the club, and many other things in Washington. In the letter, Steffi told Mr. Cafritz about the lazy manager who was very unfriendly and not helpful to the members. In fact, he informed Mr. Cafritz that the manager and his girlfriend were swindling Mr. Cafritz. Shortly thereafter, my father was promoted to the job of manager of the health club. He stayed there until Liese died on December 6, 1956. Many prominent Washingtonians frequented the Health Club. One was Judge Robert H. Jackson, Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials. Judge Jackson gave Steffi the complete forty-two volume transcripts of the trials and even autographed the first volume to him!



Autograph of Judge Robert H. Jackson, Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials

[174] Anna Follender was Liese's French teacher. She turned to Dr. Strauss for legal help during the Hitler time. According to the doew website (www.doew.at/cgi-bin/shoah/shoah.pl), Anna Follender and her sister, Paula, were deported from Vienna on August 17, 1942, to Maly Trostinec, Belorusse, and were murdered there on August 21, 1942.

Among the documents and letters in the trunk there were numerous resumes and curriculum vitae. Each stressed various aspects of Steffi's education and work experience. Most were undated, though they were definitely written in English after his arrival in the United States.

> *In November 1938, I, along with the other instructors of the Stuttgart athletic school, was put in the Dachau concentration camp and imprisoned there for nearly 8 weeks. Upon leaving Dachau, the Gestapo forced me to emigrate. By chance I got an English Agricultural Trainee Permit, so I left Stuttgart in March of this year [1939].*
>
> *In England, I was sent to a big farm, where I learned to do general farm work. After a six-week period there, I was sent to one of the modern English nurseries, Hale Nurseries Ltd., Woodgreen, Hampshire. During the three months that I worked there, receiving a Nurseryman's salary, I learned a good deal about gardening. In addition to my regular work at the nursery, I assisted the director and the Jewish Committee in locating Jewish refugee boys to work at the nursery. My leisure-time job at the nursery was caring for these boys, teaching them English and physical culture.*
>
> *I left the job in England when I received an immigration visa for this country. On August 26th I arrived in New York and am now seeking employment. As you can see, I am equipped for different types of work, especially teaching physical culture, German, Latin, and doing any kind of massage work.*

In one of Hede's letters to Liese, she wrote that Hans' parents' immigration plans were progressing. She also wrote that Hans had lost his job because there was a fire in the building, thankfully at night when no one was there. "But perhaps Hans will find a better paying job, at least he will try." So the optimism continued!

Bertha, who was still in England, continued working 14-hour days for Mrs. Mason. When she had a day off she would get together with two other women who were also employed in Burley as cooks. "Both are much younger than I and do not actually suit my taste, but we all have similar worries and so we can discuss them a bit." Bertha also wrote that her English was improving because she was spending more time with the parlour maid. Bertha's time was "...spent cooking and then more cooking and I have to be twice as happy to be able to stay here and years will pass before I see both of you again." She reported that she was not receiving any mail from Vienna.

The Strauss family, still in Vienna, wrote to Onkel Alfred, on board the SS Rex, which was departing from Genoa on October 6, 1939, wishing him all the best for a safe passage. Sophie wrote that Hugo had been named as "permanent consultant" and that Frau Teller (probably the secretary) had come back and was working for him again.

In a letter dated October 5, 1939, Hede wrote to Liese and Steffi that Hans was looking for a job and also for something to study that would bring him a better future. Meanwhile, Grete had gotten a job as a nurse and was paid $20 a week, plus room and board. Hede was working two jobs and sewing gloves, which she was able to sell. And she was having a hard time keeping up with cooking and household chores.

Bertha complained [October 13, 1939] that Liese and Steffi were writing her in English and not in her "mother tongue." And, she wrote, "I do not particularly want to learn English through your letters." She fussed at them for not buying the things they needed and told them that she would be sending them money. She was working very hard, but Mrs. Mason was very helpful. "Naturally Mrs. M. bought me a gas mask. Hopefully it will not be necessary to put it on."

Ines Mandl wrote from Dublin, Ireland, congratulating Liese and Steffi on their wedding and explaining that she and her husband had been in the Irish Free State for six weeks, which, "...at least so far, is a neutral country" and were waiting for Hans to accept a good job at a large knitwear factory. Then she wrote that their parents were fine.

> Unfortunately all Austrian and German men in France up to the age of 66 have been put into a camp and though I know they are well treated, it is a hard thing for a man of this age to be in the open all day and night.

Ines' parents were living in Paris at this time; therefore, her father would have been interned.

Then Ines wrote that Liese should not worry so much about her own parents.

> I honestly believe that the war has made the situation easier for those Jews who still are in Vienna and as to air raids, Vienna is probably the safest city of all!—Nevertheless I do hope that all of this will not take as long as we fear and not only will you soon be reunited with all those you love, but a better future may be in store for us all!

On October 19, 1939, Steffi submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Labor, Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington, D.C.

Hede wrote that it was "...good that Papa can continue to work, but we hope that he will not have to enjoy this kindness much longer in Vienna." Hans had gotten a different job in a factory where he was paid 45 cents an hour. Hede also wrote that Hans would have liked to travel to Washington when he needed a haircut because there he would have to pay only 35 cents, and in Chicago it cost 75 cents!

Steffi completed an Affidavit of Support for his mother on October 21, 1939, saying that she was *"...quite alone in England and she always lived with me together before."* He said that she could work as their housekeeper since his wife, Liese, had a job.

Lisbeth, Aryan, and Tante Gisi wrote [October 22, 1939] from Dubbo, Australia, to congratulate the young married couple. The letter that informed them of the wedding had taken four weeks to arrive. Lisbeth reminisced about her wedding day: "You surely left the temple more quietly than we did, when we had no idea that upon our departure there would be SS or SA men there to 'congratulate' us." Lisbeth remarked how impressed she was with Liese and how capable she was and hoped that they would stay in close contact, "...so that despite the fact that we have been torn apart, [we] are at least informed about one another." Lisbeth also described her work in the garden, her learning to iron, and the success of her baked goods in Australia, since there they had mostly sponge cakes—nothing at all like the rich Viennese fare. She said that all the work she was doing around the house was typical in Australia, even if one could afford servants, which, at the moment, they could not. In describing her situation, Lisbeth said, "...one pearl is falling from my crown." And although they could not afford to have servants, they still had everything that they could have possibly needed.

> All of us can happily treasure that we are in peaceful countries (unbelievable, toi toi toi, are you all listening to me knocking?)—and, on the other hand, one can hardly imagine how horrible things must be now on the Continent.

Aryan remarked what contrasting cities they were thrown into, and said that his parents were doing well in Palestine and were convinced "...that there will soon be a downfall of the Nazi

criminals." Aryan's brother, Karl Kahane, was still in Switzerland and, since he already had a certificate for Palestine and the trip was not dangerous at that time, would soon be traveling there.

Bertha's letter of October 26, 1939, spoke of the "spoiled, rich women" who came as guests to Mrs. Mason's. They were not there for short visits, but would stay there "as long as there is a war." Bertha also wrote that the caretakers who worked for the female guests were also actually "...waited on and not treated like hired help, do not work at all and eat an awful lot." The parlour maid would not wash dishes. "She has to properly wear a little hat. That is essential." Dinner at 7:45 consisted of soup, fish or meat, two vegetables, and a sweet. A neighbor who also worked as a gardener would come at 8:00 PM to wash and dry the dishes.

Bertha complained that she did not have much luck with her own acquaintances because they had neither mastered English nor German! "Still, what can one do, they are still people who have similar situations and therefore it is quite pleasant to go for walks with the two women." Bertha was hoping to "patiently wait it out here. You should not be angry when I say that at times I am overcome with longing. After all, I am here with strangers and am often angry because the work here is not equally distributed." She also wondered why she had not heard from Tante Rosa: "Tante Rosa could have written through the Siebenscheins."[175]

Bertha also had not had any news from Karl. She assured her children that soon, when the guests moved into a hotel in Bournemouth, she would not have much work. Bertha also sympathized with Dr. Stefan Ringer, who was dying of prostate cancer in Vienna. She also wondered if Tante Stephy was able to get out of Vienna. "If things were normal, I would have been able to greet her in Southampton. But now I cannot go further than Ringwood."

[175] Relatives who were living in Zurich, Switzerland.

Chapter 48: A Modest Life

In the meantime, the Deutsch parents were still trying to leave, but apparently the affidavit that Pepi had procured for them was not sufficient, and Hede asked if Liese could perhaps get the B'nai B'rith or Dr. Guthman to provide a supplementary one.

The tone of desperation to get family out of Vienna was increasing. Hede thanked Liese [November 1, 1939] for having gotten a supplementary affidavit for the Strauss parents.

> The question is as you brought it up in your last letter, Steffi, what is better, a perplexed immigrant or a capable lawyer, I can only answer that it is imperative that our parents get out of Vienna as quickly as possible. I hope that we will be able to, with our united forces, provide them and your dear mother as well as Hans' parents and Stephanie with a modest life.

The Deutsch parents had gotten a supplementary affidavit from Pepi's boss. Apparently, not even that would be sufficient to get them out of Vienna.

Hede had a "new extra occupation," namely, Lilly Deutsch's uncle, Mr. Schindler, had a matchbook collection and for forty cents an hour, Hede catalogued them and put them in order. Hede had read in the November 1, 1939, newspaper that after March 1, 1940, all Viennese Jews would be sent off to Poland: "...we have to get our parents out before then, I hope so."

Numerous letters from our family stated that as of March 1940 all Viennese would be deported to Poland, or to "Onkel Stefan's homeland,"[176] depending on whether the author of the letter was in or out of Nazi Germany. It seemed that the Jews knew. And yet the American excuse at that time was always: we did not know about the killings and concentration camps. In fact, my father had often told me that when he would describe the death camps to acquaintances shortly after arriving in the United States, they would tell him that he was lying. I wish he had been.

Sophie informed her children [November 2, 1939] that the mail was taking 4–6 weeks and asked them to write airmail. The good news was that they had been summoned for the examination for November 27, 1939. "You can imagine how happy we are about that. The joy is subdued because Stephy is not that far along ... but hopefully it will also happen soon for her." Sophie asked if they had received the telegram informing them of Onkel Stefan's death and begged them to "...urgently obtain an affidavit for Else. The thought of leaving her alone here seems awfully sad to me. She is, after all, my sister and will surely not become a burden to us in the USA because she is very capable." She sent Tante Else's dates and reminded them that if Tante Else did not get out, "...she might have to travel to the homeland of her husband." Hugo added on that they would have to travel through Holland because the tickets were more expensive going through Italy, but also the exchange rate for dollars would make it too expensive.

The guests at Campden House had left. One of the women gave Bertha £2, which she thought to be very generous. Bertha continued to do her job. Mrs. Mason was pleased and Bertha could remain with her and would not have to go where, as she had feared, Karl was. She wanted to send Karl money for shoes. Then she reminisced about the happenings a year before: Steffi was back in Stuttgart, Liese was packing for her trip to the USA. "Then the difficult days began for us, but now everything is good again and you are together happily. May God always protect you!"

[176] Onkel Stefan Ringer was born in Wadowice, Poland.

Sophie wrote [November 12, 1939] to say that Papa was busy in the office and his clients were crying for him. "When I think of how he always worked so tirelessly in his profession and now he has to give it all up. To me this seems very sad. Surely you can sympathize with me." Hugo was expecting that Herbert Muller would fulfill his obligations and also that he would let them stay in his hotel for 10–14 days and would feed them. Apparently Hugo had a lot of business matters to attend to in New York. Hugo was hoping that the extra affidavit that Liese had procured could be used for Tante Stephy, if she needed it, and if not, then for Tante Else.

Hugo also wrote that he had received

> beautiful official diplomas, which state that I have been a chartered accountant since 1922, I will proudly carry them on the ship.... But above all I am thinking that I will be seeing you soon, perhaps even in six weeks and for me that is the greatest joy that I can ever experience in my life.

Tante Stephy wrote how Tante Else had changed now that she was no longer under Onkel Stefan's influence. And then: "You can imagine how happy I will be to see you and be able to begin a new life."

The Foreign Service of the United States of America sent Bertha Form No. 15, [November 16, 1939], which stated that the Consulate General had received her registration for an immigration visa according to her registration at the American Consular office in Vienna. It also said that once her "alleged registration" was officially verified, then her name would be entered on the waiting list. The last sentence of the letter stated: "Please do not forward any documents to this office until you are requested to do so."

In a birthday letter to Steffi [November 18, 1939] Hede reminisced about his previous birthday, "...which I spent at the Jewish Community Center with your mother; that brings you back to reality, how does it seem to you?" Onkel Alfred was going to be arriving soon, so Hede did her utmost to find time to clean a bit. That evening, she wrote, they were invited to the opening of an exhibit of Italian Masterpieces at the Art Institute where she had to wear a long dress! She had to miss work because of the cold she had, so in order to make up the time, she would work and was going to send Hans and his sister to meet Onkel Alfred. As to her getting an affidavit for Tante Else,

> ...it is so difficult here, but I will try. I think that when Stephanie is here, she should fill one out for her, perhaps then it will be easier to get a supplementary affidavit. Naturally it is urgent since all Viennese Jews will be shipped to Poland by March 1940, many even sooner. That is why I am happier to know that our parents and aunt and the Deutsch parents are this far along.

Onkel Alfred announced his safe arrival in Chicago. In the meantime, he was trying to "...set in motion a rescue for the [Schwarz] children, the parents will most likely end up being sent to Poland (without children)...."

Bertha wrote [November 18, 1939] to assure Liese and Steffi that she was well and had much less work, now that the guests were gone. On the letter she had added: *"To Censors: This letter is written in German to my son. Both of us being Austrian refugees."* Then she explained that the soonest she would be able to go to the USA would be after one year, "...that is in summer, because it is not only a question of the travel money that Mrs. M. gave me, with my signature, when I was still in V.[ienna], I obligated myself to remain for at least a year." She wrote that she was supposed to knit a cap for the military and was uncertain if she could even do it anymore

since she had not knit since her childhood. Mor Schiller, Tante Gisi's brother, forwarded Tante Gisi's letter on to Bertha "...because they were saving money in Dubbo." Ala Mor also congratulated Steffi on his marriage and sang his praises. Ala Mor had passed the first half of his examination and would complete his studies in February. In conclusion, Bertha wondered why Steffi thought that she was corresponding with Tante Rosa. "Since August I have had no news and only Karl wrote, as I told you in my last letter."

In the continuation of her letter, Bertha wrote: "I would really like to know what everyone in Vienna is doing. Can one not write to the USA from there and vice versa? I really do not understand that. H.[itler] is supposed to have taken everyone's money away."

Franzi Bollag, a friend of the Strauss parents whose family Liese had visited in Zurich on her way out of Europe, wrote congratulating Liese on her wedding and reminisced: "Many months ago, when we accompanied you to the train here in Zurich for your big journey to America, I had to hold my heart very strongly in order not to cry...." She praised Liese for all she was able to accomplish. The Bollag son, Friedel, was in Sweden, she wrote.

Chapter 49: Fate Has Separated Us So Cruelly

Bertha was getting impatient. At the top of her letter to Liese and Steffi, dated November 23, 1939, she wrote: *"To Censors: This letter written in German language is directed to my son, both of us being Austrian refugees! Please hurry up this letter* [sic] *as fate has separated us so cruelly. Thank you!"* In the actual letter she wrote that she certainly hoped "...the news about the poor people is somewhat exaggerated. I had also heard it here already."[177] Then she added that [in England] they had everything "in abundance, without exception." Bertha was still hoping and expecting that Mrs. Mason would keep her on even though she had not hired a new parlour maid. Bertha was so happy that Liese's parents would be leaving Vienna soon and wondered if they could pay for their ship passage from Vienna. Bertha was also baffled as to why she had not heard from anyone in Vienna. "What can be going on there?"

She assured her children that she had so much to eat "...that I often do not know what I should eat first." In conclusion, she wrote that they should not be worrying about her, "I am in a country where I am doing well and worry only about the poor people in V.[ienna]."

In anticipation of the Strauss parents' arrival, Hede thought that if Liese or Steffi could not meet them in New York, then she would ask Pepi or the Bing parents [Lilly's parents] to be there. Hede was also hoping that Herbert Muller would let them stay as guests in the hotel he owned, but if he did not, "...there is nothing that can be done because both of us promised him repeatedly that we would not make any demands on him."

The big disappointment was that Sophie and Hugo did not have their examination at the American Consulate because the quota numbers were used up. The January people had to be taken first. All three of them, including Tante Stephy, had received their passports. Tante Stephy's letter ended optimistically: "Soon we will all be drinking coffee together."

Tante Else's sadness was palpable. She wrote that she went to see the Strausses about three times a week and that she was also "caught up in the travel bug, even though I have no possibility to leave."

On December 8, 1939, Bertha wrote informing Liese and Steffi that just as she suspected, Mrs. Mason was going to her son's the following week.[178] "I had a feeling for a long time that something was up, and now on Monday she told me what I wanted to hear. She would be happy if I would stay in the house and I agreed." It was unclear how long Mrs. Mason would be away, though Bertha expected it would be for the duration of the war.

> So now I am all alone in the big house. I cannot really understand what I should do here considering one cannot constantly be cleaning. Should I not stay here, but where should I go?

Bertha wanted Mrs. Mason to arrange an appointment with a German woman dentist in Bournemouth with whom Bertha thought she would be more comfortable. Mrs. Mason also made inquiries at the French Consul as to whether Bertha could send her brother Karl something. "Up till now I have been afraid to write."

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[177] Transports to Poland.

[178] Mrs. Mason's son was a diplomat, stationed in Japan.

Bertha felt she would have to earn her keep "...since I certainly will not get anything from the Committee...," nor did she know how much the dentist would cost. But Mrs. Mason was quite generous, giving Bertha a black dress, a plush coat, and a previously owned bra!

Hede assured Liese [December 16, 1939] that Tante Else had enough money in Vienna to pay for her ticket, "...but it will take a long time for her to be called." Meanwhile, in Chicago, Hans had lost his job because it had just been seasonal work. Hede had been working as a caretaker and working on Schindler's collection. And she was studying stenography. After the New Year, they hoped to once again be working.

Edgar Wiener wrote Liese on Champlain Street, Apartment 403 [December 22, 1939] and asked her to visit a Mr. Maurice Bisgyer at 1003 K Street, N.W., because he was supposed to have sent him an affidavit from a certain Mr. Julius Bisno and nothing had arrived.

On December 24, 1939, Bertha wrote Liese and Steffi to inform them that Mrs. Mason was on her way to be with her son. She sailed on a Japanese ship "Kakusan marv," boarded in Liverpool, and traveled first class.

Mrs. Mason sent

> ...a nice letter with good wishes from London, where she spent a day before boarding the ship, that I should recover my nerves in Burley after the many years of "trouble" and included a pound note as Christmas present. My spoken English is still not very good, listening to the radio is still troublesome for me. I was also not able to practice speaking since Mrs. M. spoke only German with me.

Bertha also wrote that she sent Karl some sweets, but did not send any money because she was uncertain how much she would need for her dental bills. And finally she heard from Tante Rosa, through Steffi. Unfortunately Tante Rosa had not written Bertha about contacting the Siebenscheins before. Bertha did not know their address. Otherwise she would have done it a long time ago. "But Tante Rosa is not going to change anymore." Bertha was wondering if "this deportation, thank God it has to be that the news from there is exaggerated, don't you think?" And she wondered about her dear friend Käthe, what she was doing and if her mother were still alive. She wondered why Tante Rosa did not write anything about that.

Bertha was certain that Mrs. Mason's return to England would coincide with the end of the war. And Bertha also thought that the house would probably be rented since she had seen a letter to this effect. But Bertha had no affidavit yet and did not "...want to take the risk of a sea crossing and actually have no other position in this country." But Bertha was also certain that she would not be thrown out on the street.

Bertha received a post card from Karl [December 25, 1939] "...who is once again living in Amiens and weighs only 61 kg." His address was: Amiens/Somme, 25 Rue Caumartin, France.

Hede wrote [December 27, 1939] that Pepi's second affidavit for the Deutsch parents was not sufficient. Hede asked Liese to please try to find a supplementary affidavit for them. Grete was also filling out an affidavit for them. In the meantime, the parents of Lilly Deutsch [Dewton], the Bings, arrived in New York. Pepi also wrote that Herbert Muller consented to let the Strauss parents stay in the Claridge Hotel for 3–4 weeks. Hede also mentioned that the Strauss parents were having some difficulties because of "the Holicser house." Sophie's parents were originally from Holic, though we have no idea which property they owned there, nor do we know what happened to it.

According to Onkel Alfred's addition to Hede's letter, Liese was thinking of opening a *Fressgeschäft* [restaurant] and he wanted to know what she was envisioning.

On December 28, 1939, Hugo wrote with "important news... we received the summons from the Consulate for January 22nd." They would not have been able to reach the next ship, the Saturnia, on January 30, but were thinking of traveling with the Vulcania, which was leaving on February 13 from Trieste, even though it was more expensive than leaving from Genoa. They had received an invitation from Onkel Leon, who was living in Trieste, who had invited them to stay with him for eight days.

Bertha was still explaining: *"To Censors: this letter is written in German to my son, both of us are Austrian refugees."* In her letter of January 1, 1940, she wrote that a friend of Mrs. Mason's had told Bertha that the house was to be rented. But Bertha wrote that she doubted it would be possible to rent such a large house, so rather than look for another position, she would just stay put and see what developed. Apparently, as a refugee she needed to obtain a travel permit even in order to go to the dentist in Bournemouth, which was about 14 miles from Burley. Bertha was spending her time putting her clothes in order, visiting the two women with whom she had become friends, going to sleep early, and waking up late and listening to the radio, all alone in a very large house in the English countryside. Food was in abundance—only butter was rationed.

Finally, on January 4, 1940, Liese's "Lift" problems were solved, though as far as Hugo was concerned,

> ...for that amount of money, one could buy a whole house over there. Although it sounds awfully sad, to have to close down a household and leave furniture behind in which one has passed a happy life, which was all purchased from my hard-earned money, which Mutti cared for so well, but throughout all of this, that loss will be helped by knowing that we will soon be united with you and that you will be offering us a house of love, even without our old furniture.

Sophie added on that it made her very sad that they could not bring along all their furniture, which was "...old, but very comfortable."

Billy Ostermann, Liese's dear friend who was studying medicine in Basel, Switzerland, wrote [December 18, 1939] via Ines Mandl, who was in the U.K., to congratulate Liese on her wedding. She described her life: "Our life here has not changed much—Basel is naturally well-armed and barricaded, most of the things are closed, but life continues as before." Billy wrote that she had learned to speak Swiss-German, "...which makes people much friendlier. Just now one feels that one is a foreigner much more."

Hede and Hans finally got jobs after the winter holidays [January 8, 1940]. Hede started working at a laundry where one of their acquaintances, Rudi, was the superintendent. At first she would work "...in an un-organized department for 32 cents per hour, then in an order-filling department that will be re-organized, for 37-1/2 cents, every day from 8–5, 1-hour break for lunch, Saturday 8–12. The trip will take 50 minutes by el." Hans was promised a job at a toy factory for the following week and was receiving unemployment compensation, about $9. Hede wrote that "...things are going well for us." Strange, how one's perception of "doing well" changes when one is a refugee!

Seppi [Joseph] Huber[179] sent Steffi a postcard from New York [January 8, 1940] saying that he had already had various jobs, including working in a department store, as a waiter at the World's Fair, and as a shipping clerk. At the moment he was working as a banquet waiter and was trying various things, but was really hoping for a permanent profession, as "...none of this is a permanent existence." He also had many worries about his loved ones since he had not had mail from them in weeks. Thankfully he had been able to obtain affidavits for them.

Bertha, still in England, bemoaned the fact that even airmail letters took a long time [January 11, 1940]. She also wrote that a friend of Mrs. Mason had come with a lawyer to the house, "...which will soon be cleaned by me and a woman and then will be rented." But Bertha had no idea how long it would take to find a tenant.

In Vienna, Bertha had three close friends. One was Käthe Neumann, with whom she had stayed for a while, caring for Käthe's old mother. The other two friends were Clara Wohlmuth and Olga Grossman. Bertha had apparently just heard that Clara Wohlmuth's handicapped son, Otto Ernst Wohlmuth, had committed suicide.[180] And she also heard that Käthe's mother had died. Käthe had to take care of her sister, Mizzi, and Bertha was hoping that Käthe could at least keep working as a school principal.[181]

On January 17, 1940, Steffi received a certificate from the "*Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, School Division, which stated

> ...that Herr Dr. Stefan Israel Schifferes, formally of Vienna XIX, Neustift am Walde 45, now in Washington, was a student of gymnastics of the *Reichs* Union of Jews in Germany and at the same time with the *Oberrat* of Israel in Württemberg in Stuttgart during the time from 16. May 1938 until 12. May 1939 and sport instruction from June until November 1938; he did not take the examination in May 1939. Signed by Cohn.

The letters kept coming from Bertha in Burley. No decision had been made yet regarding renting Mrs. Mason's house, or about Bertha seeking other employment. In the meantime, she was thinking about what sort of work she could do in the USA to help support herself "...so that you do not have to work for me... I am not that old yet. You see that Mrs. M. was completely satisfied with me because no one got such a Christmas present, not even worth a 10th as much."

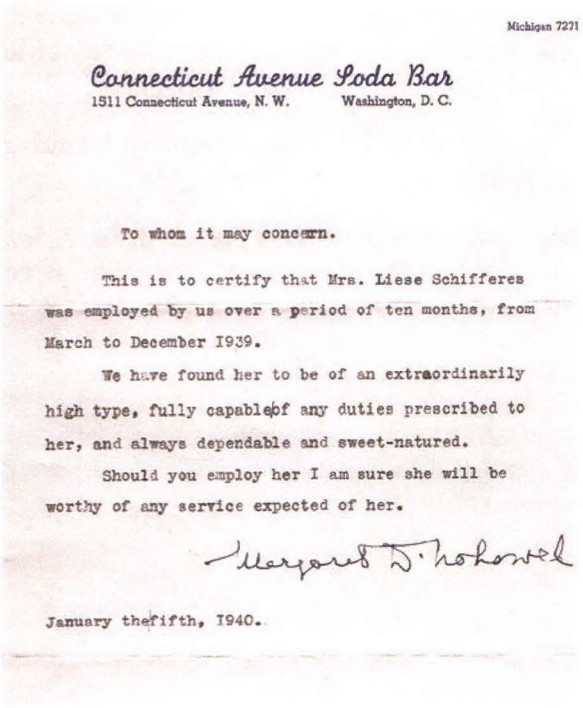
Bertha also wondered why the Deutsch parents, despite the many affidavits, could not get out of Vienna. "Can't a son or daughter bring the parents over if she or he is earning?" She ended the letter by saying how cool it was in her bedroom (c. 4° Celsius) and therefore she was sleeping 9–10 hours. "It is so quiet here, not the slightest sound disturbs the sleep. (Sometimes only the thinking)." And signed the letter: "So good night, my good children, stay very well and do not worry yourselves about Your lonely Mother."

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[179] A Siebenschein cousin.

[180] October 24, 1939; he was buried in the Zentralfriedhof IV. 22 37a 18.

[181] According to the doew website, www.doew.at/cgi-bin/shoah/shoah.pl, Käthe Neumann [born July 23, 1885] was deported from Vienna to Maly Trostinec, Belorusse, on September 14, 1942, and was murdered there on September 18, 1942. Clara Wohlmuth (her name was spelled Klara in Nazi documents), born February 21, 1885, was deported from Vienna to Litzmannstadt on November 2, 1941, and was murdered there on August 5, 1944.



Michigan 7271

Connecticut Avenue Soda Bar
1511 Connecticut Avenue, N. W. Washington, D. C.

To whom it may concern.

This is to certify that Mrs. Liese Schifferes was employed by us over a period of ten months, from March to December 1939.

We have found her to be of an extraordinarily high type, fully capable of any duties prescribed to her, and always dependable and sweet-natured.

Should you employ her I am sure she will be worthy of any service expected of her.

Margaret D. Hohorst

January the fifth, 1940.

Liese's letter of reference, 1940

Liese lost her job in January 1940 and Hede suggested that she and Steffi move to Chicago to seek employment. Hede wrote: "You write that you would then have to begin all over again, but what are you losing in Washington, after all?" Apparently the "Council" told Hede that waitresses were needed, and also Hede felt that Steffi would have a better chance at finding a job as a masseur in a city of 3 million. "If it means that you would be separated for a few weeks, that should not matter, after all, there will not be a war between Washington and Chicago any time soon." According to Hede, Grete was doing well, working as a nurse. Grete wanted to go to Holland to join her fiancé. Hans was still collecting unemployment insurance, and Hede was working for "...an order division, getting an advance of $16 and not difficult work." She wrote that there were many blacks there, "...but they are clean and nice."

Steffi's transcripts show that he attended the "Union Real Gymnasium" in Vienna XVIII until June 14, 1928, as well as the "Faculty of Law and Political Science of the University of Vienna," from October 28, 1928, until July 1930. From October 1933 to Easter 1934 Steffi studied at the High School for World Commerce [*Hochschule für Welthandel*], which is also where Liese had studied, although later.

Peter Meyer, who was now living in Alton-on-Thames, England, wrote Steffi [January 21, 1940] that he had had some luck: the Woodwards provided a guarantee and he received his visa in the middle of August 1939. He went to the farm where their mutual colleague, Bernd Hanauer, was working and preferred to stay there because of the threat of war. Peter wrote that they were both hoping to go to the USA in March, "...which pleases us immensely, especially since the work here—now still in the cold—does not give us any pleasure." Then he thanked Steffi for his "great efforts" regarding the Woodwards, Peter's cousins. He wondered if Steffi was still single, if he had run into any of their mutual friends, where he was working, how the trip was.

Bernd Hanauer also wrote [January 23, 1940] to tell Steffi that he and Peter were "...first of all, still living and secondly, together." He wrote that they spoke frequently to Rudi Siegel and his wife, Lorelott; they wrote to Helga Levin; and had not heard from Hänschen, although he was also in London, as was Trude Seligman. According to Bernd, Hannelore Pels[182] was either still in Germany or in Holland. These were the sports colleagues from Stuttgart.

Pepi wrote [January 21, 1940] that he had been occupied with the arrival of his in-laws as well as at work and his own parents' affidavit. Apparently Steffi had inquired about podiatry and chiropractor programs. Pepi informed him that it involved two years of study at a university and then one had to become licensed in the state in which one wished to practice. Interestingly

[182] In the Yad Vashem website [www.yadvashem.org], one finds that Hannelore Pels, born 1920 in Essen, Germany, perished in the Lodz Ghetto.

enough, Pepi also wrote: "The people are managing for better or worse; a dentist from Marmorek and Dr. Engelsrath just went to Seattle, Washington State, because they think that the life-style resembles our previous one more."

On January 23, 1940, Liese wrote to the General Counsel of the Treasury Department inquiring about openings. She had submitted an application to them.

On January 25, 1940, J. Fred Knowlan of the Mayflower Health Club, 1716 H Street, N.W., wrote a recommendation letter for Steffi, certifying that he had been "...employed by us as an instructor, massor [sic], and salesman from November 1939. As his work is entirely satisfactory his position is permanent." His weekly salary was $15 and the average commission was $20. "Mr. Shifferes is a responsible employee and may remain with us as long as he is happy."

As noted from Liese's letter to the General Counsel and the recommendation given Steffi, the surname Schifferes had only lost the "c". It is uncertain at what point the last "e" was dropped, but presumably it was before Eva Julia Shiffers was born in 1941!

Chapter 50: Life of Fantasy

Bertha was still living at Mrs. Mason's, doing well and getting her full salary and money to purchase everything she needed for the household. She would go for long walks, read the *Daily Sketch*, and study grammar from a schoolbook that Liese had given her. In a letter to her children on January 26, 1940, she described her daily activities:

> I get up at 8 o'clock, go to the kitchen where I fill the "Aga" with coal. Then I turn on the oven in the servant hall and heat it and make my breakfast, real coffee with rolls, i.e., white bread and butter. Then I naturally have things to do. I straighten up my room, run the Hoover (vacuum cleaner), once a week the rugs must be vacuumed, sometimes I wash my underwear and also iron it. Then I cook something for myself, naturally I do not strain myself too much with this and also not with the other work. At 1 o'clock I eat lunch, then mostly I take a bath, get dressed and go for a walk, once a week I also go to Mrs. Zwilling, whom I do not visit too often because of her blond hair,[183] but it is my only conversation. When I get home (5 o'clock) I have coffee again, listen to the radio, read, write and also sew, naturally. I go to bed at 9 o'clock the latest, where I read more. So you see, at the moment I am leading a very comfortable life, have only to worry about myself, which often seems strange.... I wrote that I have enough food and can cook and eat what I want. Mrs. M. is really a good and clever person. I do not need to pay for anything myself, and every Monday I get a check for my wages. Only sometimes I am impatient since I do not know how long the "life of fantasy" will last.

She also wrote that Karl had not received her package and she was going to make a claim at the post office.

Bertha agreed with Liese about what a fine person Steffi was.

> Your dear parents saw that right away and I still see and hear your dear Papa before me, how affectionately and dearly he greeted my good, kind boy when he saw him again in Vienna after his long stay in D.[achau]. Unfortunately I did not do enough for him in his life and everything went wrong and this fine boy always knows an excuse for his poor mother and is thankful for every little thing. You are right, Lieschen, I really do not have to go to Mrs. Hooper to hear praise about Stepsi. Only this good, loving child makes my life worth living and enables me to forget many sad things.

On January 28, 1940, Bertha received a letter from the American Consulate General, 38, Grosvenor Street, London. W. 1, Form 9, stating the following:

> Reference is made to your application for a quota immigration visa to take up permanent residence in the United States.
>
> While no assurance can be given that you will qualify for an immigration visa the Consulate General is willing to grant you an appointment to be formally examined if you first will submit by mail to this office for preliminary inspection all available financial evidence regarding any income and resources of your own,

[183] Presumably Bertha meant she was a Christian woman.

> and affidavits of support from your relatives in the United States together with the corroborative evidence of their income and resources.
>
> Upon receipt of the foregoing you will be informed further concerning an appointment. (Signed by John G. Erhardt, Consul General)

The Affidavit of Support that Steffi submitted on behalf of his mother stated that he had declared his intention of becoming a United States citizen on October 21, 1939, certificate number 15262, which was issued by the District Court of the District of Columbia. In this application Steffi listed his regular occupation as being "gymnastic teacher, massor [sic], and salesman for the 'Mayflower Health Club'" and his average weekly salary was $35. His "other assets" were $765 in a bank account.

On January 30, 1940, Mr. M. F. Bauer wrote to Mr. Benjamin Bateman, 60 Park Place, Newark, New Jersey, who had given Liese an affidavit of support for Steffi before his emigration. In this letter he asked if Mr. Bateman would be kind enough

> ...to execute another affidavit for his mother, it will be greatly appreciated by him as well as by us. I might state that both Dr. Shifferes and his wife are now employed so that you are not likely to be burdened either in connection with his support or that of his mother.

Also on January 30, 1940, a letter was written from the U.S. Department of Labor, Immigration and Naturalization Service, New Post Office Building, Chicago, Illinois, to Onkel Alfred. The letter stated that they were unable to find his file, No. 4-21704, which had been transmitted to their office from Washington, D.C. If he did not hear from them in a month, then he was to "call at this office and bring this letter with you." Naturally Onkel Alfred then turned to Liese [February 12, 1940] and asked if she could go to the "appropriate department" to see if she could attend to this matter.

Bertha once again wrote [January 31, 1940] of her loneliness, though she added this: "The main thing is that you are doing well and do not live in a country where there is war. I myself do not hear, see or feel anything of the war."

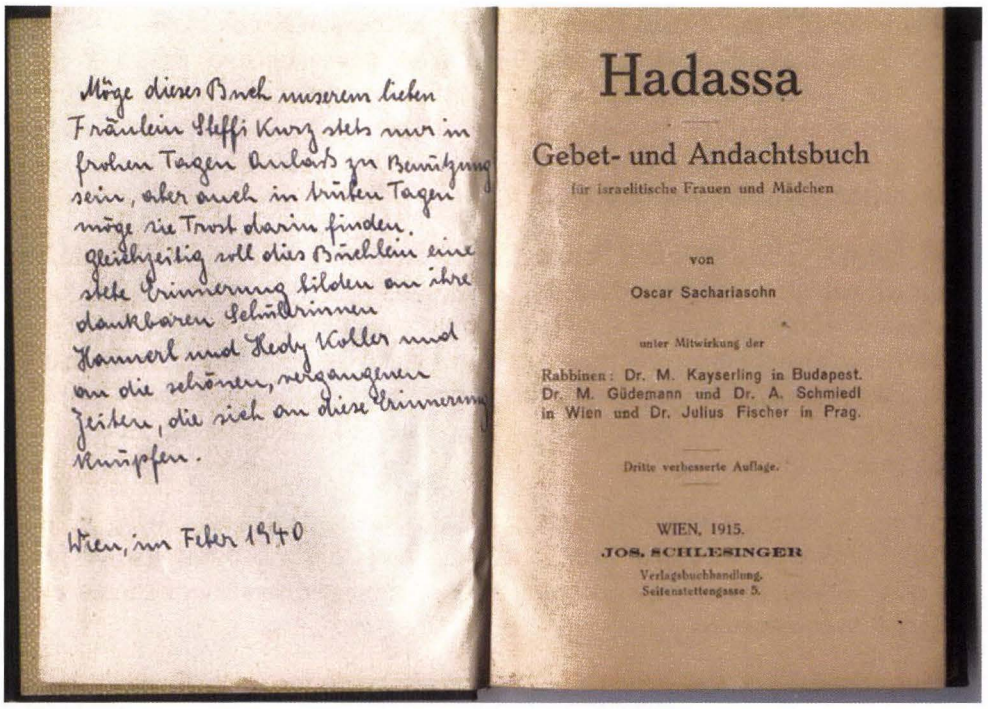
Arnold E. Browner (originally Breuner) wrote to Steffi from New York City [February 2, 1940], asking if Steffi could help his brother and sister-in-law by approaching a Dr. Maurice Besgyer, who was a representative of B'nai B'rith. Richard Breuner was apparently the number one rice dealer in Vienna.

Before fleeing Vienna, Tante Stephy, who had been a tutor for a number of students, received a prayer book as "souvenir" from two of her students, Hannerl and Hedy Koller. The inscription read:

> May this book we are giving Frl. Steffi Kurz be of use not only on happy occasions, but may she also find consolation in it in dark days. At the same time may this book serve as a reminder of your grateful students, Hannerl and Hedy Koller, and of the beautiful past that is bound up in this memento.[184]

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[184] Hedy Koller, born June 11, 1929, was deported to Theresienstadt and was murdered there on October 25, 1942. It is uncertain whether Hannerl was her mother, although there was a Johanna Koller, born April 21, 1888, who was deported to Modliborzyce.



Möge dieses Buch unserem lieben Fräulein Steffi Kurz stets nur in frohen Tagen Anlass zu Benützung sein, aber auch in trüben Tagen möge sie Trost darin finden. Gleichzeitig soll dies Büchlein eine stete Erinnerung bilden an ihre dankbaren Schülerinnen Hannerl und Hedy Koller und an die schönen, vergangenen Zeiten, die sich an diese Erinnerung knüpfen.

Wien, im Feber 1940

Hadassa

Gebet- und Andachtsbuch

für israelitische Frauen und Mädchen

von

Oscar Sachariasohn

unter Mitwirkung der

Rabbinen: Dr. M. Kayserling in Budapest. Dr. M. Güdemann und Dr. A. Schmiedl in Wien und Dr. Julius Fischer in Prag.

Dritte verbesserte Auflage.

WIEN, 1915.

JOS. SCHLESINGER

Verlagsbuchhandlung.

Seitenstettengasse 5.

Prayer book given to Stephanie Kurz by two of her students, Hannerl and Hedy Koller, before Tante Stephy's departure from Vienna, February 1940, "...as a souvenir of beautiful memories..."

On February 6, 1940, Bertha wrote:

> Today I had a letter from Karl, who is already waiting to get a letter from you. It seems that he is doing quite well and he also writes that the certificate from the *Légion d'Honneur* from dear Onni sometimes helps him. Tante Gisi sent him a legal copy from Vienna.

Bertha also wrote that a sergeant came to bring her the renewal of her travel-permit so she could then travel to Bournemouth for her dental appointment. When she rode on the bus, she met a French woman who had been in England for thirty years and did not speak English much better than Bertha did. "I naturally spoke French with her because it still seems to come more fluently than my English. Sad, don't you think?"

Herbert Muller's letter from February 6, 1940, informed Liese [whom he, for some reason, called "Thiese"] that he had received her letter, but could not go to Ellis Island to pick up her parents since he would be out of town until February 21.

Hede wrote that the Strauss parents had sent a telegram from Trieste announcing their departure on the SS Vulcania. Hede thought that perhaps Liese would be able to obtain a housekeeper affidavit for Bertha and Tante Else. "But it would be another good year before Tante Else would be called, who would wait that long?"

As to the arrival of Sophie and Hugo Strauss, Hede wrote that if Liese could not pick them up because she might lose her job, then Hede would ask Pepi, Dr. Falkner, Rudi Herbert [Hans'

cousin], Olga Feitler,[185] and Robert Klein. She thought that surely one of them would be able to do them the favor. Hede also wrote about their living expenses: they paid $19 for rent each month, $1.50 for electricity, 60 cents for gas, $1.85 for telephone. Hede had joined the Union (membership cost $3 plus 35 cents weekly). Hans had the possibility of working as a "Collector + Salesman" for an insurance company, where he would earn $20 weekly + commission. They hoped that something would come of that.

Hede wrote [February 15, 1940] that Pepi had received a telegram from Holland informing him that the Deutsch parents were summoned to the Consulate for March 5. Hans did not get the job with the insurance company because they required their employees to be U.S. citizens. Hede was very sad that the financial burden for their parents would fall completely on Liese and Steffi. She and Hans could not really skimp on food because they were still living with Siegfried Held, who was "...especially sensitive and sometimes pretentious and frivolous, even though he claims to never have any money."

Apparently there were many houses for rent in the area where Bertha was living, so that she was not so fearful of being thrown out of Mrs. Mason's house. That was surely a relief for everyone! Karl had written Bertha that he was spending a lot of time at the cafés. "I should really lecture him again," Bertha commented.

Liese's friend, Mary Goldwater, wrote from New York regarding the arrival of Liese's parents. Mary said that "...either the principal affidavit signer must be at the boat or he must give the National Refugee Service (formerly Coordinating Committee—165 W. 46 St. Bry 9-2102) power to represent him. THIS IS ESSENTIAL." Mary said that if the boat arrived late, after 5 o'clock, she would perhaps be able to meet them. Then she asked if they had another signer for Steffi's mother. "If not, perhaps I can arrange it."

On February 16, 1940, HIAS wrote to Liese "RE: STRAUSS, Hugo and Sophie" that they had

> ...notified their pier representative to meet them on the SS Vulcania and facilitate their admission. Due to the fact, however, that they are elderly people, and in order to avoid the possibility of their detention at Ellis Island, we would advise you to send us immediately $25.00 or $30.00 for their railroad and baggage transportation expenses. It would also be advisable for you to include a letter addressed to the immigration authorities stating your reasons for not being able to come to New York to meet your father and mother.

Tante Gisi (née Schiller) had two sisters: Malwine, who married Paul Schuschny, and Lina, who never married and lived with her mother, Mrs. Dora Schiller. Tante Gisi had one brother, Moritz (called Ala Mor by the family), who was able to go to England.[186] On February 17, 1940, Tante Gisi's siblings wrote to Bertha in Washington, thinking that she had already left England. Malwine wrote about their children, Ida [married to Paul Weiss] and Trude, who were all living in New York. They wrote about having been at Tante Rosa's for the holidays. Lina complained that she had not heard from Tante Gisi or Lisbeth and Aryan:

---

[185] Sophie's good friend, Olga Feitler, born November 8, 1895, was able to get out of Austria and lived in Annandale on Hudson, New York. She died in October 1975.

[186] Malwine [b. February 6, 1884] and Paul Schuschny [b. November 11, 1881] were deported from Vienna to Wlodawa, Poland, on April 27, 1942. Lina [Leontine, born April 11, 1884] was deported to Izbica, Poland, on May 15, 1942.

> ...unfortunately this is impossible now. You surely know how fond we were of one another; unfortunately Fate willed it to be so. What will become of me? God knows. I am more at peace, before I was very unhappy, what sense does that have. I trust in God, if I only knew where Mor and family were and how he is, then things would be easier.

She asked Bertha, whom she called Tante Bate, to send Tante Gisi her best and to write them again. "I send you warmest greetings and kisses from one who treasures you."

The *B'nai B'rith* Vocational Service Bureau sent Steffi a letter, [February 18, 1940] stating that they were enclosing an affidavit and proof of income for Bertha Schifferes "...and trust that same together with your own affidavit will facilitate the immigration of your mother. Signed M.F. Baer."

Sophie and Hugo Strauss arrived at Ellis Island on February 21, 1940. Liese's friend, Mary Goldwater, met them at the pier.

Bertha continued to enjoy her lonely life at Campden House, though she said her only real pleasure was hearing from her children. Mrs. Mason's brother-in-law came to bring her money for her food. She would listen to the radio so that she heard English spoken, but did not have much of a chance at all to converse. "I am only afraid that a Stepsiboy will not be satisfied with my speaking and will send me back to England." Though there was central heating, Bertha felt the rooms were not heated enough for her to get back to playing piano, but she would do so when it got warmer. Her only complaint was:

> ...I have no one about whom I must concern myself, I must always occupy myself with myself and in the long run, that is somewhat boring. I actually find it somewhat strange that I am not being sent away and am not only being paid my wages, but rather also [am getting] my food. You are right, Stepsi, Fate has been somewhat kinder to me, if I deserve it, that I do not know. Though I always wanted the best, and still I never accomplished anything and actually, above all, I have failed. Now I am speaking of myself again.

Benjamin Bateman, Certified Public Accountant in Newark, New Jersey, had filled out an affidavit form on behalf of Bertha Schifferes, but apparently the HIAS sent him a letter suggesting that he include information about: the date of his birth in Newark; his income from 1939, not 1938; list the balance of his bank account; give the cash value of his insurance policies; elaborate further on his friendship with Mr. Schifferes and his reasons for making an affidavit on behalf of his mother; how many dependents he had; description of the house in which he lived; list the amount of spending money he would give Mrs. Schifferes weekly. As a result of this correspondence, Mr. Bateman wrote Steffi and said that he could not understand why all the additional information was necessary because it had not been required when he had provided Steffi with an affidavit.

> You must realize that there are a number of things that I do not care to disclose and it is impossible for me to visit the New York office of the Society, since a great deal of my work is not in this vicinity. If you feel you cannot use the affidavit, please return it.

Despite this, Mr. Bateman wrote to Mr. Isadore Hershfeld of the HIAS in Washington and told him that his "...interest in Mrs. Schifferes, as in the case of her son, is humane, and not a personal one. I am not related to them, as a matter of fact, I met Mr. Schifferes only when he landed and

have not seen him since. I have never met his mother." He then reiterated what he had written to Steffi, saying that he was certain that the Counsel General in England would approve of the affidavit.

Bertha wrote [February 29, 1940] to tell her children that she had received a letter from Liese's parents on board the Vulcania, which had been written between Naples and Gibraltar. She also said that she had saved £21 and the February salary would be used for her dental treatments. When she had to travel more than five miles, in anticipation of her trip to London, she had to get a travel permit. Bertha thought that Tante Gisi was not writing, either to save money or because the letters took so long. She was hoping to hear from Tante Rosa, and was happy that Tante Stephy would soon be summoned to the Consulate in Vienna.

In a letter dated March 9, 1940, Bertha remarked that she had heard a wonderful broadcast of a Schumann sonata on the radio, which she used to play with "Papa" and Onni.[187] Karl had written her that he had a job as an official in an agricultural machinery factory. "What good luck! That is, he was taken on a month's trial, but hopefully he will then be able to stay." Then Bertha wrote:

> I just remembered what a pity it was that I did not buy sheets out of real linen. Now everything is more expensive. What should I bring from here that is better than there? For example, I think paper is cheaper. I am thinking too far ahead, I do not even know when and if I will be coming there.

Bertha waxed nostalgic in her birthday letter to Hugo [March 9, 1940]:

> I can remember with pleasure the little celebration when every one of your kind friends brought a present. They were really nice times that I spent with you in V.[ienna], I often think back on it with sadness. But enough with the thoughts of the past on which so much suffering is also attached.

Steffi, although he was working at the Mayflower Health Club, was still in pursuit of extra income as a masseur and therefore wrote to Major Paul Logan and also to Lt. Col. J.F. Barnes, House-Committee, at the Army and Navy Country Club at the War Department, Washington, D.C. In both letters Steffi said he merely needed a little space for a portable massage table. He wrote that most of the other golf clubs had masseurs who worked on the weekends and charged between $2 and $3 per treatment. Steffi would get $1.50 for "a complete oil and alcohol treatment and 75 cents for a common alcohol massage." Col. Churchill and Capt. Robinson of the Navy had given Steffi permission to use their names as recommendations.

Steffi also applied to the Congressional Country Club, c/o Mr. Bancroft T. Foley, 2020 I Street, N.W., as a swimming instructor. At the same time, he wrote to his boss, Mr. John A. Logan at the Mayflower Health Club, to inform him that he was applying for this position because the Health Club business was "shrivelling [sic] in the hotter season...." He hoped that he could find another job for this period of time and to "...thank you so very much that you will help me to break in my real field, the sporting teacher's job." He thanked Mr. Logan and said that he would

> ...never be disappointed by me and that I always try seriously, industriously, and honestly to earn my living. If you speak for me it would be the biggest help I ever had and therefore I thank you so very much in beforehand [sic].

[187] Steffi's father, Julius Schifferes, and her brother, Ernst Schifferes.

Tante Stephy arrived in the USA on March 14, 1940, and went to Chicago, where she was employed as a practical nurse for wealthy women. Since she basically had no expenses (her room and board were paid for, as were her uniforms) she was able, over the many years that she worked, to save quite a bit of money.

Chapter 51: I Never Wanted to Be Alone

On March 13, 1940, Bertha wrote that she had finally received the summons to the American Consulate for April 16. She had not heard from Steffi and Liese in some time and was a bit concerned. But mostly, she was overwhelmed:

> Today I am living as if I were in a dream, I can hardly grasp the fact that I will be lucky enough to see you both so soon, my dear good children. You cannot imagine the mood that I am in. If only nothing would spoil it, I am just uneasy about the fact that I have no news from you and I do not even know from whom the affidavits are.

Bertha informed Mr. George Mason, the brother-in-law of her employer, about having been summoned and said, "...I think that he is very satisfied with the solution. Until now I can only say that I have met fine and generous people in the Mason Family here at Campden House."

Mr. Mason, who lived at "Sandys," Burley, Hants, wrote a letter [March 16, 1940] to The Secretary, Home Office, Aliens Dept., Horseferry House, Thorney Str., S.W.I., on Bertha's behalf, asking if she would need a special permit to travel to London for the meeting at the American Consulate in London and if so, whether it could be obtained from the local police. And Mr. Mason also wrote [March 16, 1940] to The American Consulate General, 38 Grosvenor Str., W. 1., enquiring about Bertha's "original passport," which had been issued in Austria and was no longer valid. He also wrote that "the applicant proposes to join her son who has been resident in Washington for some time."

In her next letter [March 19, 1940], Bertha reminded Steffi that it had been a year since he left Vienna. "Here one is not at all happy that I will be leaving since they have not yet found a renter." She once again told them not to worry about her and said, "...you know I like working and if I had not stayed here, I would have had to take on a job soon. I would rather be near you both and work because I never wanted to be alone."

On March 20, 1940, the American Vice Consul, J. E. Callahan wrote Mr. Mason, saying that

> ...it would be quite in order for Mrs. Schifferes to present a photostatic copy of her birth certificate together with the certified copy she has in her possession. If she is unable to have her passport extended she should endeavor to obtain a Certificate of Identity from the British authorities.

Tante Gisi, Lisbeth, and Aryan wrote from Dubbo, Australia [March 22, 1940]. Tante Gisi began by saying that Bertha's letter had taken two months to reach them and if it did not cost too much, she should write airmail next time. She also happened to mention that Erwin Hacker, who had a silver business in Vienna where both Karl and Steffi had worked, was in Sydney, already working in his field.

Mr. George Mason was really helping Bertha a lot regarding the difficulties with her passport. He wrote [March 23, 1940] to a Mr. B. A. Freegard regarding Bertha's birth certificate, saying that he needed

> ...two certified copies and this being quite impossible under present conditions, she is told to present a "photostatic" copy. I presume this merely means a "photograph" of it and it shall be obliged if you will let me have two copies as

soon as possible. Nothing is said about the size but I should think a fairly large copy would be sufficient, but you can judge better as to this.

Then the Immigration Branch, Home Office wrote Mr. George Mason to acknowledge the receipt of his letter from the 16th and enclosed

> ...an application for a Certificate of Identity and forms of application for an Exit Permit, all of which forms should be completed and returned to this Office (not H.M. Permit Office) with the following:-
>
> (b) Police Registration Certificate.
>
> (c) 2 small unmounted (certified) photographs.
>
> (d) Postal order for 7/6 made payable to the Accounting Office, Home Office.
>
> (e) Applicant's former national passport.[188]

Finally, a letter dated April 4, 1940, arrived in Washington from Tante Rosa. She said that she had just received their letter from December 17, 1939. Fritz was still taking a course and reading; Tante Rosa had a lot of work in the house. The maid Anna would come to see them occasionally. Tante Rosa wrote about Alfred Huber's death,[189] angina pectoris, which left Roserl "...despondent and confused; it is doubly sad and tragic because the next day the affidavit for both of them came from Seppi and now poor Roserl will have to leave by herself."

Tante Rosa had not heard from Bertha at all and wondered about her:

> ...I feel very sorry that she does not find a way to write to us, hopefully she is doing well... on the 18th of this month it will be a year since I saw her last and spoke to her... how often I think of her, my dearest, best, only friend; I think to myself now that she is so alone, her nerves can have a rest, but with whom does she speak, with whom can she have contact?

Tante Rosa said she had not heard from Karl. "The Mandys make themselves scarce, too much has changed."

Mr. James Rowe Jr., Administrative Assistant to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, wrote to Steffi on April 12, 1940, and enclosed the letter that Archibald MacLeish, who was the Librarian of Congress, had written regarding Liese's application for employment at the library. Archibald MacLeish wrote that he had not yet received an application from Steffi's wife and also that he had not been given an address to which the reply could be mailed directly.

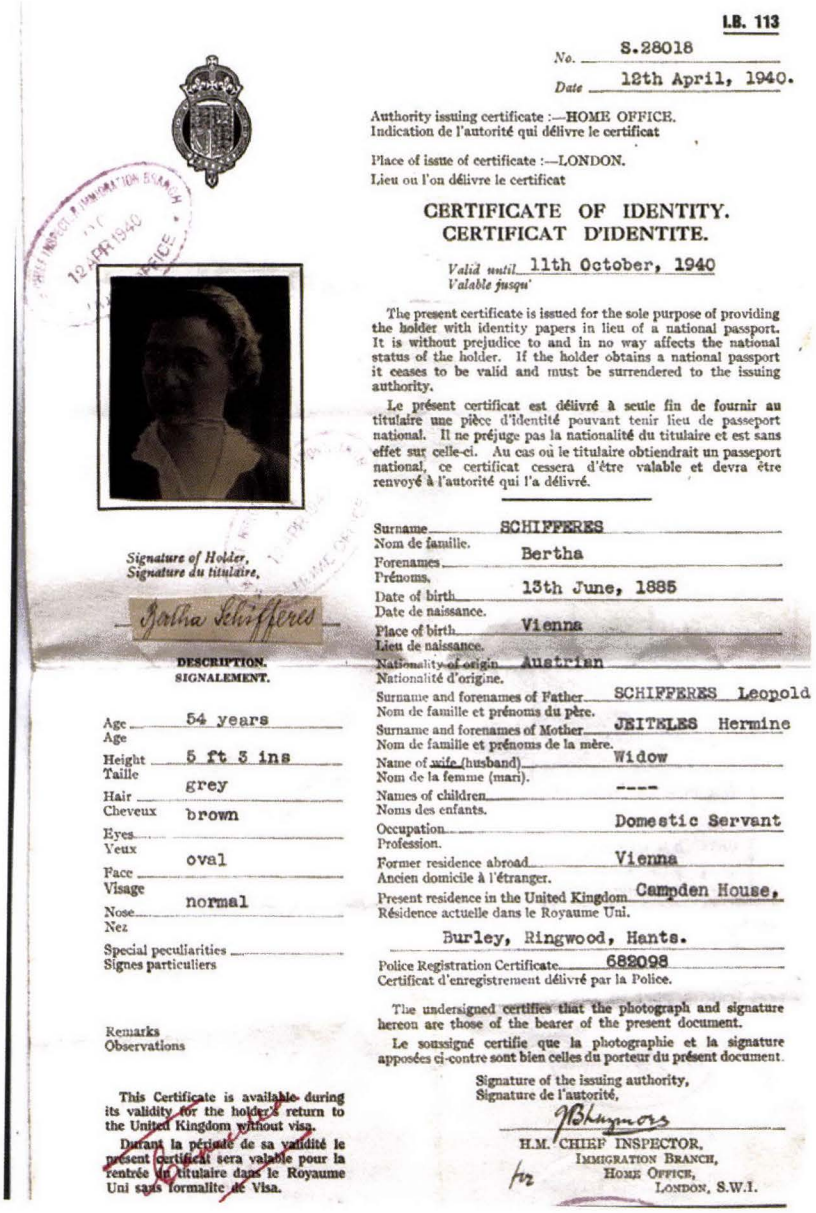
Tante Stephy wrote Liese saying that Tante Else was asking if Liese could get her a visa. She would pay Tante Stephy back,

> ...but cannot help herself in any other way because from her letter one is to assume that all Jews from Vienna must depart if they do not want to go to Poland. That is why the Allinas have a plan to go to Shanghai. Hans' parents have a ticket on a ship reserved for December, etc., so I imagine Else will be called around this time. It is taking so long still. If only the affi is strong enough. The Deutsch parents are completely despondent and it is noticeable. They have to move again.

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[188] Paragraph (a) was obliterated on the letter.

[189] Alfred Huber was the husband of Julius Schifferes' first cousin, Rosa née Hoffmann.



I.B. 113

No. S.28018

Date 12th April, 1940.

Authority issuing certificate :—HOME OFFICE.
Indication de l'autorité qui délivre le certificat

Place of issue of certificate :—LONDON.
Lieu où l'on délivre le certificat

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY.
CERTIFICAT D'IDENTITE.

Valid until 11th October, 1940
Valable jusqu'

The present certificate is issued for the sole purpose of providing the holder with identity papers in lieu of a national passport. It is without prejudice to and in no way affects the national status of the holder. If the holder obtains a national passport it ceases to be valid and must be surrendered to the issuing authority.

Le présent certificat est délivré à seule fin de fournir au titulaire une pièce d'identité pouvant tenir lieu de passeport national. Il ne préjuge pas la nationalité du titulaire et est sans effet sur celle-ci. Au cas où le titulaire obtiendrait un passeport national, ce certificat cessera d'être valable et devra être renvoyé à l'autorité qui l'a délivré.

Surname SCHIFFERES
Nom de famille.
Forenames Bertha
Prénoms.
Date of birth 13th June, 1885
Date de naissance.
Place of birth Vienna
Lieu de naissance.
Nationality of origin Austrian
Nationalité d'origine.
Surname and forenames of Father SCHIFFERES Leopold
Nom de famille et prénoms du père.
Surname and forenames of Mother JEITELES Hermine
Nom de famille et prénoms de la mère.
Name of wife (husband) Widow
Nom de la femme (mari).
Names of children ----
Noms des enfants.
Occupation Domestic Servant
Profession.
Former residence abroad Vienna
Ancien domicile à l'étranger.
Present residence in the United Kingdom Campden House,
Résidence actuelle dans le Royaume Uni.
Burley, Ringwood, Hants.
Police Registration Certificate 682098
Certificat d'enregistrement délivré par la Police.

The undersigned certifies that the photograph and signature hereon are those of the bearer of the present document.
Le soussigné certifie que la photographie et la signature apposées ci-contre sont bien celles du porteur du présent document.

Signature of the issuing authority,
Signature de l'autorité,

H.M. CHIEF INSPECTOR,
IMMIGRATION BRANCH,
HOME OFFICE,
LONDON, S.W.1.

Signature of Holder,
Signature du titulaire,

Bertha Schifferes

DESCRIPTION.
SIGNALEMENT.

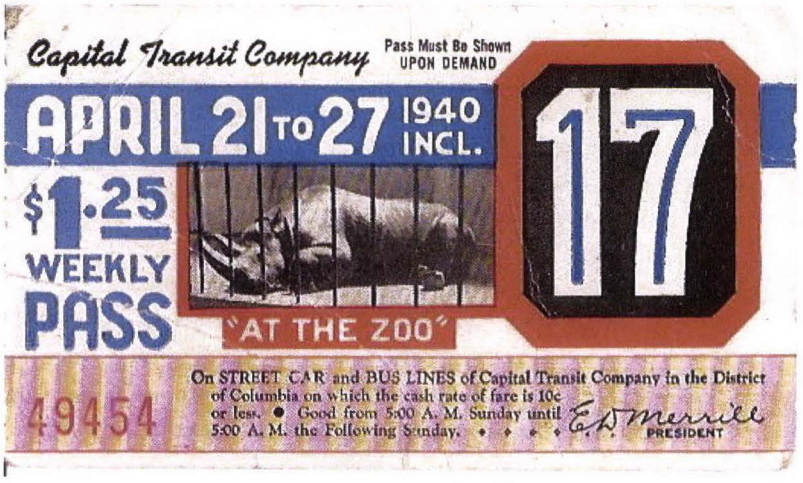
Age 54 years
Height 5 ft 3 ins
Hair grey
Eyes brown
Face oval
Visage
Nose normal
Special peculiarities
Signes particuliers

Remarks
Observations

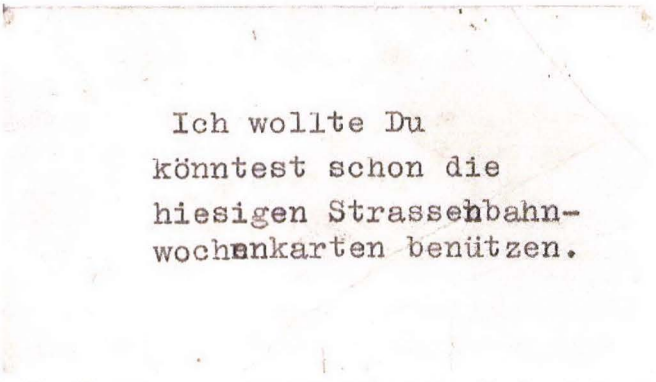
This Certificate is available during its validity for the holder's return to the United Kingdom without visa.
Durant la période de sa validité le présent certificat sera valable pour la rentrée du titulaire dans le Royaume Uni sans formalité de Visa.

Bertha Schifferes' Certificate of Identity

At the end of April Steffi sent his mother a weekly pass (cost, $1.25) for the Capitol Transit Company and typed on the back of it: "I wish you could already be using the local streetcar weekly pass." The pass had a photo of a sleeping rhinoceros in a cage at the zoo.



Capital Transit Bus Pas



Ich wollte Du
könntest schon die
hiesigen Strassenbahn-
wochenkarten benützen.

Steffi's note to Bertha: "I wish you could already be using the local streetcar weekly pass."

Two of Steffi's colleagues from the sports school, Peter Meyer and Bernd Hanauer, wrote him from Walton-on-Thames [April 21, 1940] saying that they would both be coming to the USA in July. In the meantime, they were still working on a farm, which was the only kind of work they were allowed to do in England. Peter wrote that Hänschen Philippson "...is actively taking part in the war and has probably already whipped the Germans back close to Hamburg." They addeed that Marianne Schlesinger was still in Germany, as was the director of the Sports School, Herr Adler.

Fritz wrote Bertha a long letter [April 25, 1940] in which he said he had been studying wallpapering in Vienna. He had received the first summons: "...just have to await the second one, so then I will know more about the preparatory work to bring about my emigration." Apparently the whole class, about eight people, were to travel together "...so that I should not be in a foreign land all by myself. Our master arranged this so that we can also work together abroad." There was such hopefulness, such optimism.

Fritz also wrote about "Dear Heini,"[190] who, according to Fritz, "...was still on his way to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, at the moment in an intermediary stop on the Danube, he is probably doing well." Fritz also wrote about "K. P."[191] According to Fritz, Carl Pollak was in an old-age home and had asked Onkel Dori "...to subsidize him since H.[eini] cannot send him anything and he wants to buy himself something to smoke...."

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[190] Steffi and Fritz's cousin, Heinrich Pollak.

[191] Heini's father, Carl Pollak. Fritz was using the more German spelling, Karl.

Then he continued to bring "Tante Bertha" up to date on the rest of the family:

> Big and little Mandy are working here, the big one in gasoline use, the little one (the sometime so big "Schönauerin"[192]) as an office worker in a technical office, which she is running by herself since the boss is in military service, which she got upon the recommendation of Markus' [Schifferes] wife; sad ending to the creation of an actress! Nothing can be done!

Further news of the family included the sudden death of Alfred Huber, that his son Lixi [Felix] Huber was still in "protective custody" [in concentration camp] and Tante Irma [widow of Sigmund Siebenschein, brother of Ottilie] had broken her leg and was in the hospital. Coincidentally an acquaintance of Rosa Huber was in the same room as Tante Irma so she at least had company. As Fritz then wrote, "...so enough 'prokuratiert'[193] as Karl would have said now."

Then Fritz proceeded to write about Rosa Günsberg, whom we only recently learned was related to us through the Jeiteles side of our family. According to Fritz, she also had to get out of her house and moved to a room on Rembrandstrasse [in Leopoldstadt, the Jewish "ghetto" in Vienna]. According to Fritz, Rosa Günsberg's brother, Dr. Robert,

> ...teaches the people who are willing to travel to the nicest piece of land on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in judicial procedure and mathematics at the Jew. School, where I am also waiting to travel. —The school itself is free, however the young people are forced to immigrate to the praised land.

On April 26, 1940, Fritz added on that they had just received Steffi's letter from April 6, which informed them that Bertha had been summoned to the Consulate for an examination. He hoped that the letter would reach Bertha in the "new homeland." And Fritz ended by writing: "May the dear Lord fulfill all your wishes as quickly as this one and may you also enjoy a happy and quiet life there by Steffi and Liese's side.—I wish you this with the hope that you will not completely forget me...."

Tante Rosa continued the letter on April 27, 1940, wishing Bertha well and reminiscing about Steffi's and her departure from Vienna in March and April 1939.

> I can still see Steffi, tipping his big hat when we accompanied him last year and then when we said our goodbyes to you, in the restaurant, can you still remember? I should have kissed you more, but I did not want to make your leaving more difficult; how very often I think about that. How were your last days in England, did you only have to do housekeeping for yourself; did you buy new clothes or will you manage with what you have? Do you have coffee for breakfast? I am still making it according to your method with 20 dkg and then I also think of you and all your love for me. And now you are far away and we can only chat in our thoughts, as in old times.

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[192] Mandy junior (whose first name was always Marianne) changed her surname to Schoenauer. So Fritz was mocking her.

[193] Rosa Prokurator was related to the Schifferes family through a branch of the Jeiteles family. In the 1920s she and one of her daughters settled in Rochester, New York. When Rosa Prokurator was living in Vienna, according to my father, she would give long explanations about various maladies that she had. Karl Schifferes made a verb of her last name, which described this idiosyncrasy of hers!

She wrote more about Roserl Huber, her cousin. Roserl was "...often impatient and in a bad mood." She was closing down the apartment, but had her Tante Katherine[194] and Angi living with her, even though she did not get along with them. In addition, there was also a married couple living with them. Such were the conditions for Jews in Vienna.

Rosa Schifferes Allina, whose real name was Rosalia, and Rosa Hoffmann Huber were first cousins. Their mothers were sisters, both Siebenscheins. And they were both named after their mothers' mother, Rosalia Kohn Siebenschein.

Tante Rosa wrote that Anna, the cook, was no longer coming and that Frau Stubaum "...only wants to wash dishes once a week..." So Tante Rosa had a lot to do in the kitchen. The winter had been very cold and they only had heat in the dining room and kitchen. She had ruined her hands from cleaning frozen carrots without thawing them out and was in the process of getting three new fingernails. "Hopefully the warm weather will heal everything...."

Although big Mandy once told them some news about Karl, Tante Rosa wrote that they had not heard from him. Tante Rosa wondered what he was doing, so all alone, "...he must be marveling at how capable Steffi and Liese are, in comparison to his people."

And Tante Rosa also wondered what would become of them: "...so far we are still happy, despite everything."

[194] Katharina (Kitty) Siebenschein was the daughter of Joseph Siebenschein and his second wife, Cäcilie. Kitty was born on February 5, 1896, in Vienna. She was the stepsister of Ottilie née Siebenschein Schifferes [grandmother of Fritz and Heini and Steffi]. Kitty's last address in Vienna was Porzellangasse 22, which was a "Sammelwohnung." *Sammel Adresse* is a collective "herding center" where people were crowded together after being driven from their homes. She was deported from there on May 27, 1942, to Maly Trostinec, Belorusse, and was murdered there with the Prisoner Number 342 on June 1, 1942.

Chapter 52: It Is Really True

Ines Mandl wrote [April 26, 1940] from Cork, Ireland, to thank Liese for the birthday wishes. She also suggested that Liese use her cleverness to sew and knit things and then sell them. She also thought that she could perhaps do something for glove manufacturing, perhaps through Hans Deutsch's old girlfriend, Gerda Neubauer, who lived in Gloversville, New York. Ines thought that Liese and Steffi would have better chances in a larger city. So she suggested they do what she and her husband had done, namely write to various places and show them a sample of her work. Someone might even have need for a secretary with her knowledge. Or she should go to department stores and show her wares in order to sell them.

> Above all, Liesl, do not let it get you down, you are still young, there are always new and unpredictable chances and it seems to me that everything is making a turn for the better. The world seems to be getting more normal and in any case, the "Refugees" who are all over are establishing themselves and I have great faith in them in general and in you and yours in specific. Especially now that you are both together, I hope that you give one another courage and you will see, everything will suddenly go twice as fast...

While they were living in Cork, Ireland, Ines was taking some courses in chemistry. She updated Liese about some of their friends and teachers from Vienna, most of whom had left. Ines thought that perhaps their French teacher, Anna Follender, had not been able to leave Vienna because of her sister Paula. Both of them perished in Maly Trostinec, Belorusse, in August 1942.

Richard Meyer, the father of Peter whom Steffi had helped so much, wrote Steffi [April 29, 1940] in response to a letter Steffi had sent Peter in Germany. Herr Meyer opened the letter to see if he could perhaps help Steffi. Apparently Steffi wanted to obtain a certificate from the sports school in Stuttgart and had asked his future father-in-law, Dr. Hugo Strauss, to write the school on his behalf. In December 1939 they responded to Hugo by telling him that they issued a confirmation that Steffi had participated in the sports school "without completing the examinations." By stopping the sports course, he reneged on the possibility of receiving a certificate. The *Reichs Alliance* stated that if he had put enough value in the certificate he should have remained. They were also not prepared to issue a certificate for sports massage "...since these subjects were not even taught at the sports course and Dr. Sch. did not have a lesson in it." They did give him Frau Alice Bloch's address in Zurich.

On May 1, 1940, Steffi wrote to Col. C. B. Garnett, president of the Washington Country Club, Tower Building in Washington, D.C., asking for permission to do massages there. "...I massaged the best known men in town, e.g., Mr. Eccles, Mr. Chewning, Mr. Rowe (Secretary to Mr. Roosevelt) etc. etc."

Robert L. Mouton, who was a member of the Congress of the United States from the Third District in Louisiana, wrote a letter to Mr. Edgar F. Rogers, Administrative Assistant to the Librarian, Library of Congress, on behalf of Liese, stating that she was

> ...a very accomplished young lady, being particularly adept as a Linguist. She has a very extensive educational background, having completed a General College Course at the University of Vienna, as well as a Course in Commercial Economics, and has studied languages in Paris, London, and Italy. In addition, she successfully completed a thorough course in practical library training in the Library at the University of Vienna. She speaks, reads, and writes English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Old Latin.

Steffi wrote to his mother [May 4, 1940], whom he sometimes called "Mickerl," reminding her that her passport would expire and that she would have to get British travel papers from the Bloomsbury House. They were hoping that her departure would not be delayed because of that.

On May 5, 1940, Hugo wrote a birthday letter to Liese from the Michel Preese Hospital in Chicago, on stationery from the ship they took across the Atlantic Ocean, the SS Vulcania.

> This is the second and hopefully last birthday letter which I will write, next time I would rather do it verbally and not like today, from a bed.
>
> Last year around this time you were alone in Washington and we were in Vienna, in constant danger of life, freedom, fortune. I had only one hope, to see my children again. And that came about thanks to your help.

Then he went on to call her "...the best, most capable, delicate child that one can imagine. I wish you every possible good, above all a nice, assured, and pleasant existence."

Hugo wrote that he was able to fall asleep without a pill for the first time. "No wonder with all these worries one has here. One cannot imagine, there is no spot on my body that has not been examined. Except for a psychiatrist, all sorts of doctors were here."

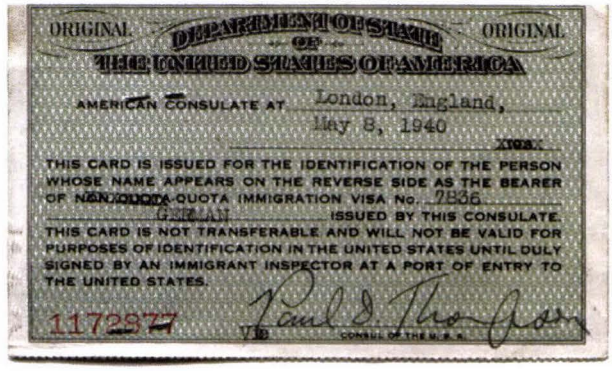
Hugo's wonderful sense of humor is evident in this comment:

> I do not know how long I will be in the hospital, every day they are doing new tests, no end in sight. With that, I have a liver spot on the left side of my back, where the back loses its name. If they discover that, unimaginable! X-ray, permanent wave, radioscope, and who knows what else! But so far, I am feeling well, never better.

Onkel Emil, who was now living in the Minneapolis, philosophized to Liese [May 5, 1940]. He was inquiring whether Sophie, his cousin, had gotten somewhat used to things. Then he wrote:

> America signifies great happiness for very few of the new emigrants. But for Hugo and Sophie (as well as for Alfred and me) the displacement here, compared to remaining in Vienna, was the lesser of two evils. And we have to be satisfied with the fact that we have the possibility to choose.

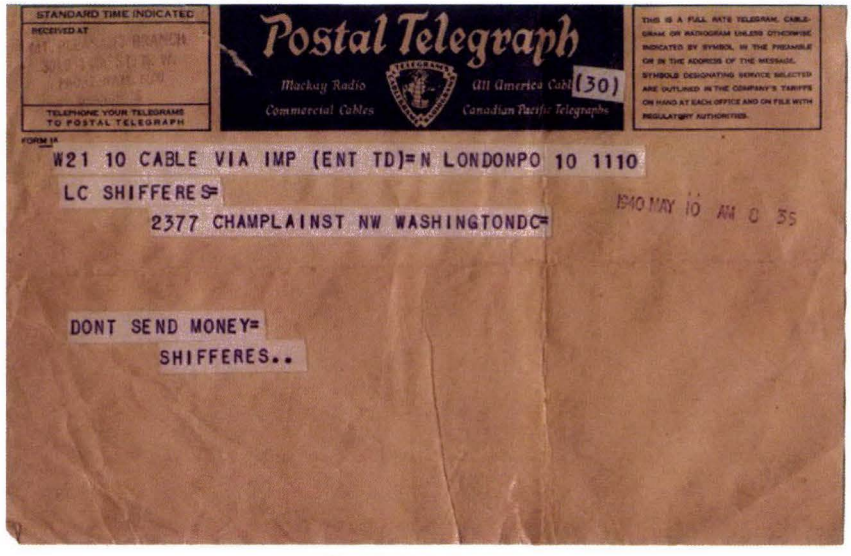




Bertha's American Identification Card

On May 9, 1940, Steffi received a Western Union telegram that stated: "YOUR MOTHER'S FUNDS EXHAUSTED REQUIRED STLG 38 FARE STOP PLEASE HELP CABLE REPLY= JEWISH REFUGEES COMMITTEE OVERSEAS."

Then the next day, May 10, 1940, Bertha's telegram to Steffi said: "DON'T SEND MONEY=SHIFFERES…"



Bertha's telegram

On May 9, 1940, Bertha wrote a letter that began: "It is really true, I have the visa, that is, I got it at 4 p.m. yesterday." The Bloomsbury House had gotten her a room in a little hotel where she stayed for two days. The shelter was now for men only. Then she described the examination, which was

> ...rather exact, the Consul was very nice and asked me if I were born in V. and where my son is, otherwise nothing. Now I just have to fight for my ticket, but in order to immigrate I will still need my Exit Permit. But I have no idea how long that will take.

Bertha had to be back in Burley because her travel-permit, for which she had to fight, expired. Then she added that Karl had not answered her last three letters. "I cannot understand what is happening with him." Tante Gisi was slow in responding and Bertha's letter to her in Australia took two months. "Tante Rosa is strange; why does she not write me through you. Why are Käthe and Clara[195] not answering?"

On May 15, 1940, Liese wrote to Congressman Robert Mouton and thanked him for his intervention on her behalf.

> During your interview with me you considered it as advisable for me to get some more congressional endorsements and you mentioned a few of your friends in Congress and [the] Senate you had in mind. I should be most thankful to you if you could help me again to get them or show me a way how I could get them myself.

On May 18, 1940, Bertha received £7/10 from The Jewish Refugees Committee.

Tante Rosa wrote Bertha a postcard c/o Steffi in Washington congratulating her on her birthday (June 13).

Bertha wrote [May 20, 1940]:

> Now I always think it will be the last letter that I send from here. I am already very anxious and am afraid that I will not even be coming to you so quickly. Everything is so difficult because I am so far away from London and there are always new things that get in the way.

She was concerned that she would not be able to bring anything with her or even be able to bring the money she had earned. "But I still want to continue to work diligently over there [in the United States] because I have really recovered here." Karl had finally answered and wrote that he had another job. And once again she wrote: "I am very, very impatient and fearful that I will not be able to leave."

On May 21, 1940, Bertha again received £7/10 from the Jewish Refugees Committee.

On that same date, Steffi wrote that he was also nervous. He had been at two companies that sold ship tickets (American and Cunard Lines) and found out "...that neither the departure of the ship nor the arrival is known." He suggested that if Bertha was not already on her way that she try to leave from Ireland "...like the American citizens do." He also suggested that she write and telegraph the Bloomsbury House every day.

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[195] As noted before, both Clara and Käthe had been deported.

> ...Otherwise they will fall asleep just like half of the world did before they were awakened. I want you to be here already, dear Mama. I want to be able to celebrate your birthday here... Try to see N.Y. since it is only "a cat's jump away" and then come right to your children.

Steffi was certain that someone from HIAS would meet her at the ship

> ...since the person who gave you the affidavit will not be able to meet you at the ship, if the exact arrival date of the ship is not known. In the worst case scenario, go like the local foreign minister of America [meaning himself!] suggested, via the free state of Ireland, and do not spare any expenses.

In the last sentence of his letter, Steffi wrote that it was already pretty hot in Washington, "...a damp heat, yesterday a storm, still I would like to see you here sweating."

The Jewish Refugees Committee sent Bertha a form letter on May 22, 1940, informing her that her departure was to be on the Furness Line Steamer, which would leave from Liverpool on June 1, 1940. She was to take a train at 8:25 AM on Saturday, June 1, from Euston Station. The boat ticket would be issued to her on the boat train. However, on the back of this, Bertha wrote a note, as she would announce to Liese and Steffi in a later letter, that she had been interned on the Isle of Man.

> *I inform you that I was interned and I am living on the Isle of Man with the above address. Will you kindly look if there are letters and cards for me and send them over. I am very sorry to make all this trouble....Yours faithfully and I have nobody else. Address: Mrs. E.A. Nerld, Ivernia Promenade, Port St. Mary, I.o.M.*

Chapter 53: Class B Enemy Alien

Two more letters arrived from the Jewish Refugees Committee for Bertha at Campden House. Both were dated May 23, 1940. The first letter requested that she fetch the Certificate of Registration (Police book), which was at the Superintendent's office of the Hants Constabulary, Lyndhurst. Otherwise they would not be able to collect her Exit Permit. The second letter requested that Bertha fill out a green declaration form, and also requested that her signature be witnessed and returned to them. Furthermore, they would not be able to pay her fares to Chicago. The letter ended: "We should like to draw your attention to the fact that the matter of your Exit Permit is very urgent and we would ask you once more to let us have all the necessary documents as soon as possible."

On May 25, 1940, the Hants Constabulary, Superintendent Office, Police Station, Lyndhurst issued the following:

> TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, This is to certify that Bertha SCHIFFERES, of Campden House, Burley, Hants, is registered as an alien with the Police of this district. She holds Registration Certificate No. 682098, issued at Lyndhurst on the 30th April, 1939, but this is now in the possession of the Police as the alien's case is under consideration by the Regional Advisory Committee, she being a Class "B" Enemy Alien.
>
> A. Wilson, Aliens Registration Officer, for Superintendent

Tante Rosa wrote Liese and Steffi [May 28, 1940] that the Deutsch parents and Tante Else were at their house on Khevenhüllerstrasse. They all "...sat together under the pear tree and spoke a lot about you and all our loved ones over there." Tante Rosa wondered if "Mickerl" had arrived in the USA yet. She also wrote that she had been

> ...at the cemetery to see all our loved ones, put stones down[196] for you and Mama and me, also for Boxi, and will have the graves fixed up, as if you were here; I was also at the Wäre [Währinger Friedhof], I did not find Onni's grave, will go there next time.

The ship line Furness, Withy & Co., Limited, Passenger Department sent Bertha initial labels to be attached to any baggage to be taken on her departure date of June 1, 1940.

On June 2, 1940, Bertha's brother Karl, who was using the French spelling of his name, sent her a birthday letter. He wrote that he had been at camp with friends for 15 days. "Because of my departure, I could bring nothing with me except for what I was wearing. The meals are good, but the money that I had earned is already spent." He had not heard from Bertha, asked for Steffi and Gisi's address and thought that Steffi might be able to send him an affidavit through his acquaintances. "I have no one who can help me." He hoped that Bertha would soon be able to go to America. He signed: "I embrace you, write me soon, your brother Charles". His return address was: "Lieu de Destination des Étrangers de St. Sulpice (Oise), Par bureau central de Beauvais (Oise)".

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[196] In Judaism, it is customary to place a stone on a person's grave when visiting the cemetery. When the tradition started, grave monuments were mounds of stones. Visitors added stones to "the mound" to show we are never finished building the monument to the deceased.

Hugo was hospitalized again. They were trying to regulate his diabetes and attend to a nerve problem in his legs. Sophie wrote birthday wishes to Liese. She felt very bad that she could not put the usual marble *Gugelhupf* on the table for her, but said she would make it up to her.

After the fall of France in May 1940, stories began to appear in the press about a supposed German "Fifth Column." In 1940 the British Government began a policy of rounding up all Germans in Britain, no matter where their sympathies lay. It was of no consequence that one was a Jewish refugee from Nazi persecution, or if one had never ever seen Germany. All Germans were sent to the Isle of Man, where apparently there were vigorous arguments between the Jews and the Nazi supporters. The Isle of Man had become a dumping ground for enemy aliens. Thus, in 1940, Bertha Schifferes was arrested as an enemy alien and interned.

The British Government interned approximately 4,000 women during May and June 1940. Just as Bertha was classified as "B," so were most of the women who had been interned and most of them were refugees from Nazi Germany. The immigrants were interned not because they were Jewish, but because they were German. Naturally, the British thought that compared to the Vichy government, which handed the refugees over to the Nazis, their government was generous. Intolerance was limited by intolerant measures. The women were released from July 1940 onwards.

The rationale for the internment of Austrian and German Nazi sympathizers together with Jewish refugees from Hitler was the fear of invasion by the Nazis as well as suspicion of pro-Nazi spies among the refugees. According to one source:

> Several hotels in Port St Mary and Port Erin were "requisitioned" by the government during World War Two. They were used to house what were called "enemy aliens"—people living in Britain whose loyalties were suspect. The government was afraid some could be German sympathizers. A complete and utter over-reaction, obviously, but thousands of Germans, Austrians, Jews, Italians, etc., who had lived and worked in the UK for many years, were shipped over to the Isle of Man so that the authorities could keep an eye on them. Apologies if you already know all of this. The men were put into camps mainly in Douglas. The women and children were interned in Port St Mary and Port Erin. [Dave from oldmanxbooks, e-mail from March 2007.]

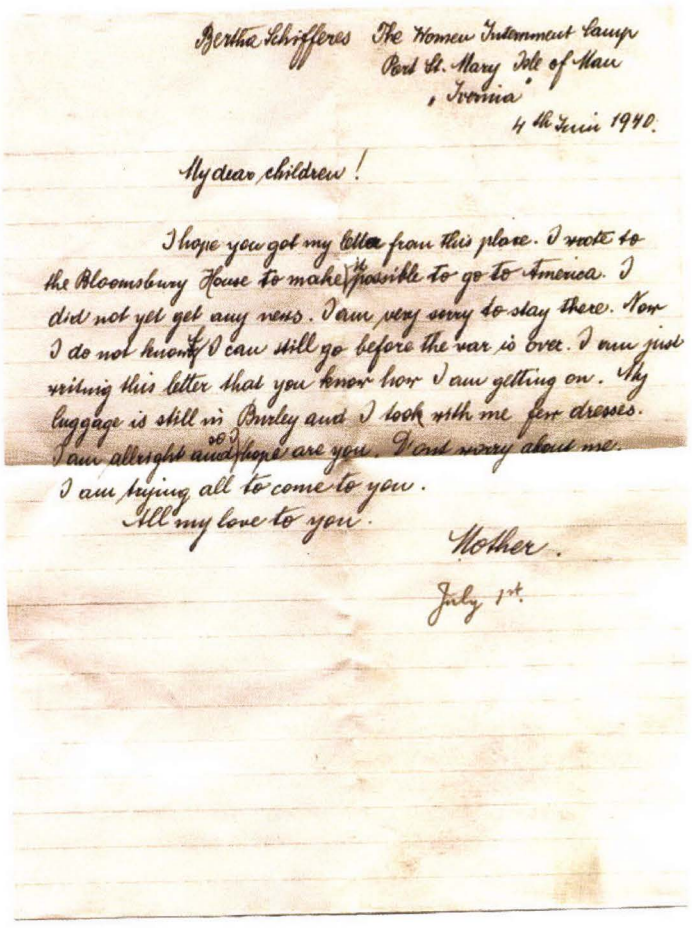


Boarding Houses in Port St. Mary

For the first few weeks of internment no letters arrived. Nor were the internees allowed to listen to the radio or read newspapers until mid-July. There was concern among the refugees that the Brits would hand them over to the Nazis, as happened in France. Finally, they were given writing paper and could write brief letters. That is why Bertha's letters were short and always had the heading: *"Written in German to my son, both of us being refugees."* Her actual dates of internment were from May 30, 1940, until June 20, 1940.

Vacationers in Port St. Mary were forced to leave to make room for the women internees. The men were interned behind barbed wire in Douglas. Barbed wire also surrounded Port Erin. The internees could attend courses and lectures, and twice a week movies were shown. The curfew was from 8:00 PM to 6:00 AM. Internees were allowed to send two letters a week, which were to be written on special letter forms. Twenty-four lines was the maximum. [197]

On June 1, 1940, Bertha sent a handwritten letter in English to Liese and Steffi announcing her internment on the Isle of Man. She was staying in a nice boarding house with seventeen women and two children. *"I will try to arrange to make it possible to come out, but I do not know at what time it will be allowed. If you can help me, will you do it as soon as possible. I have all papers except my Exit Permit...."* The next letter, written in English, from "Ivernia" was dated June 4, 1940. Bertha wondered if she would be able to leave before the war was over. Her luggage was still in Burley and she took few dresses with her. *"I am trying all to [sic] come to you."*



Bertha Schiffers The Women Internment Camp
Port St. Mary Isle of Man
, Ivernia
4th June 1940.

My dear children!

I hope you got my letter from this place. I wrote to the Bloomsbury House to make possible to go to America. I did not yet get any news. I am very sorry to stay there. Now I do not know if I can still go before the war is over. I am just writing this letter that you know how I am getting on. My luggage is still in Burley and I took with me few dresses. I am allright and hope are you. Dont worry about me. I am trying all to come to you.
All my love to you.

Mother.

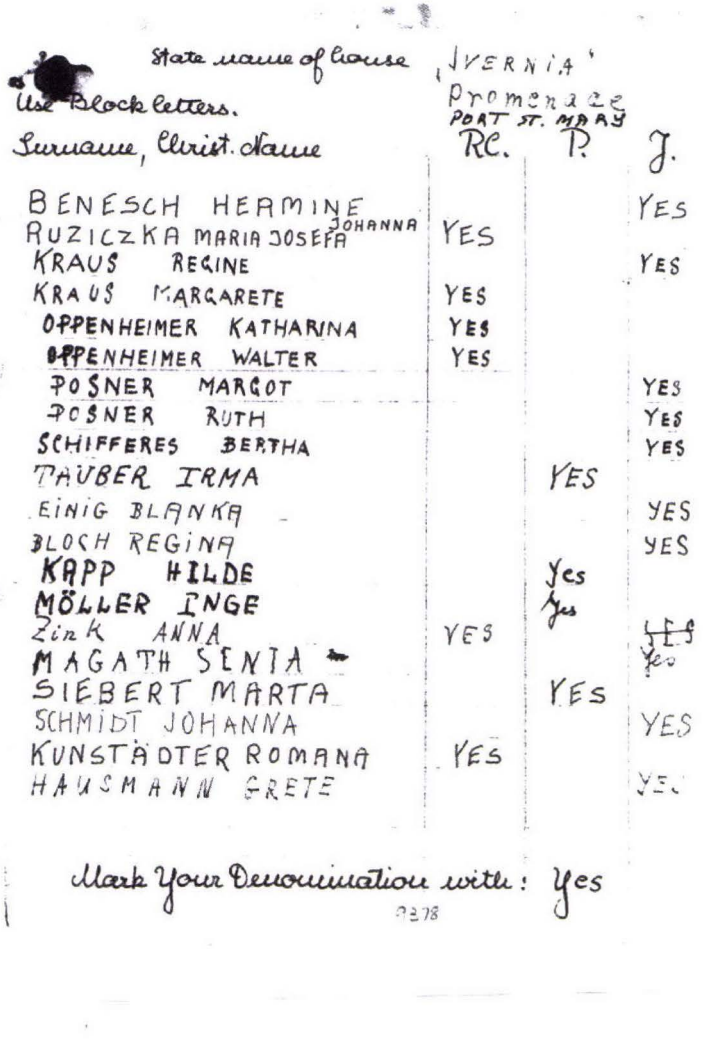
July 1st.

Letter from Bertha, June 4, 1940

[197] Connery Chappell, *Island of Barbed Wire* (London: Robert Hale, 2005), 43.

In Hede's birthday letter to Liese [June 5, 1940] she wrote about a telegram she had received from the State Department regarding the Deutsch parents, that they were well, but would apparently only have their turn in the next quota year. The waiting time would be until July. Hede thought that perhaps the telegram would help expedite matters.

Among Bertha's letters was a list of the seventeen women who were interned with her on the Isle of Man. The Manx National Heritage, the Manx Museum, sent a photocopy of the women's names with columns marked "Yes" as to who was Roman Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish. Of the seventeen women, ten were Jewish.



State name of House 'IVERNIA' Promenade PORT ST. MARY

Use Block letters.

Surname, Christ. Name	RC.	P.	J.
BENESCH HERMINE			YES
RUZICZKA MARIA JOSEFA JOHANNA	YES		
KRAUS REGINE			YES
KRAUS MARGARETE	YES		
OPPENHEIMER KATHARINA	YES		
OPPENHEIMER WALTER	YES		
POSNER MARGOT			YES
POSNER RUTH			YES
SCHIFFERES BERTHA			YES
TAUBER IRMA		YES	
EINIG BLANKA			YES
BLOCH REGINA			YES
KAPP HILDE		Yes	
MÖLLER INGE		Yes	
Zink ANNA	YES		~~YES~~
MAGATH SENTA			Yes
SIEBERT MARTA		YES	
SCHMIDT JOHANNA			YES
KUNSTÄDTER ROMANA	YES		
HAUSMANN GRETE			YES

Mark Your Denomination with: Yes

9278

Internment list, Isle of Man
"Ivernia" on the Promenade in Port St. Mary was where Bertha lived with the above-listed women. Seemingly it was not sufficient to have escaped Nazi Austria. In The United Kingdom, the people interned on the Isle of Man had to list whether they were Roman Catholic (RC), Protestant (P), or Jewish (J).

Steffi's letter [in English] to The Women's Internment Camp on the Isle of Man, dated June 9, 1940, explained his mother's situation.

> *According to the Immigration Law of the United States my mother has to enter this country within 4 months after May 8th, one-and-a-half of which is over already. Otherwise she would have to stay in England as I dont [sic] have any ways and means to get her another German Quota Number. The Overseas Department will arrange for a ticket to New York and the Exit Permission from England. True to the fact that the only thing she needs is to be released from your camp, I want to ask you to arrange that she can leave for the United States immediately. Otherwise she would have to become a burden to the Refugee Committee as she does not have a soul to take care of her while she is in England when her opportunity to come to me in Washington expires. White House, State Department, and Dr. Thompson, Counsellor of the British Embassy here in Washington promised to give me every possible help [sic] to bring my mother over here. Please dont* [sic] *delay her arrival any longer!*

On the same day [June 9, 1940] Steffi typed a letter in German to his mother, whom he presumed was still interned. The letter was returned to him in Washington. He was uncertain as to her arrival date because he had heard from Peter Meyer and Bernd Hanauer that there was "summer vacation" at the American Consulate. There was a war going on, people were trying to leave, and the Americans had to go on vacation! Steffi also sent Bertha the address in Zurich of Gisela Siebenschein, who was the widow of Ottilie's youngest brother, Eugen. "She and Tante Rosa are always happy when letters come from Burley." Steffi complained about his mother never writing anything about herself in her letters.

> [You] do not write what the dentist pulled, not how many, not what kind of replacement you got and not what it cost. There is so much to write and you do not write anything! I do not know why, I do know that you are not used to it, to be occupied with one person or even to report about this person, [you] could assume that I am interested in this.

On June 14, 1940, the Cunard White Star Limited sent Bertha a letter addressed: Ivernia, Port St. Mary, Isle of Man, requesting that she complete and return the United States Declaration Form. "Please ensure that this Form bears particulars of your passport, United States visa, and Exit Permit."

Peter Meyer, Steffi's sports colleague from Stuttgart, wrote from a different, larger farm where he and Bernd Hanauer were working. He had registered too late for the end of April 1940 Quota year and would therefore have to wait "...when you will already be at war with Germ., or I will be interned. In the meantime I am gaining a lot of farm experience (which is very unimportant to me)."

On June 15, 1940, Steffi typed a letter in English to his mother, which apparently never reached her (and was returned to sender). He said he had heard of her internment from the Overseas Department and that he was writing to several places to get her over. He wrote that he had not forgotten her and if they did not let her out, then he would try to visit her, *"although that seems to be impossible right now."* He hoped that the English people who had granted her refuge (and also him) would be *"human* [sic] *to us and release you as soon as possible, just to put you on a steamer which brings you right away to me."*

Liese's friend, Mary Goldwater, sent a telegram from Brooklyn [June 20, 1940] saying:

> AM SENDING YOU COPY OF LETTER TO AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY HERE ACCOMPANYING CHECK FOR PASSAGE MONEY RETURNABLE IF PASSAGE IS PAID IN ENGLAND PLEASE WRITE ME IMMEDIATELY MOTHERS FORMER ADDRESS AND ANY IDENTIFICATION NUMBER AT BLOOMSBURY HOUSE NEEDED BY COMMITTEE HERE FOR CABLE

Chapter 54: 5th Columnist

Despite all their worries and concerns, Steffi was still searching for other opportunities, so he sent his curriculum vitae to Friends of Refugee Teachers, 178 Coolidge Hill, Cambridge, Mass. In their reply to him they wrote that his "teaching experience and field of teaching" was limited and consequently they could not be hopeful about finding a position for him.

In the meantime, Steffi wrote a letter in English to Dr. Thompson, Counsellor to the British Embassy, and apparently sent Liese to personally deliver the letter to Dr. Thompson. In his most heartfelt description of his mother, he included the fact that in her letter dated May 9, she had written that she hoped to come over with one of the next departing ships, although she was not allowed to write the name of it. "*When she did not arrive here I cabled to the Jewish Refugee Committee, Bloomsbury House, London, where she is, and yesterday got the answer: in the Women's Internment Camp Isle of Man.*" Then he continued:

> *I can't describe to you how I feel about that, a lady of 55, robbed of her fatherland by the World's biggest oppressor found refuge in a country of humanity, which is imprisoning her just when she is going to leave her [sic] to join me in America! Like this country England was a free democracy, but let me tell you, that even I when I was imprisoned in Hitler's most famous Dachau Prison Camp—only for being a Jew—I was at once released when I got a permit to enter the United Kingdom. About all these developments I am very sad but could still smile a little thinking my mother taken in as a 5th columnist, if it would not be in a prison camp. Dear Sir, I know that you have to help only British subjects, but help in this special case help me and an old woman who without any relationship or acquaintances, quite alone in a strange country innocently waited to come to her children. If you would send 3 letters, one to the Administration of the Women's Internment Camp, one to the local police of Burley, Ringwood Hants, or whatever is competent under the new emergency law to release my mother at once so that she can come to the United States, and a third one to the Jewish Refugee Committee to get in the meantime the exit permit and ticket for her. You always hear and read here what a big problem the refugees are to the allies and here they just delay the departure of one of the most innocent victim [sic]. I never will forget the English people for whom [sic] I like.... I learned to like the English people when I lived among them last year, please help not to change this feeling by oppressing my poor old mother.*

Mary Goldwater's letter to the American Express Co. on 5th Avenue stated that she was enclosing two checks totaling $137, which was payment for third class steamship passage for Mrs. Bertha Schifferes on the earliest ship possible. Mary added that if Mrs. Schifferes could come sooner with tourist class, then Mary would guarantee to pay the difference. If Bertha was able to pay her own passage with her English pounds, then Mary expected to get a refund.

On June 21, 1940, the Acting Manager of American Express in London wrote to both The Jewish Refugees Committee and to Bertha c/o The Jewish Refugees Committee to tell her to call on them so they could inform her of which arrangements that they were "expected to make on her behalf."

Steffi's letter to his mother, dated June 23, 1940, had been opened by the English censors and then sent back to him. In it he had written his mother that his "urgent air mail letter to the Bloomsbury House was answered by a cable: 'DOING OUR UTMOST.' Besides, different papers write that Sir John Anderson, home secretary and minister of homesecurity [sic],

announced the release of interned refugees when arrangements for their emigration to America are completed." Steffi thought that things would now be in order for her departure. He also said that Liese's father had spoken to a Viennese doctor whose sister had already written him from the camp and Steffi wondered why Bertha had not written to him.

On June 24, 1940, the Jewish Refugees Committee, Overseas Settlement Department, at the Bloomsbury House sent Bertha a brief letter c/o Messrs. Cunard White Star Ltd., Cunard Building, Liverpool, stating that they had just received a copy of a letter from the American Express Company, which they were forwarding to her.

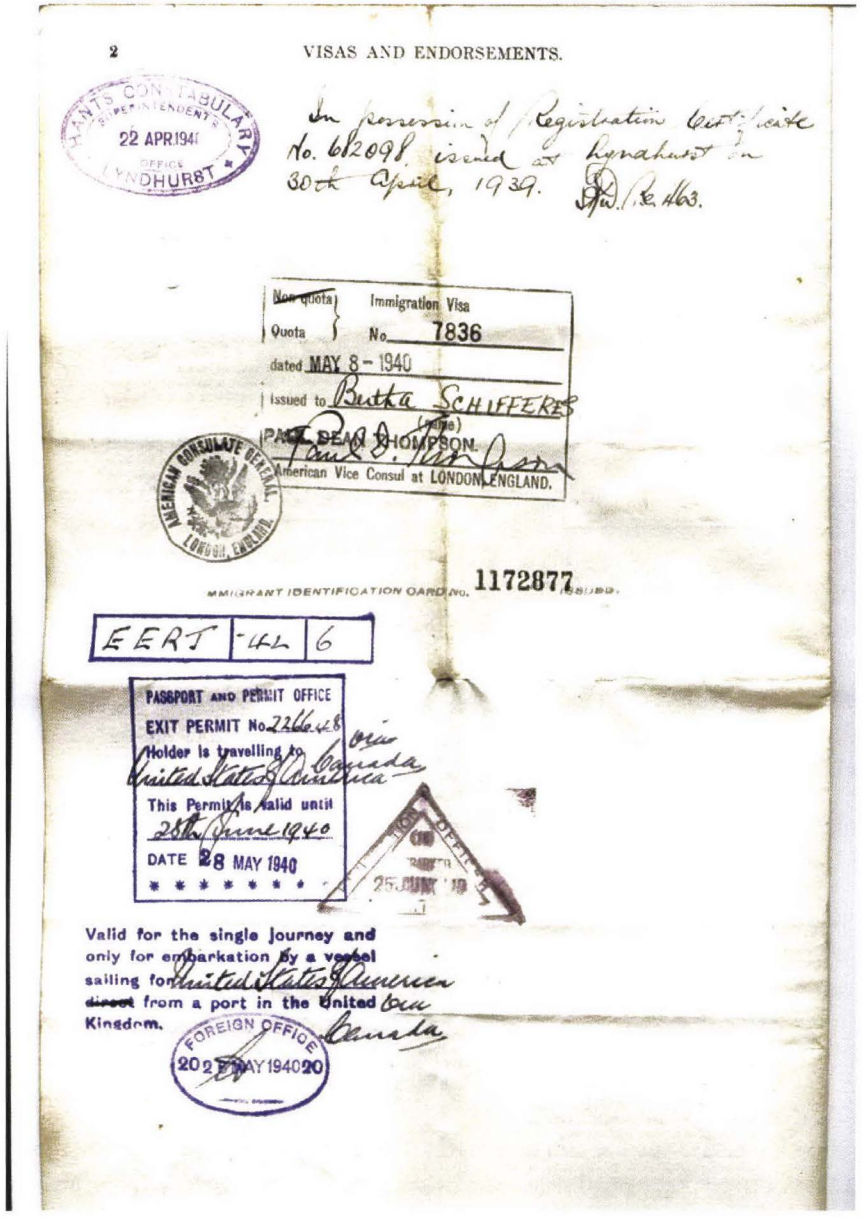
Steffi had written to an acquaintance, whom he knew from Dachau, who had been living in London, to inquire about his mother's internment. His name was Harry and he knew from Hans Dewton [who had changed his name from Hans Deutsch] that Steffi had married Liesel Strauss. Harry explained in a letter [June 29, 1940] that

> ...everyone who happened to receive a "B" qualification at the superficial examination (which took place mechanically in some districts), who were living in a particular area on a certain day, were all interned. Since I was living in London at the time and was classified with "C," I, and all the others in the same position were spared internment. I just do not understand why your mother was not allowed to go to the ship in consideration of her experiences. Maybe it had to do with the fact that she was not booked for a particular ship. There were 16 people on my ship who were brought directly to the ship from the Isle of Mane [sic] in order to travel to the USA. I believe that the only and best way is to perhaps, with the understanding of the Bloomsbury house, to take a ticket for the next ship and with reference to the cancelled ticket to implement a release for the trip. As far as I know, this is always approved. A Jewish lawyer, Mr. Barnett Janner, 199 High Holborn, London, deals with such requests for release. He is, as I have heard, partially motivated by political ideals to intervene on behalf of many internees.
>
> If you present a confirmation to the German Jewish Aid Committee (that is the correct designation for Bloomsbury House) for the amount of the ticket, they may then immediately procure a ticket for the next ship for your mother so that the visa would cause the release and that would make the thing work.

Steffi typed a long letter to his mother [June 29, 1940] that, once again, was examined by the censors and sent back to him on Champlain Street in N.W. Washington. He wrote that they had just received Bertha's first letter (dated June 9) from "Ivernia," but he already knew on June 9th that she had been interned. He had cabled the Bloomsbury House to find out where she was because he had been expecting her to arrive at the end of May. He also wrote about the ticket being paid for by Liese's friend, but suggested that Bertha try to get the Committee to pay for it, or she should pay herself. *"I spoke here at the State Department and with many influential Jews, they all say they cannot understand the English. And so cannot I...."* He wrote that the newspapers published a declaration made by the Home Office in London that in cases like hers, when the interned person was able to leave for the U.S. immediately, they would be released as soon as possible.

> *The English are only so very slow, the first letter of yours they censored was of May 20th and this one was the first delayed one. They censored after 8-1/2 months of war, the other belligerent part [Germany] censored from the first day*

of war even letters to U.S. They cannot make good their slowness and unpreparedness [sic] *by being radical against.... you, a lady of 55!*


2 VISAS AND ENDORSEMENTS.
22 APR 1940 OFFICE LYNDHURST
In possession of Registration Certificate No. 6/2098 issued at Lyndhurst on 30th April, 1939. Sec. 4(3).
Non-quota / Quota Immigration Visa No. 7836
dated MAY 8 - 1940
issued to Bertha SCHIFFERES (Wife)
PAUL DEAN THOMPSON
American Vice Consul at LONDON, ENGLAND.
AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL LONDON, ENGLAND
IMMIGRANT IDENTIFICATION CARD No. 1172877 ISSUED
EERT 42 6
PASSPORT AND PERMIT OFFICE
EXIT PERMIT No. 2266 48
Holder is travelling to via Canada United States of America
This Permit is valid until 28th June 1940
DATE 28 MAY 1940
Valid for the single journey and only for embarkation by a vessel sailing for United States of America via Canada direct from a port in the United Kingdom.
FOREIGN OFFICE 20 MAY 1940 20

Exit permit to the United States, issued to Bertha Schifferes, valid until June 28, 1940

Steffi wrote that Liese was working very hard as a waitress from 11:30 AM until 2:30 PM and then from 6:00 PM until about 3:00 AM as a cashier. He said that he did not have an agreeable job, but it was very easy work and he had opportunity to lift bar-bells and swim, *"...but both of us do not see the sun often."* He advised his mother to write to the Bloomsbury House "as often as possible," and informed her that the State Department told him that if she did not come over within four months they would have to provide her with new affidavits.

Steffi said that the last letter he had received from her from Burley was written on May 20. *"When did you arrive there, how and where do you live, are you allowed to walk around and to go swimming or to the strand?*[198]*"* He continued,

> *I dont* [sic] *think that the English will be so cruel to send their women and children to this continent and keep you in spite of your visa in a [sic] internment camp, ready for Hitler. He sent all refugees from Belgium and Holland to Poland. Billy Ostermann wrote Liese, she is still in Switzerland and they had a very bad time, afraid any moment of the Germans marching in and they heard very bad gun firing.*

Bertha's good friend, Käthe Neumann wrote [June 30, 1940] to Champlain Street that since May 1 she no longer had a job. She was taking care of the housework and cooking. She had been to Tante Rosa's. Everything was in order there, "...the roses are blooming and the cherries are ripening." Bertha's other friend, Clara Wohlmuth, added on: "...you know one has to accept the inevitable."

Doris Nevill wrote from London [July 2, 1940], and said that she had received Steffi's letter:

> ...and got in touch with Bloomsbury House, who immediately remembered the name and said they would look into the case. Two days later I received a letter from them saying: "We are glad to be able to inform you that Mrs. Schifferes embarked for the United States this week." There is little point in discussing something which is over. Nevertheless, I would like to point out, in view of your remarks, that an Internment Camp in Great Britain cannot be compared to a Concentration Camp in Germany, and even if your Mother had had to remain here she would have been taken good care of. However, happily she will now be able to explain all these things to you herself.

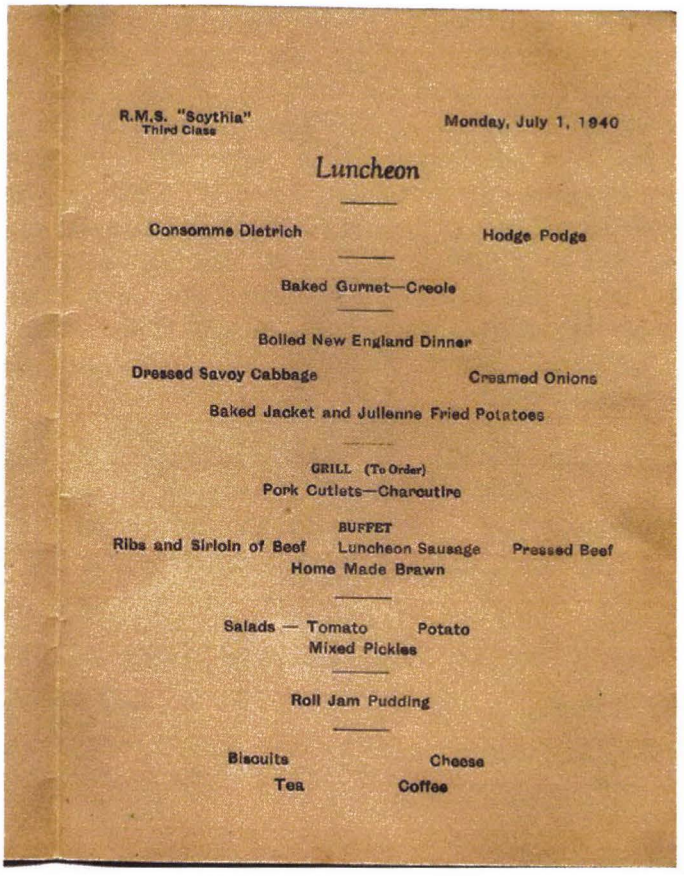
Among the treasures in the straw trunk was a menu from the R.M.S. "Soythia," Third Class, Monday, July 1, 1940.

A fellow internee from "Ivernia" Port St. Mary, Mary Ruzicka, wrote Bertha a letter, dated June 30, 1940, in which she said she was *"...praying daily for your arrive"*[sic]. She herself was hoping to obtain a third affidavit so that she could also leave. On the back of her handwritten letter, Mary Ruzicka wrote that Mrs. Porges, who had also been interned with them, had gone to Shanghai.

Bertha arrived in New York on Sunday, July 7, 1940, on Cunard Pier 54. Mary Goldwater sent her a letter to the ship informing her that in case she herself could not meet her at the pier, then someone from the Committee would do so and would then send Steffi a telegram as to when her train would arrive in Washington. She also gave her phone number, in case she did not make it to the pier and offered Bertha a place to stay in the city.

---

[198] Beach.



R.M.S. "Soythia"
Third Class

Monday, July 1, 1940

Luncheon

Consomme Dietrich — Hodge Podge

Baked Gurnet—Creole

Boiled New England Dinner

Dressed Savoy Cabbage — Creamed Onions

Baked Jacket and Julienne Fried Potatoes

GRILL (To Order)
Pork Cutlets—Charcutire

BUFFET
Ribs and Sirloin of Beef — Luncheon Sausage — Pressed Beef
Home Made Brawn

Salads — Tomato — Potato
Mixed Pickles

Roll Jam Pudding

Biscuits — Cheese
Tea — Coffee

Menu from R.M.S. "Soythia," the ship with which Bertha traveled

Apparently Steffi wrote many letters regarding his mother's internment, including one to the British Embassy in Washington, D.C. [July 8, 1940]. The response came from Secretary F.R. Hoyer Miller, who advised him to

> seek the good offices of the Swiss Legation in London, who are in charge of all German interests in the United Kingdom. As your mother is in possession of an United States visa it might also be worth while to write to the United States Consulate General on the subject.

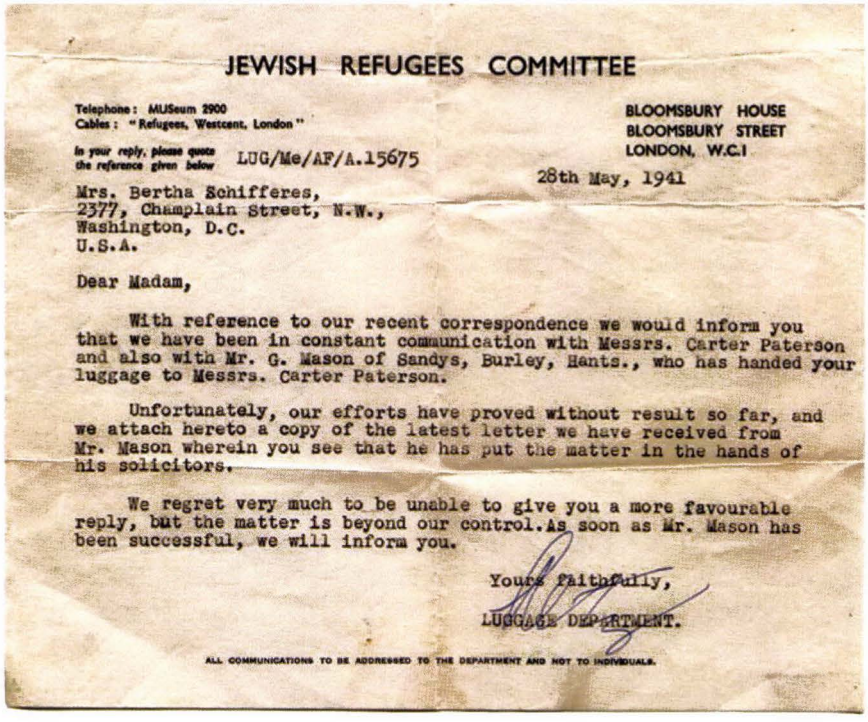
Then there was an apology for the delay in the response.

Trude, Liese's friend, sent a long typed letter from Sydney, Australia, describing her doll-making venture there and filling Liese in on their mutual acquaintances. Trude was surprised that Liese was not able to find a better job, such as typing or stenography, but she was not certain whether that paid better than waitressing. *"Tell your husband that he could not get a better wife than you are, so competent, energetic, and self-sufficing* [sic]. *And what I know from your description he is your equal."*

A letter from Lisbeth [July 10, 1940] from Dubbo, Australia, included news about various family members. Ida Weiss was working in the office of a beauty parlor in New York, her husband Robert worked in the radio department of a department store, and Ida's sister, Trude Schuschny, was working at "one of the most exclusive hat salons on Fifth Avenue." The Kahane parents and Aryan's brother, Karli, were in Palestine. Lisbeth and Aryan felt pretty isolated in Dubbo, which was a small, country town. Although they had acquaintances there, their friends were in Sydney

and they corresponded. Tante Gisi wrote that Tante Etka's sister in Belgium was supposed to give Ala Mor money to open a dental practice in Liverpool, England, but they had not heard from her in weeks and weeks. They were uncertain as to what happened to her, or whether she could save herself. Naturally they were depressed about that. Tante Gisi said that Bertha had promised to go and visit them in London. Then, she observed: "It is really awful to live so spread out throughout the world and to have to worry about every single person." And she wondered if anyone had heard from Karl or from Tante Rosa. At the end of her letter, Tante Gisi wrote that there was not much new with them. "We are living the same, work hard, and wait daily for the mailman to bring us mail from our loved ones scattered all over the world. But he does not bring something very often." Aryan added that although his parents were lazy about writing, he had heard that his father was going to begin manufacturing industrial glue. Aryan was "confident that the Nazi bandits will find their deserved end."

Bertha had arrived in the United States, but for some reason, her luggage was missing. Steffi wrote to the "solicitor" recommended by his friend, Harry, by the name of Barnett Janner[199] at 200/201 High Holborn, London W.C.1., who was going to look into the matter.



JEWISH REFUGEES COMMITTEE

Telephone: MUSeum 2900
Cables: "Refugees, Westcent, London"

BLOOMSBURY HOUSE
BLOOMSBURY STREET
LONDON, W.C.1

In your reply, please quote the reference given below LUG/Me/AF/A.15675

28th May, 1941

Mrs. Bertha Schifferes,
2377, Champlain Street, N.W.,
Washington, D.C.
U.S.A.

Dear Madam,

With reference to our recent correspondence we would inform you that we have been in constant communication with Messrs. Carter Paterson and also with Mr. G. Mason of Sandys, Burley, Hants., who has handed your luggage to Messrs. Carter Paterson.

Unfortunately, our efforts have proved without result so far, and we attach hereto a copy of the latest letter we have received from Mr. Mason wherein you see that he has put the matter in the hands of his solicitors.

We regret very much to be unable to give you a more favourable reply, but the matter is beyond our control. As soon as Mr. Mason has been successful, we will inform you.

Yours faithfully,

LUGGAGE DEPARTMENT.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE DEPARTMENT AND NOT TO INDIVIDUALS.

Communication about the Missing luggage

Despite numerous worries, the unanswered question about Bertha's luggage persisted. In the end, it was determined that the building where it had been stored had been bombed.

[199] According to Anthony Kahane, Barnett Janner, solicitor, became Sir Barnett Janner and "... after retiring from the House of Commons was made Lord Janner, and as such he sat in the House of Lords. For a long time he was also president of the Board of Jewish personalities that acted to defend Jewish interests, combat anti-Semitism, etc. in Britain." His son, Greville Janner, also became Lord Janner "... and among his various positions, he is [now] chairman of the Holocaust Educational Trust."

On July 17, 1940, Mr. George Mason, the brother-in-law of Bertha's employer, Mrs. Mason, wrote that "after endless worry and correspondence [he had gotten] to the bottom of the mystery of [the luggage]. Apparently it had been transferred to agents in Liverpool

> ...and then a German plane dropped a bomb on the warehouse, and completely demolished it, and also its contents and all their records. It was a long time before it would be ascertained what the warehouse contained, but there is no doubt all your belongings have gone. I have made enquiries about your getting compensation for the loss, but am told there is no chance of doing so. I cannot say how sorry I am to have to tell you this, but I feel that I could not have taken any other steps to send the luggage, and any other carrier might have met with the same misfortune. I trust you are long since quite recovered from your trying time in England, and especially the last few weeks.

Barnett Janner had been trying to find out information about getting Bertha released from Isle of Man. In the meantime, Bertha was no longer interned. Janner wrote on July 20, 1940, noting this and asking to be paid "for services rendered" (although he had done nothing). "I proposed to make you a charge of £1.1.0. for my services in the matter, and I shall be obliged if you will let me have a cheque accordingly." End of story.

Sophie wrote on July 23, 1940, still desperately seeking an affidavit for her sister, Else Ringer. Tante Stephy wrote how Else had changed so much since the death of her husband, saying that "...he was unfortunately very unbearable and she had to obey him." Else had to move to III. Weyrgasse 9, leaving the apartment she had lived in for 32 years. She was living in a single room that cost as much as the apartment she had just left. To find some peace, she would go to Tante Rosa's, where they would reminisce and speak of the family and read everyone's letters. It seemed that the house on Khevenhüllerstrasse was the place where relatives and extended family gathered. It was in a peaceful area on the outskirts of the city.

Chapter 55: What I Would Like to Have Again

Tante Steffi continued to encourage Liese and Steffi and Bertha to come to Chicago. She thought that Liese would surely be able to find a waitressing job there and Bertha could work as a companion for an older woman, or she and Tante Steffi might be able to start something themselves if nothing worked out with Lilly Deutsch's mother, Frau Bing.

Peter Korolanyi, whose family had lived near Bertha and Steffi in Vienna, wrote to Bertha from Hereford, England. He had come over on a *Kindertransport* [evacuation of children to England]. Despite their conversion to Christianity, his parents had been murdered by the Nazis. Peter had bumped into Frau Elsa Zwilling[200] in Hereford and she had given him Bertha's address. On July 29, 1940, Bertha filled out an American Red Cross form in Washington, D.C., to convey a message to her brother Karl: "After many experiences here with Steffi. Last news from you from 2. June I received middle of June on Isle of Man. How are you?" Karl's address was listed as: Lieu de Destination des Étrangers de St. Sulpice, Oise, Par bureau central de Beauvais.

Liese was able to obtain a better job as a waitress at the Bavaria. It was thought that the Deutsch parents might be able to come to the United States via Russia. Sophie thanked Liese for the affidavit for Else. "You really are very, very good and capable...." Tante Stephy was working for a ninety-eight-year-old woman, earning $10 per week. Hugo expressed worries about everyone's future.

Thea Heimann, who lived in Newark, New Jersey, a cousin of someone who was interned with Bertha on the Isle of Man, wrote Bertha saying that she had just learned that her cousin could only come to the States after she received a registration number.

Bertha paid the U.S. Department of Justice $2.50 on July 30, 1940, for a certificate of her arrival in the United States.

Hede wrote [August 5, 1940] that Siegfried Held, a cousin of the Deutsch family, was going to be moving out. Then Sophie and Hugo could have his room. That meant that Hede, Hans, Sophie, and Hugo could live together. Onkel Alfred would also live with them, but Onkel Emil was still undecided. Sophie then cooked for all of them and was able to earn money for the household. Onkel Alfred was paying one fifth of the rent, $9 per month, and one fifth of the cost of food.

Tante Stephy got a new job and was now earning $12 weekly. She reprimanded Liese and Steffi for saying that if they moved to another city, it would not be Chicago. She wrote that Mutti (Sophie) was crying bitterly about this. Tante Stephy thanked Liese for arranging for the affidavit for Tante Else. "You can be certain that I will take care of her and dear God will reward you for being so good...."

On August 7, 1940, Sophie wrote that a new ordinance had just begun in Vienna: one could emigrate with only two dresses and one coat and a minimum of things and "the telephone can only be used by doctors, midwives, and hospitals that have Jews."

Mr. George Mason, brother-in-law of Mrs. Mason, wrote [August 7, 1940] saying he was very relieved to hear that Bertha had arrived safely, despite her internment. "It was very bad luck, but of course with the large number of refugees—any of them might have been disguised—it was

[200] Elsa Zwilling had also been employed in Burley and would often go for walks with Bertha when they both were working there.

impossible to make exceptions in a hurry." Such was the feeling, it seemed, regarding the internment of refugees from Hitler.

Tante Rosa wrote a postcard [August 12, 1940] thanking Liese, Steffi, and Bertha for the birthday wishes they sent her.

> My dear ones, how happy you must be and proud that you have poor dear Mama with you, do not ever let her leave again, she must always stay with you and you should live happily and joyfully together with her....

In a separate letter to Bertha, Tante Rosa wrote:

> You can imagine how happy I was when I once again saw your dear, beautiful handwriting and with sadness and tears I read your letter, not just once, but again and again. What you had to go through, my dear Bertha, is hard to believe and it is hard to fathom that one person can endure so much; did the 13th also come into play?[201] Praise be to God that you now have everything behind you and that you are in such a nice and rich country with Steffi and Liese; could there be anything better? How happy the children must have been to actually have you there!

Tante Rosa thanked her again for her birthday wishes and said that on the 22nd she would take Bertha's letters "...and will make a day of reading them and thinking about you and our earlier times together."

According to Tante Rosa's letter to Bertha, the Allinas had apparently not heard anything from Karl. Nor had he written to his ex-wife via Steffi. Still, despite Mandy's divorce from Karl, and the ill-feelings that the Schifferes family had towards her, Tante Rosa wrote that Mandy visited her: "...sure she speaks of him and if he is still living, etc. It hurts me terribly when I think of the time he spent with us, during an especially sad period...." Onkel Dori had lost his business but managed to keep occupied with "...the garden, fruit, and flowers, the beautiful roses you had given him, which all provided a distraction for him."

In a heartfelt letter to Liese and Steffi [August 14, 1940], Sophie expressed concerns about Hans' behavior towards them.

> He is very good at managing things, for example, he bought Papa a nice lounge chair so he could lie on the porch and I know that he has not earned very much. Once again, I must say that he really takes care of us, Hede is also extremely good, the children are really making sacrifices for us, they are both very much attuned to our well-being. But it is the old evil with Hans that saddens us, that he hardly says a word to us and if so, then in a strange, hurtful way which particularly affects Papa and also saddens me. Liese, you know how he is because Papa often was upset about his behavior in the office. And now it hurts him even more because he often says to me; I have lost my existence, my home, have become a beggar, it would do such good if he would speak nicely to me, as I have become accustomed from other people. When we come in the morning, he does not ask how did you sleep, what did you do all day, in short, he is so good

[201] Bertha, who was born on the 13th of June, lost her husband in the year 1913. And her son, Steffi, was arrested on November 12, 1938, and sent to Dachau the next day, on November 13. Therefore, she believed that thirteen was her unlucky number.

> and nice to Hede, thank God, we, especially Papa are so upset about his repressed manner. I am writing you about this, children, because I want to be forthright and now, above all, because the move also concerns us and Papa should have it as good and nice as possible, he really earned it and he should not have to be upset, which also harms him. For what have all the trips to the hospital been, the glass tube treatments of the feet, the insulin treatment, if Hans' manner hurts him so.

She begged Liese and Steffi not to write Hede and Hans about her complaints. Although some of the members of the family escaped Nazi Germany, they could not escape the intrigues of family life.

Sophie reported that Tante Else had written that she was still trying to find someone to bring Liese the few things she had forgotten. Hugo wanted to be in Washington with Liese and Steffi, but felt he needed the treatments he was getting in Chicago, and the courses in Spanish and accounting.

Hugo and Sophie had heard from Tante Else that the Deutsch parents had to move again, this time to Schottenfeldgasse. Such information was not shared by Hans, which really hurt Hugo, who said that they were, after all, one family.

Ines Mandl, who was still in Cork, Ireland, wrote [August 19, 1940] that she had not heard from Liese in some time. She encouraged Liese by saying that she hoped that: *"...though it may take some time to gain a real foothold in a new country, you keep being cheerful and thankful for the fact that you are all together and your worst troubles are over."* She and Hans were fine, but they had worries about their respective parents:

> *...at the time of the fall of Paris my mother was alone there, my father having been in one of the camps for Austrians. It took more than 6 weeks until they could find each other and even longer until I got some news (by telegram). At the moment they are in Toulouse, reunited at last and waiting for their American quota. Ultimately I guess we shall all meet again in the United States, but it may take some time until then. However, we remain optimistic, in this respect and others, and enjoy life while we can. Altogether we have become more philosophical in our outlook on life, though I don't know what good that does.*

In Hugo's letter [August 19, 1940] to Liese and Steffi, he reported that Pepi and Lilly were visiting. Pepi hoped to find a job in Chicago. If he did then Lilly and Onkel Emil would start a photographic business with the help of Onkel Emil's capital. During Pepi and Lilly's stay Hans became more outgoing. Hugo said, somewhat disingenuously: "I am surely not an old chatterbox, and also not sensitive," but the extent of his disappointment was clear as he continued, "it really hurts if one is treated with such disrespect by someone whom I have always considered to be my son." Then he wrote:

> My heart hurts and I never thought that I would have such an old age. I have never complained that the fruits of my labor would bring me to a loss of work and respect, and I am prepared to work again, but I have always prided myself on having a nice home and that had nothing to do with the rugs or night table, but rather with the love that always united our family, and this is exactly what I would like to have again.

Then Hugo said that when he had been with them in Washington it had felt like a vacation and that he was "...longing for a regimented occupation. I do not want to be leading the life of a retired person and even if the job opportunities are limited, at least I have a goal ahead of me."

When Sophie added on, she wrote how Hugo had gotten a letter from Dr. Goldenberg in Washington, referring Hugo to a Chicago doctor named Hamburger. Hugo and Sophie opened the letter in which Dr. Goldenberg had spoken very highly of Hugo, but "found him to be very sick and spoke of 'helping make his last days easier', yes, we all have to die, some earlier, some later. You can imagine how Papa and I were when we read the letter, which was written in English." But truth be told, Dr. Goldenberg had not really examined Hugo. If he had he would have found his cardiogram to be fine. Sophie thought the condition was exaggerated so that Hugo could be admitted and treated in a hospital in Chicago. And Sophie wrote that Liese should not write anything about this to Tante Else, or to Tante Rosa, or to Hede and Hans.

The eleven crates of furniture, linens, dishes, and crystal that Sophie had packed up in Vienna and had shipped were now in storage in New York. One of the crates was let down so hard upon its delivery to Liese and Steffi in Washington that many pieces of the white china with a gold rim were broken.

Hugo wrote anniversary wishes [August 24, 1940] to Liese and Steffi, hoping that they would be able to celebrate their next anniversary and earlier holidays together. He felt bad that he could not give them a present; "with great effort I talked Mutti out of the idea of sending you $1, as I know Liese, she would have sent it back prompt[ly]."

Onkel Emil's wishes included the wish "...that the Nazis and other followers would be 'crushed': a lot to ask for, but not inexpensive!" Then he wrote that Sophie, his first cousin, "...would rather have Chicago and Washington be 'Twin Cities,' just like Minneapolis[202] and St. Paul are" so that they could be closer to Liese and Steffi.

Sophie was hoping that Bertha had made them a marble *Gugelhupf* for their anniversary, just as Sophie had made for Pepi for his birthday celebration there in Chicago.

> And I am so happy that you love one another so much. Just stay well, both of you, dear God should always protect you, with your diligence, you have both accomplished so much in such a short time, like few emigrants.

Then she wrote how "Pepi and Grete want to let Hans study at a university, at their expense, they would pay for everything for 1 year so that he could then get a job in a library, which could then bring $150–$200 monthly and also better jobs."

Steffi had a Western Union telegram sent to Liese for their first anniversary: "SWEETHEART = ALL THE LOVE OF ALL MY HEART FOR YOU TODAY, SWEETHEART ="

[202] Onkel Emil had lived in Minneapolis.

Chapter 56: One of the Lucky Ones

Tante Rosa wrote [September 1, 1940] thanking Bertha, Liese, and Steffi for remembering her birthday. Tante Else bought her a nice pair of shoes and lined gloves for her birthday, even though Tante Rosa did not want her to know that it was her birthday. Evidently Tante Else saw a signed picture Liese had sent with birthday wishes that gave it away. Tante Rosa then asked them to tell her when Tante Else's birthday was so she could reciprocate.

Tante Rosa wrote about Anna, the woman who cooked for them. Bertha had given her many of her possessions "...a clock, lamp shade, and many other things that give her pleasure; we spoke about you a lot, she is really devoted." Tante Rosa wanted to know what Bertha wore in Washington.

> Is it very elegant there? I hardly get into the city, wear my old things, no one is here now who tells me you cannot go around like that. Unfortunately we also do not hear anything from Karl, he surely also thought of me on the 23rd.... It pleases me no end that the children are good, diligent, and splendid, but does not surprise me, you are a good role model, a rare, courageous mother. Stay well, all of you and be happy together, that is what I wish all of you with all my heart.

Naturally the letter was stamped with "*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* [Supreme Command of the Armed Forces]" with its accompanying swastika, and "*Geöffnet* [opened]," which meant it had been read and censored, though actually there was nothing to censor. I suppose it gave a loyal Nazi something to do.

Sophie wrote [September 4, 1940] that the American Consulate in Vienna was "...asking for an extremely large bank deposit from the Deutsch parents, which would cut them off from their needs. Because he is 75 years old, this is a difficulty. It is already so terrible what bad luck they have had." In the meantime, Tante Else, who was stuck in Vienna, was still concerned about getting Liese her coat and two dresses.

Anna, who worked for Tante Rosa, wrote in a letter to Bertha, [September 1, 1940] how happy she was that Bertha was finally with her children

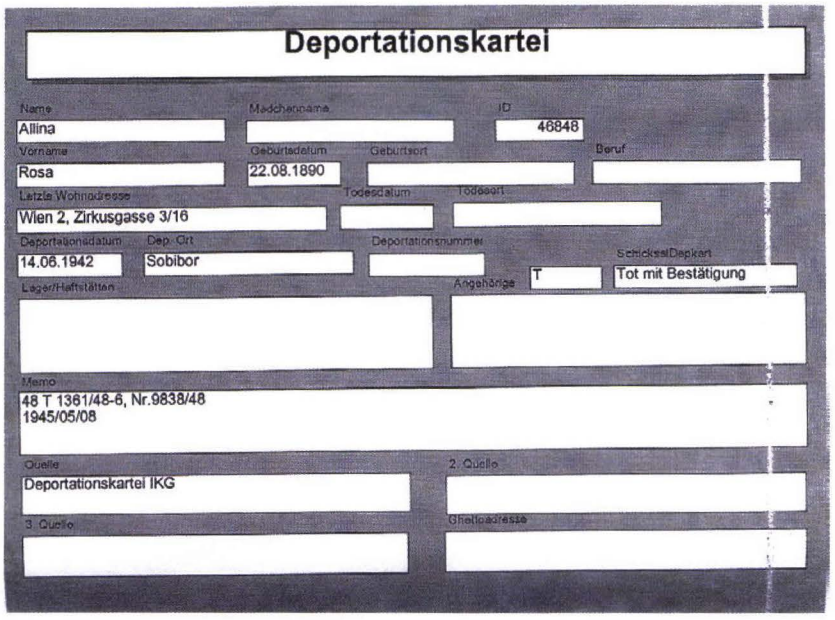
> ...where you can recover from the many worries and agitation. I think of you very often and I wish you very well because you were a most gracious woman. Herr Steffi and Frau Liese, who are surely happy that you are already there with them, with their love, will help you forget everything that you had to go through, we are also not doing so well....

Sophie wrote [September 7, 1940] about the deteriorating conditions for Jews in Vienna: "Awful how Viennese Jews were carried off in coal cars. Poor Tante Else,[203] Tante Rosa,[204] the Deutsch[205] parents, Spitzers, Frl. Bermann,[206] Frau Hostovsky,[207] how they must be freezing."

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[203] Elisabeth Ringer, "Tante Else," sister of Sophie née Kurz Strauss and Stephanie Kurz, born January 14, 1888, deported August 21, 1942, to Maly Trostinec, Belorusse.

[204] Rosalia née Schifferes Allina, "Tante Rosa," sister of Steffi's father Julius, born August 22, 1880, deported to Sobibor June 14, 1942. David Allina, "Onkel Dori," husband of Rosa, born Misowitz, September 14, 1863, died of shock of separation from his family, June 18, 1942, buried Zentralfriedhof Vienna, IV 18 20 45. Friedrich Allina, "Fritz," son of David and Rosa Allina, born January 27, 1903, deported to Maly Trostinec, June 2, 1942.



Deportationskartei

Name: Allina	Mädchenname:	ID: 46848	
Vorname: Rosa	Geburtsdatum: 22.08.1890	Geburtsort:	Beruf:
Letzte Wohnadresse: Wien 2, Zirkusgasse 3/16	Todesdatum:	Todesort:	
Deportationsdatum: 14.06.1942	Dep. Ort: Sobibor	Deportationsnummer:	Schicksal/Depkart: Tot mit Bestätigung
Lager/Haftstätten:		Angehörige: T	
Memo: 48 T 1361/48-6, Nr.9838/48 1945/05/08			
Quelle: Deportationskartei IKG	2. Quelle:		
3. Quelle:	Ghettoadresse:		

Tante Rosa's Deportation Card

Sophie wrote that Tante Else had received Liese's affidavit, "...but who knows when and how she will get out, for the moment there is no possibility. She is doing a designer's course because she wants to work here." She was fixing old hats for nothing, including some for Tante Rosa, whom she was visiting every week. Tante Else also wrote that Ella Deutsch did not look well and was "beside herself because she cannot get to her children. They had especially bad luck!"

Sophie also wrote about how much she missed Liese, that Liese was used to having her mother around:

> You know how the school teacher said, that you never wrote an essay for school without mentioning your mother. I found it especially nice at the time, it was so obvious to me, and later I also realized how dependent you were on me. And now this separation, who knows for how long.

Hugo added on that it made no sense to complain, "one must always... think how bad the conditions are for the people who are still in Vienna and for the children still in England or France!"

Hans was preparing to begin his studies in Urbana, Illinois, and Sophie was occupied with helping prepare his belongings. [September 15, 1940]

Hugo wrote that he and Onkel Alfred were both studying advanced accounting and Hugo was also attending a course in advanced Spanish twice a week for two hours. Sophie was going to evening school four times a week for two hours. Onkel Emil was taking a photo course. Hugo

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[205] Dr. Eduard Deutsch, born September 26, 1876, in Misslitz, Moravia; Elsbeth "Ella" née Brauchbar Deutsch, born December 11, 1877, parents of Johannes "Hans" and Joseph "Pepi" Deutsch [Dewton] and Margarete "Grete" Deutsch. Deported to Minsk, Russia, November 28, 1941.

[206] Luise Bermann, "Frl. Bermann," friend of Sophie Strauss' and piano teacher and Hede and Liese Strauss, born June 7, 1866, deported to Theresienstadt November 28, 1941.

[207] It is uncertain who Frau Hostovsky was. On the www.doew.at/cgi-bin/shoah/shoah.pl there are four women with the last name of Hostovsky who were deported during the Holocaust.

complained about Liese's "unique handwriting," which only Hede could decipher. "But if Hede is at her English course for geniuses, meets with the Council of Jewish Women, or does not come home, then we have to wait two days before we know the contents of your letter. So never again will I receive such a letter!"

Then Hugo fussed at Liese for not dating her letters and not writing if there was anything included (i.e., money).

> Onkel E.[mil], as a lawyer, examined the case historically-chronologically and came to the conclusion that we have examined all the fine last letters according to date and contents and have concluded that the Friday letter from the 23rd of the month with the $ content did arrive. Inconclusive is just for whom the money was intended, Mutti says for herself, I say for me. Hopefully we will come to an agreement without blood and do fifty-fifty.

Then he explained that they were doing fine financially. Sophie was running the household and, for the first time in her life, was earning money because of the meals that Onkel Alfred had with them. She was working harder than she ever had in her life.

Sophie also wrote [September 17, 1940] that Tante Else gave the Deutsch parents 3,000 RM "...for emigrating, which the children will then give back in dollars." Liese and Steffi were sending the Strauss parents money for their share of the rent as well as other expenses. Pepi and Grete Deutsch gave Hans $100, fifty dollars for each semester at the university.

In the meantime, Bertha was still receiving letters from some of the women who had been interned with her on the Isle of Man. Grete Hausmann wrote that her cousin in Washington had been very happy to hear from Bertha. Mary Ruzicka wrote [September 20, 1940] that they were permitted to write only 24 lines, but there was enough room to write how unbearable it was "...to live here in the house with so many various characters. But all of this would be a novel to be told, so I hope to be able to tell everything in greater detail over there." Then she wrote "We think and talk about you often and I cannot really believe anymore that I will also survive this. Praise to God that you are one of the lucky ones." Mary also asked Bertha to not tell her son Bela "how badly I am suffering here." Then Irma Tauber and Hermine Benesch added their best regards. All of these women were still being held on the Isle of Man. Bertha truly was "One of the Lucky Ones"!

Herr Held was giving no sign of leaving the rented house on Paulina Street in Chicago and the Strauss parents, who were renting a room elsewhere, told Hede not to say anything to him because he "...does want to help the Deutsch parents get out somehow."

Chapter 57: Resignation

Tante Rosa [September 30, 1940] wished everyone a Happy New Year: "...may the Almighty continue to protect you and fulfill all your wishes." Then she wondered why Bertha had not heard from Karl:

> Where can he be, he will surely be thinking of us during the High Holidays, just as we will be there with you in spirit, and especially on Yom Kippur we will think of Steffi leading us on our walk; it was so nice for us to always be together.

Rosa Huber added on, saying what a comfort it was to have Rosa and Dori there "...for they are like brother and sister to me and help me so much to overcome my sorrow; they are so good to me and Fritzl always accompanies me on the Sommerhaidenweg. I often think of the joyous times we lived."

According to Fritz, Onkel Willibald,[208] age 52, was going to be marrying 63-year-old Frau Ethel Spitzer so that he could emigrate to the USA (Pittsburgh) and she could go to her children on the Hungarian Quota. Käthe Neumann added on, though not too much "...because the poor censor has too much to do anyway." But she did write Bertha that most of her acquaintances and relatives were still in Vienna.

Sophie continued to complain about Herr Held and his son who were still living in the rented house. She hated cleaning up after them and understood why his first wife divorced him and why his second wife did not live with him. Not only that, they were unpleasant people, Sophie wrote. And Sophie continued to put pressure on Liese and Steffi to move to Chicago, though it was uncertain where Hans would end up working.

One remarkable irony is Sophie's constant concern about Liese's coat and dress that she had forgotten in Vienna. It seems that it was mentioned in every letter. This time she wrote: "Tante Else wrote that the Deutsch parents will bring it to you, but when will that be?"

Hede said she was working "...in a different department taking new orders, stock increase, special delivery, etc., so that means absolutely nothing mechanical because one has to be very careful and it entails a big responsibility, aside from that, a lot of running around so that everything is finished on time. But it is fun for me." She was earning $17.56 per week for 48–49 hours.

Sophie wrote [October 2, 1940] wishing Liese and Steffi a Happy New Year[209] and saying that this would be the first time that she could not visit her dear parents' grave in Vienna. "Tante Else will also be very sad this year. So all alone, without her husband, without her sisters." Hugo also wished them "...all the best for the New Year, above all that this terrible feeling of not knowing will be taken away from all of us and we know where we belong and what our goal is. Above all, I am thinking of you for you are still at the beginning of your journey."

Hans actually made a surprise visit to Chicago for *Yom Kippur* [Jewish Day of Atonement], which also happened to be Sophie's birthday.

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[208] Willibald Siebenschein, born August 6, 1888, was the son of Joseph Siebenschein and his second wife, Cäcilie née Siebenschein. Onkel Willi married Anna Morgenstern, born in Budapest on April 11, 1873. They were both deported to Izbica on April 9, 1942 on Transport 17.

[209] The Jewish New Year, *Rosh Hashanah*.

Apparently Liese was complaining of lack of energy in the autumn of 1940.[210] Tante Stephy wrote that Liese

> ...always used to be the sunshine who always brightened everything and cheered everyone up when you came in the room. How the times have really changed and you, who never lacked a thing, who was taken good care of by father and mother, had to experience the difficult battle of being the first of our family to arrive. You really went through a lot....

In a letter dated October 21–23, 1940, which had been opened by the *Oberkommando* of the *Wehrmacht*, Fritz wrote that Onkel Willibald Siebenschein got married to someone named Karla at the Justice of the Peace. In the previous letter from Fritz, the woman Onkel Willi was to marry had a different name. He wrote that the "traditional wedding will be in 8 days. So today, in my youth, I gained without tax or fees, a great-aunt—one should take what one can get, right?" He also mentioned that Tante Else had re-made a hat for Tante Rosa, "to be worn as advertisement, 'free and on the house.'" According to Fritz, both Mandys had come to see them and had asked about Karl, from whom they had not heard.

Tante Rosa wrote that Käthe's visits were slowly stopping. And she wrote that "...when I am washing dishes I think about all of you a lot, my dear ones and about earlier, happier times."

Sophie sent [October 24, 1940] Liese $1.00, which she said Liese had to accept "...because it is from the first money I have ever earned in my life." She continued to long for her youngest daughter, Liese. "Now we must be patient. Grete says correctly, from where should one find this patience!"

Hede wrote [November 1, 1940] how nice Urbana was and also that they "...had not heard directly from the Deutsch parents for many weeks, but they did write to Grete's former employee, who had given them an affidavit. The chances of coming here are very weak."

Elly Sachs, who had been one of Liese's teachers in Vienna, was now living in West Medford, Massachusetts. After receiving a letter from Liese, she wrote how happy she was to hear from her.

> I feel very bad that you have to work so hard—but there will be better times for you, of that I am sure. Everyone here has to go through a difficult start (which lasts quite a long time), but then everyone has a moment where everything goes well. The younger one is, the easier it is and you belong, luckily to the generation that will still be able to thrive here—to see the world differently than we do today.

She also wrote that her daughter, Lisbeth, had not yet arrived, which worried them greatly.

Mr. Hirsch, who had promised to give Tante Else an affidavit, could not, in fact, do so because he did not have enough money in the bank. Tante Stephy [November 1, 1940] was desperately trying to procure another affidavit for her. "The American Consulate is making emigration more difficult, old people are not getting visas at all and Else will have a reason to ask for it in every letter. Perhaps the people who already have an affi can still get out." Various friends who were still in Vienna had to move again. "They want to remove the roof over the Jews' heads at any cost." Tante Stephy also wrote:

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[210] Eva Julia Shiffers was born in 1941!

> Lieserl, all my hopes are resting with you. You helped me, please, please do it for Else. The thought of her being so alone in V. is making me and Mutti completely desperate and I and Else will be forever grateful if you would be able to get her one.

Tante Stephy said that Sophie must now realize that it would have been impossible for them to have continued to live in Vienna.

Ines Mandl, who was in Corcaighy, Ireland, wrote a letter that was "OPENED BY EXAMINER 5296" [November 2, 1940]:

> *There is not very much to tell about ourselves, things that look important at the time become rather insignificant looked at in proportion to the happenings around us and so, we just go on to lead our lives, quietly, peacefully, and awaiting events.*

Hans Mandl had lost his job but had quickly been able to find another. Furthermore, they had been in touch with the American Consulate and hoped to be able to cross over early in the New Year because people with Hans' skills were needed in the United States.

Tante Else [November 4, 1940] wrote news about the Allinas: Tante Rosa had lost a lot of weight, Tante Else could notice it in Tante Rosa's face. Onkel Dori desperately needed a cataract operation; otherwise he would lose his vision. "They are completely peculiar in their outlook and are holding on to their old ways, which is understandable."

Sophie reported [November 5, 1940] that their "successor" in their apartment on Langegasse (and also where Hugo had his "office" after being evicted from their old apartment [Alseggerstrasse]) "...had to run away within 2 days, probably the Party moved in." Tante Bertha (widow of Emil Müller), whose son Paul was an eye doctor in Milwaukee, was getting ready to emigrate.

Tante Rosa wrote [November 6, 1940] to Steffi to congratulate him on his birthday. She wrote how much she missed him calling her Etnatasor[211]: "...I just thought about that, how I liked to hear you say that, how often you called me that; do you still speak this language?" And she wrote how she understood how Bertha would not take the time to eat, now that she could occupy herself with cooking for Liese and Steffi. According to Tante Rosa, Bertha's "Papa" [Leopold Schifferes] was just like that. And Tante Rosa reminisced about how good Leopold, who was her uncle, was to all of them and that his *Yahrzeit*[212] was coming up. Tante Rosa had done as Steffi requested, that is, she had a photographer take photos of the various family graves in the Zentralfriedhof. Surely Steffi was wondering not only if he would ever see his Tante Rosa again, but if he would ever see the city of his birth, or the graves of his ancestors.

The resignation and sadness in Tante Rosa's letters to Bertha became more apparent.

> When you write me about the washing machine, I think how often you gave me advice and how you wanted to modernize old-fashioned me; now I have no one who occupies themself with me and who means so well with me as you. [November 6, 1940]

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[211] Etnatasor is Tante Rosa, spelled backwards.

[212] Anniversary of death.

Tante Rosa had not heard from Käthe in a long time. Roserl Huber could not leave, despite the fact that she had an affidavit, and was very unhappy about it. She reminded Tante Rosa of Tante Elsa (née Siebenschein) Hoffmann, Roserl's mother, "...just that she is not sarcastic, she is very nice and is the one who comes most often to see us."

Hugo wrote [November 14, 1940] how much he was learning in his Spanish class, and also about how ill-prepared the bookkeeping teacher was. He was hoping Liese and Steffi, as well as Bertha, would come to visit them in Chicago. Mr. Held was still not moving out, but was ill so Hugo did not want anyone to be able to say that they kicked out an old, sick man. Occasionally in the letters from Hugo he would call his youngest daughter "*Hunzi*," which means "puppy."

Hede wrote to Steffi [November 18, 1940] for his birthday and said that Siegfried Held had finally moved out, which meant that the Strauss parents could move in with them. Basically, Sophie was running a "boarding house," where she would cook and clean for everyone and the "household" would earn money. In that way Sophie and Hugo could have some spending money. Even so, tickets to the opera, which Hugo bought for Sophie's birthday, and as Grete did for Hede and Hans when Hans was home for Thanksgiving, were sheer luxury. Every penny mattered.

Hugo also wrote Steffi a letter for his birthday [November 19, 1940].

> I will spare the detailed count of all the wishes, you can imagine that there is nothing that I do not wish you with all my heart. You had the luck to get out of the hell over there, and your imprisonment is in the past since your arrival in America even though the effects will last your lifetime.... And for you, as I know you so well, the light of your life, you have your dear mother there with you so that the only thing that is lacking is the mother-in-law, with the father-in-law as supplement. We hope that our luck will grant us a complete reunion and that it is to be assumed that the world will once again have quiet and peace. Until then we must be satisfied with the reunion.

Then he said that he was enclosing a valuable, nicely presented picture of Abraham Lincoln—a five-dollar bill!

Irma Tauber, who had been interned with Bertha on the Isle of Man, wrote from Promenade, Port St. Mary, Isle of Man [November 19, 1940] how happy she was that Bertha was "in safety and united with your loved ones." She said that she was very lonely now because her friend from the Isle of Man, Mary [Ruzicka], had left. Irma also wrote that everyone's "nerves were shattered." She hoped that Bertha had recovered from all her worries and could once again enjoy life. This letter had been "OPENED BY CENSOR 2812."

Sophie, in her birthday letter to Steffi, wrote:

> Unfortunately we are now living in such terribly awful times, in every family there are such worries and sadness because the next people, family members, good friends are torn apart, yes, I know, I must be happy and feel myself lucky that we are already together in this manner, but I am really missing my good Lieserl a lot, my child whom I always had with me, for whom I was used to worrying about and whom I was used to seeing. Motherly love!

Peter Meyer wrote Steffi from "Maryland" Meadow Close, Willfrod/Surrey, England. He said that their mutual friend, Bernd Hanauer, was now a Corporal in the British Army and was going to marry an "...'English' girl and not without money." Peter had gotten his visa but there was a very long wait for accommodations on ships.

Tante Stephy wrote [December 4, 1940] that Tante Else had to move again, as did Tante Anna and their friends the Spitzers. And Sophie said in her letter of December 5, 1940, that "...Hans' parents cannot come because they are asking for a deposit for them that Pepi cannot gather together, one thought that $200 would have been enough. Is that not horrible, since Pepi and Grete could very well take care of the parents."

CHAPTER 58: THE FIRST AMERICAN

In Hugo's letter of December 13, 1940, he described his feelings about becoming a grandparent:

> That was truly the biggest joy that you could possibly have given us.... Hopefully your child, my grandchild, will come into a happier world, and it will have one distinct advantage, that it will be born with American citizenship.... Above all, the possibility is great that the child will be a girl, in the tradition of the family!

Sophie was also very pleased and hoped that Liese would find "...joy in all nice things... the child should have only positive feelings in it... during the most difficult times you kept yourself erect, and to whomever God sends a rabbit, He will also send a bit of grass, so says an old adage." Then Sophie wrote that she called Tante Stephy and said: "Good Morning Great-aunt."



The First American, Eva Julia Shiffers, in Meridian Hill Park, circa 1944

Hede hoped that Hans would get "...a good job and then—we will also get a baby, because we always had the same things, right?"

The six "infamous" crates had finally been delivered to the Strausses and needed to be unpacked in the garage because they were so large. The total weight was 3,500 pounds! Most of the things were for Liese since Hede and Hans had already received their own things when they got married.

On December 26, 1940, Hugo wrote about Hans' continuing attitude towards them. "I am surely not sensitive, in my profession after 30 years one learns about people and families!" Hugo felt that Hans was "...a nervous person, upset because he is not getting ahead here, because his parents could not come over...."

Hugo said that despite the fact that he himself could not earn any money in America, he was busy the whole day.

> And how ideal my life in Vienna was, and how respected and appreciated I was by everyone; that he [Hans] saw, and you also, my children. —I have lost this rich life and the best prospects—I was promised to be named professor this year, lost without expressing one word of complaint, and adjusted easily to the discouragement and hopelessness. But this is no life, if one has to be cautious that at any given moment there will be a tantrum and—before being thrown out, one is shaking! I feel sorry for poor Hede, who is so good and considerate to us, but she cannot do anything against her husband, she has to spend her life with him, + we cannot, in any case, stay with him.

On December 28, 1940, Hugo wrote more about how his life had changed since leaving Vienna:

> ...during the times when every day there were new laws, [I] was one of the busiest and successful counselor's office in all of Vienna, when I think of how the

> people in Vienna valued me and how hard they made me work, then this idiocy which is put before me every single day really upsets me, makes my life worthless and sabotages my health.

He turned to Liese for help and wrote: "...if you want to facilitate our being able to continue to live, take us in, my child!" At the end of the letter he wished for "...peace for the tormented world, and peace and happiness for the whole family!"

Liese had apparently written a letter to Hede and in Hede's reply to Liese, she explained that everything had settled down once again and their parents would stay in Chicago when Hans returned from his studies in May.

Meanwhile, Ines Mandl's parents were still in France, unable to get exit permits and the American Consulate was not issuing visas at that time [January 9, 1941]. So Ines asked Liese if she could possibly help the parents of her husband, Hans Mandl, who had been told in London that they could get their American visas, but they did not have the necessary affidavits. Ines and Hans were unable to help them since they were unable to leave neutral Ireland.

Apparently, there had been some bad news about Onkel Dori. Hugo wrote to Liese [April 16, 1941] that when he was still in Vienna, he appealed the implementation of the *Reich's* "fleeing tax"[213] as it pertained to Onkel Dori.

> I was able to ascertain that an old, ill man who has a mentally impaired son can simply not emigrate because no one will accept him. The reason for the rejection of the complaint was the limit of hypocrisy and the cringing in front of the Streicher-Rosenber'schen doctrine: all the Jews are criminals who are cheating the poor Aryans and the person who has, in the course of the years, stolen such a fortune from the German people, should have to pay the *Reich's* "fleeing tax" for himself and his family for his flight. For that reason the security amount is with foundation and can be implemented. It is a question of 25% of the value of the fortune—stocks, house, land and business from 1. January 1938, in other words, quite a hefty sum. But it is only a guarantee and as long as I was there, it was possible, through an indication of the value of the house and the land for which the debt was incorporated, to delay the sale.

So Onkel Dori was most likely forced to pay a huge sum, his business was liquidated ("Aryanized"), his beautiful house sold for a song to a Viennese baker named Schamburek who, as it was found out much later, owned too many Jewish houses. So the house was actually bought by someone else, even though it belonged to Schamburek.

Hugo felt that after he left Vienna, if Onkel Dori had spent the money to hire a consultant to help him, someone "...whom he would have paid in *Reichsmark* and not with apples from his garden, ...the sale of the property and the house for which the Juva [Jewish property tax] paid could have been salvaged, certainly only from the standpoint of the taxes."

On February 16, 1944, Steffi received a response to an inquiry he made to Congressman Fred A. Hartley of the 10th District of New Jersey, asking him if he could expedite Liese's citizenship. The surname of both Liese, now officially known as Lisa Friederike Shiffers, and Steffi was changed once again—first it was SCHIFFERES, then it became Shifferes, and the final evolution

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[213] *Reichsflugsteuer*, translated as tax for fleeing.

was Shiffers. They both received their Certificate of Naturalization in 1944. Liese's was dated April 4, 1944, and Steffi's was dated July 5, 1944.

Steffi's friend from his *Hakoah* days in Vienna, Fritz Weiniger, wrote from Medellin, Colombia, filling Steffi in on the various mutual acquaintances from their days of being athletes. "From what I could gather from your letter, you went to visit me in Dachau. You had bad luck because at that time I decided to move to Buchenwald. We were both lucky to have survived that." Fritz also bemoaned the fact that no one had written a report on their *Hakoah* section. Eventually Fritz Weiniger moved to the United States.

At the end of the year, Judith Leah Shiffers was born.[214] Her middle name, Leah, was after Bertha's father, Leopold.

In 1945 Liese was employed by Beyda's, a children's clothing store located at 1118 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. Steffi was still working for the Ambassador Hotel as manager of the Health Club. For the year 1945 he earned a total of $4,050.00. The federal income tax withheld was $328.80.

Every year Steffi donated money to the United Jewish Appeal. In 1944 he gave $2.50, which was quite a bit of money, even for an employed refugee.

Onkel Alfred was working for the Urban Realty Company at 211 North Western Avenue, Chicago. On March 12, 1945, he wrote Steffi and Liese advice about their tax return.

Bertha was desperately trying to find out what had happened to her only living brother, Karl. One of her two younger brothers, Ernst/Onni died on February 24, 1933. Her eldest brother Marcus/Max had died before the Nazis took over, on March 31, 1937. Her next brother, Arthur, had been murdered in Dachau on December 15, 1938. Bertha wrote to the Embassy of France on May 6, 1945, to inquire about the fate of Karl. The response was written on May 8, 1945. It stated that Bertha's letter had been forwarded to the French Ministry in Paris. "We will communicate with you as soon as we receive any news. However, this will take time, as conditions abroad are still difficult." The letter came from the Mission of Prisoners of War, Deportees, and Refugees from their New York office.

On November 5, 1945, Max Roth, Treasurer of the *Hakoah* Athletic Club of New York, sent Steffi a letter informing him that they had "...received the following information from the *Hakoah* Office in Vienna, dated October 18, 1945:

> Karl Schifferes 11. March 1939 to Paris
>
> Elisabeth Ringer, deported 17. August 1942 to Minsk
>
> Rosa Allina, deported 14. June 1942 to Izbica

Steffi had a tree planted in the Forest of The Six Million in Israel in memory of his aunt, Rosa Allina.

On July 23, 1945, Dr. Hugo Strauss died a natural death in Chicago

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[214] Both Evy and Judy were born by Caesarian section, since Liese had a bad heart.

Chapter 59: To My Great Sorrow

Mandy Schifferes (Marianne Schoenauer,[215]) Steffi's cousin, wrote a letter dated October 17, 1945, which was sent by *Hakoah* in Vienna. Mandy and her mother had not heard anything from her father, Karl, since 1942. "In the last 7 years I got to be 14 years older. But now everything is passed. I can act again in the theatre and must not work for the war and the Nazis for 80 Marks a month." Tante Mandy Schifferes, Karl's divorced wife, wrote that a Kurt Aschauer in Zurich had gotten to know Karl, though Tante Mandy did not know where. It was through him that she received Karl's letters, through neutral Switzerland.

> Until now I had hope that Karl was living somewhere in France, now a man told me during my visit to *Hakoah* that also the people in France were put in a camp in Paris and were sent away from there. You know, I tell myself this: if Karl were alive, he would have somehow found a way in the last 6 months to let us know and that is why I think he is no longer living. The whole year was so terrible, but I had hope, and now?

Then Mandy added the following:

> Dear Steffi, I can tell you nothing good about Tante Rosa and Fritz, I am giving you a copy of a letter from an aunt of yours [Tante Else Ringer] whom I do not know, of whose further fate the man from the *Hakoah* will tell you. Frau Stubaum, who is now Frau Köck, received this letter at that time from this woman and from it you can see the fate of the Allina Family. Is this not all awful?

Mandy continued: "Through the kindness of the *Hakoah*, our lines will reach your hands and it would be nice if next time we would have a letter from you, because there would be a lot to ask and to talk about."

Tante Else's letter to Frau Stubaum provided details about the Allinas:

> To my great sorrow I found out that Herr Allina died in Malzgasse [on June 18, 1942] and was buried on 22.6.42 in the Zentralfriedhof, Gate I.[216] His wife and son were separated from him during the arrest in Zirkusgasse[217] and were brought to Sperlgasse,[218] from where they were transported after a few days.
>
> The unfortunate old man probably died as a result of the excitement, especially because of the separation from wife and child; one still wanted to bring him to an old age home, but it was too late and so he was carried to the grave without any

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[215] Marianne Schoenauer, as she came to be known, was acting in her second principal role and was finally allowed to marry Gustav Manker on July 28, 1945. Two years later they divorced.

[216] David Allina was buried in the Zentralfriedhof IV. 18A 20 45.

[217] "Zirkusgasse 3, Vienna 2. This is referred to particularly by Celia Male in one of the messages by her that I copied for you, as one of the most notorious cases—a house that accommodated 555 people, around the same period. It is where Rosa Allina and Fritz Allina lived before they were each deported. It is difficult to imagine anything like that number of people herded into what was probably not a particularly large building." [E-mail from Anthony Kahane]

[218] Sperlgasse was another of the myriad of "*Sammelhäuser*" [gathering houses] in Vienna, where Jews were put in one place before their deportation to the East. This enabled the Nazis to avoid reaction of the deported people's neighbors, who may have been upset by seeing their neighbors carted away.

> escort. After all, I was with them every week and you can imagine that I am very grieved about the tragic circumstances.
>
> Where Frau Allina and Fritz were sent I do not know; but they were not aware of the old man's death. I am telling you this, dear Frau Stubaum, because you will perhaps be asked where the Allina family is by the relatives of the Allina family who are in the USA, especially Frau Schifferes.
>
> I am the aunt of Dr. Stefan Schifferes, of whom you often spoke during your visits to the Allina family. If I should hear something more about the Allina family, I will let you know. [Signed E. Ringer (Else Ringer)]

The *Hakoah* Athletic Club of New York, Inc., Affiliated with the World Jewish Congress, 245 West 72nd Street, New York, 23, N.Y., sent a letter to Steffi from Philadelphia, dated 26 October [year uncertain], stating that Frau Rosa Allina was deported to Izbica, Poland on June 14, 1942. The man who wrote it said how sorry he was to have to give Steffi the bad news, "...but unfortunately we must all bear this. If you would like to send some news to Vienna or desire anything else, let me know."

No one will ever know how Tante Else found out about her friends, the Allinas, or how Frau Stubaum received Tante Else's letter. Unfortunately Tante Else met the same fate as Tante Rosa and Fritz and so many others. On August 21, 1942, Elisabeth Ringer was deported from Vienna to Maly Trostinec, Belorusse [doew website, www.doew.at/cgi-bin/shoah/shoah.pl].

On March 15, 1946, Maria Hartmann sent Hans Dewton a letter about his parents. For many years Hans did not share this letter with his younger brother, Pepi. Eventually, when Pepi did get a copy of it, he translated it into English:

> I am sorry I have to give you the worst news about your parents; they died and if this would be all—we hope that they were not mistreated too badly. They were shipped to MINSK—it is supposed to be a horrible camp and from December 4 to December 12 the worst Pogroms took place. This was told to me in February by Dr. KAPPELMACHER, the lawyer of the 'KG'.[219]

[219] Kultusgemeinde, Jewish Community Center of Vienna.



War Ration Books issued to members of the Shiffers Family[220]

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[220] See www.genealogytoday.com/guide/war-ration-books.html. In the United States, nationwide food rationing was instituted in the spring of 1942, and each member of the family was issued ration books by the Office of Price Administration (OPA). These books contained stamps and gave precise details of the amounts of certain types of food that you were allowed. Rationing insured that each person could get their fair share of the items that were in short supply due to the war effort and import reductions. By the end of the war, over a hundred million copies of each ration book were printed.
The Office of Price Administration (OPA) was in charge of rationing consumer goods such as sugar, coffee, shoes, household appliances, and other goods during World War II. The OPA accepted ration book applications and issued ration books, from which consumers tore out stamps in order to purchase food and other supplies at grocery stores.

Chapter 60: Arlington

In a notarized letter [November 29, 1945] Tante Stephy said that she would be happy to provide Liese and Steffi with as much money as she could to help them in their endeavor of opening a children's clothing store.

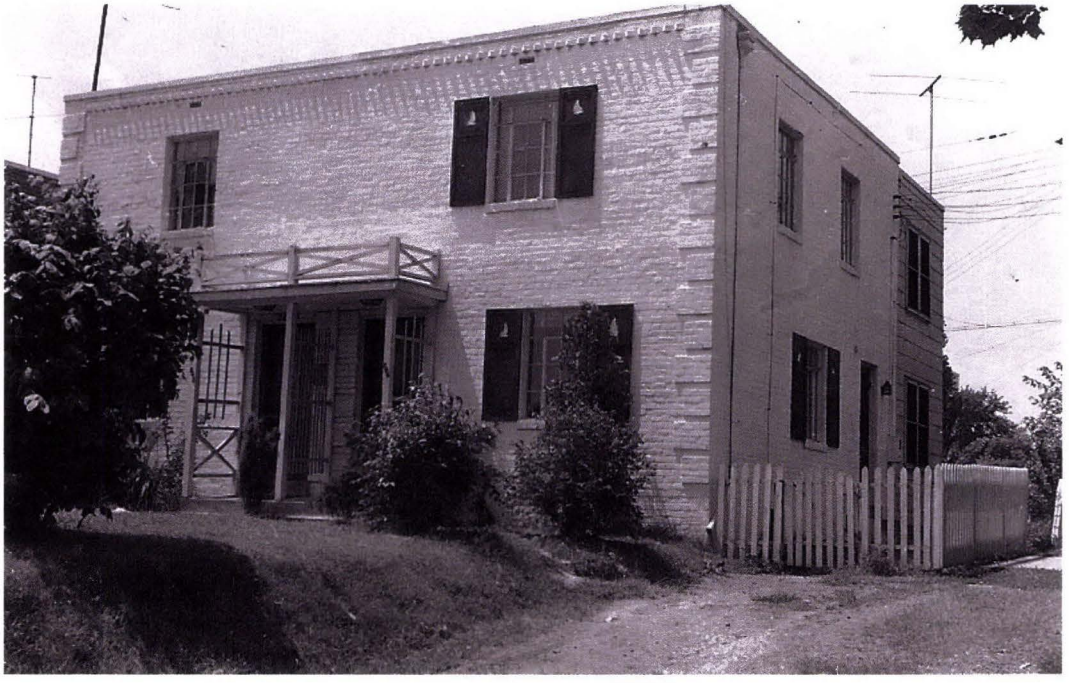
Liese was, among many other things, a clever seamstress. She and Bertha sewed beautiful coats, leggings, and hats, knitted, and made dresses. Liese wanted to open a shop of handmade clothing, but was told that retail would be the better choice. In 1946, with $2,500 in savings and the same amount given as a loan by Tante Stephy, Stephanie Kurz, the Bo Peep Shop was founded. The first store was located near the intersection of Glebe Road and Columbia Pike in Arlington, Virginia. Who knows how Liese's studies at the High School for World Commerce helped prepare her? She had even written a thesis, but because of the Nazi regulations against Jews, did not receive her diploma in Vienna in July 1938 as scheduled.

In the same shopping center as the Bo Peep Shop was the first Rosenthal car dealership and Brenner's Bakery. As business improved and word got out about the quality and service at the Bo Peep Shop, in 1952 they opened another store in Prince Georges Plaza and then in 1955 a third in Suitland, Maryland. Apparently Liese and Steffi's plan was to eventually have Steffi help run the children's clothing business, but upon the death of his wife on December 6, 1956, he had to leave his job at the Ambassador Hotel, where he had worked since 1939, earlier than planned.



Liese, Steffi, and Bertha in front of the first Bo Peep Shop, 1946

Finally, after years of scrimping and saving, Liese and Steffi were able to purchase a brand new car, a 1949 Plymouth station wagon. In 1950 they purchased their own home in Arlington, Virginia, which was in walking distance of the first Bo Peep Shop. The house was a duplex; they lived on the right side and the Toadvine family lived on the left.



The Shiffers' residence at 846 South Ivy Street in Arlington, Virginia



This was the "infamous" 1949 Plymouth that proudly bore the name "Bo Peep Shop"! (with Evy, Liese, and Judy)



Evy, Liese, Judy, and Bertha (Moma), 1949



Judy, "Santa" Steffi, and Evy, December 1949

In 1956, after closing the Arlington store and opening the Bo Peep Shop in the newly constructed Prince Georges Plaza, the family moved to Portal Drive, N.W. One week after moving into this new home, Liese fell dead into Bertha's arms in the kitchen. As a child she had suffered numerous bouts of rheumatic fever, which damaged her heart. Nowadays heart valve replacement is routine. In the 1950s it was not yet available. Would that my mother had lived for more than forty years, to see how the seeds of all her labor would come to fruition. As a young woman, practically alone, and very afraid in a strange country, to have to work and fight and struggle to get the family out of Europe, to help support elderly parents, to be a loving role model for her two young daughters, took a lot of courage. That is exactly what my mother had.



Steffi at the Ambassador Hotel Health Club
December 1955

After his wife's untimely death, Steffi had to resign his position at the Health Club and was immediately thrown into running the children's clothing business. Thankfully Liese's sister, Hede, who had begun to work with her sister in 1949, was an integral part of the successful buying and running of the stores. Not only that, she did so much to tend to her two young nieces.

Much later in my life, I learned that my parents had always intended for my father to help run the business. They were just waiting for the financial situation to stabilize. How clearly I remember my grandmother, Moma, waiting at the picture window, hoping that her son would come home soon so he could eat his supper at 10:00 PM. My father spent hours and hours in the basement at the Prince Georges Plaza store, figuring out salaries and writing checks for employees, sorting and pricing and loading merchandise into his station wagon so he could then drive it to one of the other stores. It was an endless amount of work. Yet, he managed to stay fit and trim and active his whole life.



Clarinet playing in the recreation room of 1636 Portal Drive, N.W, December 1957



Steffi in the Wheaton store, December 1961

For many years, his elder daughter, Evy, and her husband, Irv, lived in Puerto Rico and, naturally, he would go to visit them, always bringing their four boys any clothing they might need, as well as treasuring his time with them. They would also come to visit him in Washington, playing in the snow, on the rare occasion that there actually was some, as if it were sand, and not quite understanding, when they were very little, that snow is cold!

In 1985 he sold the business and was able to spend a lot of time exercising, riding his bicycle, taking his beloved walks in the nearby Rock Creek Park, searching for "bargains" at the supermarket, driving the extra mile to save a few cents on gasoline. He continued to play his clarinet. When he spent the summers with us, in Bloomington, Indiana, in Tanglewood, etc., he would always take his instrument along.

Music was such an important part of this Viennese refugee's life. But what he loved the most about his retirement, I suppose, was that two of his grandsons lived nearby and he could finally, after all the years of working so hard, all the years of hardly seeing his own children after his wife died, spend time with his grandchildren, play ball with them, teach them to sing a myriad of German songs, read and speak German with them, and, in general, have an extremely positive and poignant relationship with them.

Sadly he developed bladder cancer in the year 2000. Despite the "latest" treatments (BCG), there was nothing that could be done, short of removing his bladder. He spent the last weeks of his life with Evy and Irv at their house in Long Grove, Illinois. He passed away peacefully on June 30, 2004, and was buried at King David Cemetery in Falls Church, Virginia, on the 4th of July. Only now do I realize the irony of my refugee father being buried in the first location that my mother, the "first pilgrim" in our family, lived! My father was such a good person, businessman, and American citizen, who cherished his freedom. He would have been proud to know that he was buried on America's birthday!

Appendices

Appendix A: Stuttgart Sportschule

Appendix B: Estrade Letters

Appendix C: Kladovo Transport

Appendix A: Stuttgart Sportschule

On the following webpages I was able to find information which discussed the pogrom of November 10, 1938, as well as the Sports School in which Stephan took part. Naturally I recognized the names Edwin Haller, Alice Bloch, and Karl Adler. Dr. Adler was instrumental in procuring Stephan's release from Dachau. For that we shall be eternally grateful.



Dr. Karl Adler (1890-1973)

> Karl Adler, the eldest of Louis and Mathilde Adler's three children, was born... on 25 January 1890. Adler was one of the most important personalities in Stuttgart's music world: In 1921 he was appointed director of the "New Conservatory of Music". After being dismissed from his teaching position in 1933, he became involved in the Jewish cultural life, particularly in the Jewish house of teaching, which had been founded under the influence of Martin Buber in 1926. Within the "Jüdische Mittelstelle" (a Jewish organization assisting communications between German authorities and the Jews), Adler helped many fellow Jews to emigrate from Germany. At the last moment, in 1941, he himself managed to emigrate to the USA, where he received a professorial chair in the music department of Yeshiva University in 1946. After the war, Karl Adler encouraged reconciliation between Germans and Jews. In Buttenhausen he was extensively involved in planning places of monument to the victims of National Socialism (1961) and for the destroyed synagogue (1966). He passed away in 1973 in Leonida [sic], New Jersey. (http://www.buttenhausen.de/em_rd_06.htm)

The entry on Stuttgart of the Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities (Germany, volume II) gives details on developments in the city furing the Nazi regime (http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Pinkas_germany/ger2_00141.html):

> In 1935, the *Oberrat* opened a school for teaching physical training instuctors, under the management of Edwin Haller and the control of "*Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden*". The school was housed in the Institute of Orthopoedic [sic] Exercises run by Alice Bloch, the wife of the architect, Oscar Bloch. During its existence, up to the end of 1938, the institute trained 70 teachers of both sexes in physical instruction, who received diplomas licensing them to teach in Jewish schools. The *Oberrat* also organized various sports events and competitions for competitors from all over Württemberg. In 1937, the community acquired a sports field intended mainly for the use of pupils and youngsters.
>
> Much attention was given to the question of professional training.

"Kristallnacht"

> On 10th November 1938, the Stuttgart Synagogue was set on fire by men of the SA and SS. Eye-witnesses state that one of the officers of the fire-fighters brought a drum of petrol and with his own hands placed it inside the synagogue. His crew, who had been called to the fire, directed their hoses to the adjoining

buildings, in order to prevent the spread of the fire. The rioters removed from the building and destroyed the Scrolls of the Law and other religious artifacts, except for one Scroll which was saved by the non-Jewish synagogue caretaker, Gottlieb Heich. The two Tablets of the Law, which decorated the portico over the main entrance, the rioters were unable to remove and they remained in place until the destroyed building was demolished some time later. During the disturbance, the square in which the synagogue stood was closed to traffic but not to the general public which gathered to witness the event.

The attempt of the rioters to enter the Community House failed but the following day an official of the community was obliged to hand over the keys to the Gestapo who then emptied the safe containing cash, valuables and documents deposited in the community's care (some of the property was returned in the summer of 1939 after prolonged, tiresome negotiations). The equipment of the "Central Union", its archives, which were in the community house, the library and its books, were similarly confiscated. The building was transferred to the use of the welfare service of the National-Socialists. A similar fate fell upon the rest of the various buildings of Jewish institutions: "Pioneer House", the Community House and prayer hall of "The Congregation of Yeshurun", the offices of the Jewish Union of Artists, the Jewish Nurses Hostel, in which was situated the Jewish old-people's home, and other buildings. All the furniture and equipment was removed from the school building. The synagogue of the Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt community, which had been co-opted to the Stuttgart community in 1935, was also put to the torch and since it was built of wood, burnt leaving no trace.

Heavy damage was caused to shops and businesses which were still in Jewish hands. Shop-windows were smashed and in the doorways stood SS guards. At the height of the destruction, senior SS men drove around in luxury cars encouraging the rioters. The owners of the shops were ordered to board up the shop-front entrances. The houses of the Jews were not touched by order of the Interior Minister of Württemberg, who was afterwards called to Berlin and severely censured. Although the riots were well-planned, many residents had reservations regarding the events and not a few expressed their opinions publicly.

About 800 Jewish men were brought out of their homes and taken to Gestapo Headquarters. Some of them were transferred the following day from the city prison to Welzheim and Dachau Concentration Camps. As they were being loaded on the trucks many local citizens gathered round shouting insults and spitting in their faces. Non-Jewish doctors were prohibited from attending to those who had been injured by the Gestapo beatings. All those who had been sent to Welzheim returned to Stuttgart after a few weeks and of those sent to Dachau, two died—Artur Hirsch (52-years-old), and Nathan Fehrlich (55 years-old). All the rest were freed after a few weeks. Ernst Levine died in April 1939 as a result of his arrest and confinement in Buchenwald. Otto Fromm (b.1897) also died in Buchenwald in November 1938 (it is not known from where he was sent). Leopold Erich Seltz, 27 years-old, who emigrated with his parents to France in 1933 but had returned to Germany in 1938 for a visit, was sent to Buchenwald and died there in December from pneumonia.

To these victims are added the orthodox teacher Felix David (b.1909) and his wife Ruth (1911), who both committed suicide the day after *"Kristallnacht"*

having first put an end to their children's lives (Ben-Zion, 1936 and Gideon, 1938), and the merchant Max Mellinger (b.1876), who was married to an "Aryan" and killed himself on 22nd November, after his shop had been confiscated for use as an office.

Among the arrested who remained in Stuttgart prison was Karl Adler. His house was painstakingly searched in a hunt for anti-Nazi propaganda material. While he was under arrest, he organized his fellow prisoners and encouraged them by keeping them occupied with cultural activities and gymnastics. After about 8 days Adler was released on condition that he undertook not to occupy himself with any kind of cultural activity.

Together with him under arrest were the lawyer Albert Meitzner, the chairman of the "Central Union" in Stuttgart, the winner of a decoration for bravery in the First World War and the chief accountant of the *Oberrat*, Julius Wiessmann (b.1898). Wiessmann was released four days later on the basis that he held an immigration visa for Brazil, and assisted in the release of others by obtaining visas for them as well. Immediately upon his release he was ordered by the authorities to make a survey of the Württemberg communities in order to estimate the damage done during the riots and to count the number of synagogues destroyed and cemeteries damaged. At the end of 1939, when he emigrated with his family to Brazil, he succeeded in taking with him from Germany valuable manuscripts from the *Oberrat* library, which had been confiscated by the Gestapo, and transfer them to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

With the passing of the riots 15 Jewish prisoners were brought from the concentration camps and ordered to demolish the remains of the ruined synagogues under the direction of the architect Ernst Guggenheimer.

In the process they managed to conceal the engraved stone Tablets of the Law from above the entrance to Stuttgart's synagogue and secrete them under the rubble (from there they were removed after the war and replaced in the new synagogue, which was built in 1952).

The damage caused by the riots to Jewish business establishments was repaired by order of the authorities by the Jews themselves at their expense. Insurance payments which were due were confiscated, with the excuse that the assets still held by the Jews were sufficient to pay for the damage (Nazi estimates placed the inclusive fortune of the Jews of Stuttgart at 24 million Marks, an average of 34,482 Marks per capita of the Jewish population).

After "Kristallnacht"

Studies recommenced at the Jewish school early in 1939, after their suspension due to the riots. The number of pupils went down to 104 as a result of emigration.

The Central Jewish Office

The cultural and artistic life of the community became completely paralysed after all the institutions and organizations involved, especially the "*Jüdische Kunstgemeinschaft - Stuttgart*", were disbanded. Karl Adler, who on his release was ordered to devote himself to increasing the rate of emigration of Jews founded, to that purpose "The Central Jewish Office", which employed, in the

beginning, 5 assistants and fulfilled in effect, the functions of the community leadership. At the start Adler was forced to house his operations in a private house in primitive conditions, since all the community's properties had been either damaged or confiscated. The first monies received were from an anonymous donor through a non-Jewish doctor. The donor was Hans Weltz, the manager of the Robert Bosch Company (see below). Later, further donations were to be received from him. The Office was under the inspection of the Gestapo and the SD, who had taken one of the rooms in the new offices which they had obtained by great efforts. From here they were able to supervise telephone conversations and the mail.

The Office's first objective was to secure the release of the prisoners still held in the camps by arranging their emigration—a most difficult mission, given the few opportunities for emigration which existed. At the same time the American consul in Stuttgart made determined efforts to delay the granting of visas, even though in the cases concerned all necessary requirements had been fulfilled. Jews who appeared to be in immediate danger also turned to the Office for help, and for lack of any other means of arranging legal emigration, they were smuggled over the border, in great potential danger, with the assistance of guides who did their work at a price (about 1,000 Marks for each person). On the eve of the outbreak of the war, the authorities, on the pretext of "reasons of security" delayed the exit of a group of emigrants despite the fact that the entire preparation, with all its formalities had been completed.

Adler decided, in great danger, to transport them to the border. At the border station they were assaulted by the SS men and were forced to leave all their belongings but were eventually able to cross the Rhine. This operation was also made possible thanks to the help of Hans Weltz and the Bosch Company. Robert Bosch and his Company manager Weltz opened up many different ways of helping the beleaguered Jews. Thus, for example, they employed Jewish workers in the factory, made possible the professional training of those who were scheduled for emigration and they assisted the community leaders with donations, smuggling Jews, the exploitation of influential contacts and the financing of assistance and emigration projects. After the war Hans Weltz was awarded the accolade of "A Righteous Gentile" by the Holocaust Museum Directorate in Jerusalem.

The workers in the Office also had the task of informing families of the deaths of arrested people in the concentration camps. Adler's wife took it upon herself to do this. Apart from the deaths in the camps, deaths from mercy-killings of the mentally ill increased from 1940, and even suicides increased—among others Gustav Aaronstein, 75 years-old, one of the founders and ex-manager of a Stuttgart security firm, because his passport was revoked the eve of his intended emigration (1.6.1940); the jeweler Albert Feigt (b.1868) killed himself in front of the police who came to take him to the transport for Theresienstadt (22.8.1942).

Some time before the outbreak of war the authorities ordered the Office to arrange the lodging of a few hundred Jews from Baden, who had been temporarily transferred to Stuttgart.

With the passage of time the Office expanded, adding departments and positions, giving service 24-hours a day. Among the heads of the "Central Office" was the

social worker Tekla Kaufmann, and among her staff were numbered Dr. Ella Kesslar Reiss, daughter of the well-known lawyer Dr. Richard Reiss, the Social Democrat. She had been educated in the Evangelical religion and only at the time of the persecution had she returned to her Jewish sources (she was later to die in Auschwitz); the Judge Robert Bloch, who succeeded in forging good connections with the "Aryan" authorities; the jurist Dr. Solomon Westheimer who engaged himself in the formulation of the "Emigration Document" which people of means were obliged to finance for those who had no money; the teachers Karl Kahn and Julius Stern, who both received high decorations for valour in the First World War; and Alice Horowitz, who was nicknamed by the Jews "The Community Angel".

After the emigration of Karl Adler to the United States (see below), his brother-in-law the Judge Alfred Marks was named as his replacement.

In August 1939 the "Regulations for Controlling the Rental of Property by Jews" was published, according to which Jews were obliged to vacate apartments and houses owned by non-Jews and move to special houses designated for Jewish occupation only. According to a survey there were then dwelling 337 Jewish families (1,089 souls) in 290 houses (1,162 apartments) under Jewish ownership, in which were also dwelling 825 non-Jewish families, while 381 Jewish families (1,004 souls), dwelt in non-Jewish houses. 718 Jewish families (2,093 souls), were required to vacate their homes by the 1st Decenber 1939, as a first step towards the concentration of Jews in "Jew houses"—*Judenhäuser*—and subsequently the ghetto."

Emigration

"*Kristallnacht*" exploded any illusions the Jews may have had regarding the possibility of existing in Germany and motivated even the hesitant to exert all efforts to emigrate, while the "Help" and Central Office organizations did everything in their power to help them.

Together with those who left in 1939 went Otto Kaulla, scion of the famous Kaulla family, who went to England with his wife; Dr. Max Wolf, who went with his wife first to Switzerland and afterwards to South Africa; Dr. Meyer Reinhold, sometime minister in the Württemberg government, whose wife was a "non-Aryan", and the ex-State Attorney Walter Richeimer. Tekla Kaufmann was also saved at the last moment (1941). With the last to go was Karl Adler, who was assisted by Social Democrat friends and even Nazis, who supplied him with documents and money. Adler was arrested on the eve of the war when he tried to smuggle a group of young Jews over the border but was released as a result of strenuous efforts made on his behalf. At the end of 1940 he still managed to emigrate to the United States with his wife. Even in 1941, 70 Jews succeeded in emigrating to the United States, among them the young brother of Otto Hirsch, Theodor Hirsch, with his wife. On August 28th Leopold Löwy, chairman of the *Oberkirchenbehörde*, which had already been disbanded, got to France in a sealed carriage. From there he went to the United States by way of Portugal.

"Work-Parties" and Other Decrees

Already in 1940 the mobilization of Jews for forced labor in the munitions factories had begun. Their wages were purely nominal and symbolic. However, in the beginning they still had the right to receive food-rations on a par with other German citizens. In April 1941 a "Jew-Shop" was opened which also supplied the needs of nearby Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt and Flehingen Jews. The non-Jewish manager of the shop behaved very unsympathetically towards his clients. A Jew who tried to make purchases at another shop was caught and sent to a concentration camp. The "Jew Shop" was destroyed in a bombing raid and the shop transferred to the private house of another German who did what he could to be of assistance to his Jewish, hard-pressed clients; but in 1944 that house too was destroyed and the third German manager was as difficult as had been the first.

In the beginning of 1941 public prayer became forbidden. The Jewish labourers working in the munitions factory were fired and employed in hard, public works. Nevertheless, some public community life still existed and even, occasionally, a cultural activity.

Starting in the Autumn of 1941 until the spring of 1942, between 600–800 elderly Jews were transferred from Stuttgart to various communities in which the Nazis had created improvised "Old-peoples' Homes." In the spring and summer of 1942, the old people joined the mass transports to the East (Riga and Theresienstadt). The victims of this operation, officially named "Resettlement in the country", were permitted to take with them a bed, chair, table, and a trunk. Everything else they were forced to sell to junk-men.

The Deportations

The First Transport

On the 24th October 1941 The High Command of the SS decided to deport 50,000 Jews from Germany and Czechoslovakia to Minsk and Riga. The Stuttgart Jewish community was required to construct a transfer-camp at Killesberg, on the edge of the city and there the deportees were concentrated from all the Württemberg communities—over 1,000 souls, from the age of 6 to 65. The transport, which included 318 of Stuttgart's Jews, including the last 50 pupils and one teacher from the Jewish school, left Stuttgart on 1st December 1941 and arrived after four harrowing, anxiety-filled days in the vicinity of Riga. From this transport almost no one survived. Among the victims was the Walter Löwy family of 7 souls, and three nurses from the "Hostel for Jewish Nurses," Eva Stettiner, Irena Strauss, and Hilda Justitz.

SOURCE: www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Pinkas_germany/ger2_00141.html

Appendix B: Estrade Letters

E-mail, September 21, 2006:

Chère Judith,

Bonne année !

Vos messages ont fini par nous parvenir après quelques difficultés (vacances corréziennes prolongées, ordinateur défaillant). Nous vous en remercions et vous prions de nous excuser pour le retard mis à vous répondre.

Nous n'avons pas eu beaucoup d'informations en provenance des services d'état-civil autrichiens ni même des centres juifs de Vienne. Voici tout de même l'adresse d'une personne qui pourrait peut-eêtre vous aider car elle travaille dans un centre de documentation juive. Nous avons correspondu avec elle en février dernier au sujet de Johan Falikman. Elle s'appelle Sabine Loitfellner et habite à Vienne. Son e-mail : S.Loitfellner@ikg-wien.at

Parvenir à faire donner à une rue de Vienne le nom de Shiffers, Laufer, Steissel ou Falikman, ou bien celui des "Trente martyrs autrichiens juifs de Soudeilles", n'est pas à notre portée.

Oui, il existe des photos de Laufer et Steissel, précisement sur le programme du spectacle donné à Bergerac par le groupe artistique du 653e GTE. Nous ne nous souvenons plus si Shiffers y figure aussi. La photocopie de cette pièce est dans un dossier qui est à Soudeilles dans notre maison - et nous sommes actuellement à Paris! Cette pièce nous a été communiquée par les soeurs Vant, toujours vivantes, des amies, qui connurent bien les artistes du camp de Soudeilles. Voici leur adresse. Il faut leur écrire par la Poste, elles ne se sont pas mises au courrier électronique. Elles ont 85 et 82 ans, mais toute leur mémoire. Jeanne et Paule VANT, 6 avenue Limousine, 19250 MEYMAC.

C'est Steissel qui est revenu et non Laufer. Nous ignorons comment il a pu survivre et revenir de l'enfer. Nous observons seulement qu'il était plus jeune que ses infortunés compagnons, et que peut-être comme musicien il a pu faire partie de l'orchestre du camp ... Mais nous n'en savons rien, pure supposition. Il vivait encore en 1974. Nous ne savons pas s'il a des descendants et où ? Nous avons néanmoins noté sa dernière adresse connue à Paris, dans le 18e arrondissement, mais elle aussi elle gise dans le dossier sus-mentionné à Soudeilles. Nous avons l'occasion d'y aller à la fin du mois et nous ferons notre possible pour retrouver ces informations et vous les transmettre.

A notre connaissance, et malgré l'envoi de plusieurs exemplaires de notre livre en Israël ou aux Etats-Unis, personne ne semble avoir eu l'intention de le traduire en anglais. C'est peut-être dommage et c'est peut-être ce qui vous décidera, vous, Judith, qui paraissez si combative. Au fait, de quelle édition disposez-vous? La première (1999, 245 pages)? La seconde (2000, 253 pages)? La troisième, on la prépare, encore enrichie, mais la seconde n'est pas épuisée ...

Bien amicalement.

Mouny et Paul Estrade.

E-mail, September 21, 2006:

Dear Judith,

Happy New Year!

Your messages managed to find us after some difficulties (long vacation in Correze, broken computer). We thank you and ask for your forgiveness for the delay in our response.

We do not have a lot of information regarding the services of the State of Austria and the Jewish Community center in Vienna. Still, we are sending you the address of someone who could perhaps help you because she works in the Jewish document center. We have corresponded with her in February about Johan Falikman. Her name is Sabine Loitfellner and she lives in Vienna. Her email: S. Loitfellner@ikg-wien.at.

Regarding naming a street in Vienna for S[c]hiffer[e]s, Laufer, Steissel and Falikman, or even the "Thirty Austrian Jewish Martyrs of Soudeilles", is not in our power.

Yes, there are photos of Laufer and Steissel from the big program that was given in Bergerac by the artistic group of the 653rd GTE. We do not remember if S[c]hiffer[e]s was also included. The photocopy of this is in a folder which is in our house in Soudeilles—and we are actually in Paris! This was given to us by the Vant sisters, still living, friends who knew the artists of the Camp at Soudeilles very well. Here is their address. You will have to write a letter, they are not set up with a computer. They are 85 and 82 years old, but have a good memory. Jeanne and Paule VANT, 6 avenue Limousine, 19250 MEYMAC.

It is Steissel who returned and not Laufer. We have no idea how he survived and could return from the hell. We can just note that he was younger than his unfortunate companions and that perhaps could participate in the camp orchestra... But we know nothing, merely speculation. He was still alive in 1974. We do not know if he has any descendants or where they live. Still, we have notated his last known address in Paris, in the 18th arrondissement, but it is also in the file that we mentioned which is in Soudeilles. We will have the opportunity to go there at the end of the month and we will do our utmost to find this information and send it to you. As far as we know, and despite sending various examples of our book to Israel and the United States, no one seems to have the intention of translating it into English. Perhaps it is a pity and perhaps it will be you, Judith, who will decide to do it, you seem like a fighter. Actually, which edition do you have? The first (1999, 245 pages)? The second (2000, 253 pages)? The third, which we are preparing, including more things, but the second is not used up.

Cordially.

Mouny and Paul Estrade.

Paule Hy-Vant et Jeanne Vant
6 avenue Limousine
19250 MEYMAC

Chère Judith Schiffers,

Nous avons bien reçu votre letter du 21.09.06.

Oui, nous avons connu les travailleurs étrangers du camp du Soudeilles (Corrèze).

Mais tout d'abord une question: Avez-vous lu le livre de Mouny et Paul Estrade? Cette lecture vous serait utile pour bien comprendre notre situation à l'époque.

Mon père était instituteur et secrétaire de mairie, m mere était institutirce, à Soudeilles petite commune de 300 habitants environ.

Au camp de travailleurs étrangers il y eut beaucoup de professions représentées: des commerçants, des artisans, des médecins, des pharmaciens, des chanteurs, des musicians... Ces derniers participaient aux séances données par des troupes bénévoles au benefice du colis au prisonnier de guerre. Parmi il y avait Frédéric Steissel et Rudi Laufer don't les photos fixent mieux le souvenir. En ce qui concerne Charles Schifferes nous n'avons pas de photo, hélas... Je revois sa silhouette. Un souvenir: on disait qu'il lui était plus difficile de transporter par le train un violoncelle (plus difficile qu'un violon ou un accordéon). En effet ils se rendaient parfois en Dordogne où ils avaient leurs familles: Périgueux, Bergerac, Domme... C'était avant la suppression de la ligne de demarcation qui coupait la France en deux depuis 1940.

Nous nous souvenons aussi de chanteur A. Kaplan, du fantaisiste Grunberg, des médecins Gutman, Kopciovsky, Teiber, de pharmacien WEISS, de jeune Sachs et beaucoup d'autres...

Nous discutons de tout: de la guerre, de l'occupation, de ravitaillement bien sur. Mais nous avions aussi des échanges, de pensées philosophiques, de notions scientifiques. Il faut dire que leurs soucis rejoignaient les notres ooncernant la presence des Allmands. Ces années furent terribles par les privations, la censure, la méfiance generale, un stress continuel. Après la guerre nous avons su aussi qu'elles avaient été horribles, en particulier pour les juifs...

Je veux dire à votre famille que nous conservons un souvenir ému de ces gens rencontrés dans la tourmente et avec lesquels nous avons fraternize en silence . . .

Nous vous envoyons un programmed édicacé par votre parent et par d'autres. Nous en avons un autre exemplaire.

Je vous conseille à nouveua de lire le livre de Mouny et Paul Estrade.

Nous vous exprimons, chère madame, nos sentiments sodlidaires.

Paule Hy
Meymac le 25 octobre 2006

Notre frère est en relation avec Madame Bénari fille de Joseph Levinsonas-Bénari qui avait réalisé nos portraits (voir le livre).

Sur INTERNET nous avons obtenu des renseignements très élogieux concernant Marianne SCHOENAUER et meme sur vous!

Paule Hy-Vant et Jeanne Vant
6 avenue Limousine
19250 MEYMAC

Dear Judith Schiffers,

We did receive your letter from the 21.09.06.

Yes, we knew the foreign workers of the Soudeilles camp (Corréze).

But first of all, a question: have you read the book by Mouny and Paul Estrade? This work would be useful for you to understand our situation at the time.

My father was a teacher and town secretary, my mother was a teacher in Soudeilles, a little community of approximately 300 inhabitants.

In the foreign worker camp there were many professions that were represented: businessmen, artisans, doctors, pharmacists, singers, musicians… The latter participated in sessions given by the troup for the benefit of the prisoners of war. Amongst them was Frédéric Steissel and Rudi Laufer whose photos help us remember them better. Concerning Charles Schifferes, we have no photo, unfortunately….I can still see him. One memory: people said that it was more difficult for him to take his cello on the train (more difficult than a violin or an accordion). Actually they sometimes went to the Dordogne where they had their families: Périgueux, Bergerac, Domme…. This was before the implementation of the demarcation line which divided France into two since 1940.

We also remember the singer A. Kaplan, the whimsical writer Grunberg, the doctors Gutman, Kopciovsky, Teiber, the pharmacist WEISS, the young Sachs and many others…

We discussed everything: the war, the occupation, certainly getting food. We also exchanged ideas, philosophical thoughts, scientific notions. It must be said that their worries were the same as ours concerning the German presence. Those years were terrible due to the deprivation, the censorship, the general mistrust, the continual stress. After the war we also learned that it was horrible, especially for the Jews…

I would like to tell your family that we remember with emotion these people whom we met during the torment and with whom we fraterinized in silence…

We are sending you a program which was signed by your relative and by others. We have another one like this.

Again I recommend reading the book by Mouny and Paul Estrade.

We would like to tell you, dear Madame, of both of our feelings.

Very truly yours,

Paule Hy
Meymac the 25 October 2006

Our brother has a relationship with Madame Bénari, daughter of Joseph Levinsonas-Bénari who drew our portraits (see the book).

On the INTERNET we were able to obtain favorable information about Marianne.

[The following e-mails from Silvia Kargl, hist.archiv@wienerphilharmoniker.at, confirm that there is no record of Karl ever performing with the Vienna Opera.]

April 8, 2013

Sehr geehrte Frau Dr. Shiffers,

vielen Dank für Ihre Anfrage. Carl/Karl Schiffer(e)s war kein Mitglied der Wiener Philharmoniker, leider konnte ich in unserem Archiv keinen Hinweis auf ihn und seine berufliche Laufbahn finden.

Es gibt eine Datenbank des Dokumentationsarchivs der österreichischen Widerstandes – www.doew.at – auf der Opfer der Shoah, Gestapo-Opfer und Politisch Verfolgte angeführt sind, dort ist er unter Karl Schifferes zu finden.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen, Silvia Kargl

Dear Dr. Shiffers,

Thank you for your inquiry. Carl/Karl Schiffer(e)s was not a member of the Vienna Philharmonic, unfortunately I was unable to find any reference to him and his professional career in our archives. There is a database of the Documentation Archives of the Austrian Resistance—www.doew.at—of the victims of the Shoah, Gestapo victims, and victims of political persecution, where information about Karl Schifferes can be found.

With warm greetings, Silvia Kargl

April 17, 2013

Sehr geehrte Frau Dr. Shiffers, nun habe ich die Antwort von meinem Kollegen aus der Wiener Staatsoper, Herrn Peter Poltun. Er teilte mir mit, dass Karl Schifferes nicht in den Personallisten der Oper aufscheint.

Es kann aber sein, dass er als Substitut gespielt hat, um ein Orchestermitglied zu vertreten—darüber gibt es aber keine Namensverzeichnisse.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen aus Wien, Silvia Kargl

Dear Dr. Shiffers, I have just received a reply from my colleague at the Vienna State Opera, Mr. Peter Poltun. He informed me that Karl Schifferes does not appear on the personnel list of the Opera.

But it can be that he performed as substitute in order to replace an orchestra member—but unfortunately, there is no registry for that.

With warm greetings from Vienna, Silvia Kargl

Appendix C: Kladovo Transport

With the help of Anthony Kahane, we were able to determine that Stephan's first cousin Heinrich Pollak (son of Malvine Schifferes and Carl/Karl Pollak) was part of the Kladovo Transport, an attempt of more than 1,000 refugees to flee from the Nazis in 1939 on board a boat bound for Palestine. The following information is transcribed from the Aufrichtig Family website, www.aufrichtigs.com.

> Egon Aufrichtig was among a group of more than 1,000 refugees who, in December 1939, attempted to flee from the Nazis on board a boat bound for Palestine. Their bid for freedom became known as the Kladovo-S'abac Affair. The following has been reproduced from a Press release issued in connection with an exhibition, "Kladovo – Escape to Palestine," staged at the Jewish Museum in Vienna in 2001.
>
> The Kladovo Transport
>
> As early as 1933, and especially after the Austrian Anschluss in 1938, the expulsion of Jewish citizens became one of the main goals of the National Socialist regime. Moreover, first waves of deportations from Vienna to German-occupied Poland also started in October 1939. While pursuing this new anti-Semitic policy, the Nazi government increasingly forced Jews to emigrate from the Third Reich until 1940. (Emigration was not officially prohibited until the fall of 1941). In view of this situation, the so-called Free World more and more rigorously barred its doors to the refugee flow. Especially after the outbreak of World War II, Jews were only able to flee to certain countries overseas or join "illegal transports" to Palestine. These transports became a mass salvation program from mid-1938 onwards. In spite of British immigration restrictions, refugees continued to be smuggled into Palestine from then on. These clandestine transports became all the more important in 1939 because the British authorities froze legal immigration into Palestine in May by way of the White Paper proclamation. After the outbreak of the war, Jews from the Third Reich were strictly forbidden to directly immigrate into Palestine as Jews born in Germany were considered by the British to be "enemy aliens". Only refugees who had already reached a neutral country were able to obtain an immigration certificate and even then only under certain conditions.
>
> In view of the increasingly drastic persecution in Austria, now called Ostmark, and out of fear of new SS deportations, Georg Überall (later Ehud Avriel), the secretary general of He-Haluts and representative of Mossad in Vienna, made a grave decision in late 1939: He wanted all remaining He-Haluts members in Ostmark to leave the country even though no deep-sea vessels were ready to transport them to Palestine from the Danube delta. For the first time, a group of 120 Youth Aliya (JUAL) members also joined an illegal transport. Several hundred persons were first brought to Bratislava. A list shows that 822 people from Vienna, 130 from Berlin, and 50 from Gdansk initially joined the transport. In Bratislava another 100 refugees from Prague and Bratislava were added to the group.
>
> In the winter of 1939 the Danube was going to freeze over and the Slovak authorities intended to send the group back to the German border. Georg Überall

and Mosche Agami, the Mossad officials in Vienna and Geneva respectively, urged the refugees to continue their trip even though no ship was ready for them at the mouth of the Danube. After a ten-day sojourn the refugees departed from Bratislava on the "Uranus", an excursion boat owned by the Danube Steam Boat Company (DDSG) and decorated with the swastika flag. No sooner had the boat reached the Hungarian border when it was unexpectedly stopped and turned back to its initial point of departure. On December 13 the trip started anew, but a few days later the passengers were transferred mid-river to three Yugoslav excursion boats—the "Car Nikola," the "Car Duxan," and the "Kraljica Marija." Sime Spitzer, the secretary general of the Association of Jewish communities in Yugoslavia, had chartered these boats from the Yugoslav national shipping company on Mossad's instructions. The reason for this unexpected turn was DDSG's refusal to continue the trip on the "Uranus" as long as the reshipment at the mouth of the Danube was uncertain.

The voyage on the Yugoslav ships also ended abruptly, however, this time in the tri-state area between Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria. The Romanian authorities prohibited the passage for the same reason. It soon became clear that the weather conditions made a continuation of the trip impossible in the foreseeable future. On December 31, 1939, the ships were directed to the winter harbour in the Yugoslav town of Kladovo near the Iron Gate. In this little town, 54 kilometres from the nearest railway station and practically cut off from the outside world in winter, the refugees waited for the ice to melt. Spitzer had to promise the Yugoslav government that he would be responsible for the group's upkeep. At that time, thousands of refugees from Germany and Austria were also living in Yugoslavia alongside the country's Jewish community of 71,200. Several assembly camps were set up for refugees from the Third Reich.

Cramped conditions, dirt, and biting frost made life on the boats unbearable. It would be weeks before the refugees were allowed to spend even a limited amount of time on shore. Finally, the shipping company urged the group to vacate the three steamboats. The refugees subsequently moved on land – some to the village, others to barracks and tents on shore. A malaria epidemic soon broke out in the tents and barracks, which were close to big swamps. Malnutrition, dirt, and insect infestations also contributed to outbreaks of scabies and furunculosis. There were also isolated cases of polio, erysipeloid, and typhus.

In September 1940 the group was finally able to leave Kladovo. Their trip, however, did not lead them towards the Danube delta, but a few hundred kilometres upriver, to the Serbian town, S'abac, on the Sava river. The rerouting of the group was caused by a large-scale resettlement of ethnic Germans from Romania overseen by the SS. These re-settlers were transported upstream, also on DDSG steamboats, and temporarily put up in reception camps in the Serbian villages of Kladovo and Prahovo. On September 22, 1940, the refugees reached the small town of S'abac. There, older people and couples were put up in private rooms, while the majority of young people were quartered in an abandoned grain mill that had been adapted for these purposes. Although they had to observe some restrictions, the refugees were allowed to move freely about town.

After the refugees arrived in S'abac, their living conditions improved. The transport participants enjoyed greater freedom of movement and a more stable way of life. The various Zionist youth groups gained in importance. They tried to

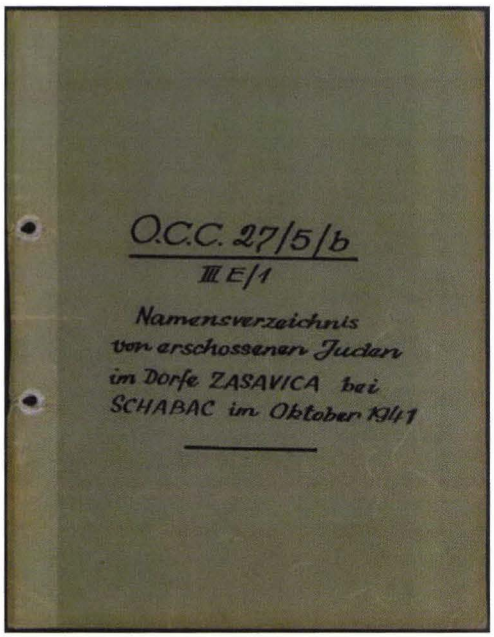
give their members encouragement through a tight social structure, strict discipline and extremely organized daily routines. Even though it was officially prohibited, many members sought to earn some pocket money through employment opportunities in S'abac. In spite of this relief, the refugees were still living on stand-by. Many times their departure was announced and they had to pack their bags and be ready.

In the final months before the German attack on Yugoslavia, the threat of war became more and more palpable in S'abac. Refugees from the Third Reich were still streaming over the borders and the refugee community in S˘abac increased to an estimated 1,400 people. Just prior to the German attack on Yugoslavia a small number of the Kladovo refugees were able to escape to Palestine with certificates. Estimates of those who survived range from 200 to 280 people. Most of the transport participants saved were members of Youth Aliya, i.e., 15-to-17-year olds. Some adult attendants, a number of older girls with WIZO certificates, and a small number of older people for whom relatives in Palestine had vouched, were also able to flee.

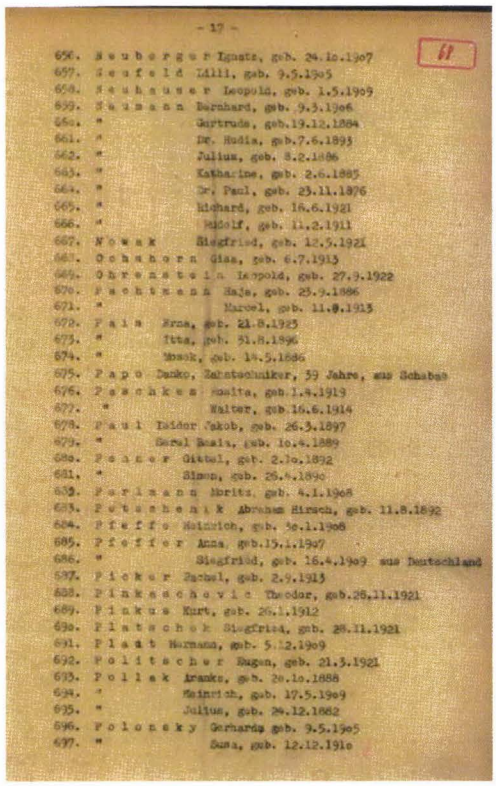
When the German army marched into Yugoslavia, more than 1,100 Jewish Kladovo refugees remained in the Serbian town of S'abac. After the attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, the German regime started a systematic extermination of Jews in the East. The Kladovo Group thus did not stand a chance of leaving Serbia in the summer of 1941. Out of all the Kladovo refugees remaining in Serbia at the time of the German attack on Yugoslavia in April 1941, only a handful managed to escape from the Nazis and survive the war.

When 21 German soldiers were killed by partisans in early October 1941, General Böhme ordered the execution of 2,100 people in retaliation – 100 people for every German killed. 805 Jews and Gypsies from the S˘abac camp, which included all the men from the Kladovo Transport, fell victim to this reprisal. In January 1942 the women and children of the Kladovo Transport were sent to the Sajmis˘te concentration camp near Belgrade, where Jewish women and children from Serbia were already interned. These former fairgrounds were ill-adapted to serve as a camp. More than 7,000 women—among them the very old, children, and newborns—languished in barracks in the biting cold. Many froze or starved to death, the remaining survivors were gassed inside transport lorries.

It was not until the end of the war that some details became known of the tragic fate of the Kladovo Transport members left behind in Serbia. To this day, some family members do not know exactly how their relatives perished in Serbia.



Names of Jews Shot in Village of Zasavica bei Sabac in October 1941



Pollak, Heinrich, b. 17.5.1909

Heinrich POLLAK[1]

PLACES

Birthplace:	Langenzersdorf
Prewar Residence:	Wien IX
Place of Arrival:	Dachau

DATES

Date of Birth:	17. Mai 1909 [May 17, 1909]
Date of Arrival:	14. November 1938 [November 14, 1938]

NUMBERS

Prisoner Number:	24536

OTHER INFORMATION

Occupation:	Buchhalter
Prisoner Category:	Schutzhäftling Jude

SOURCE INFORMATION

Source Name:	Dachau Memorial
Source Description:	Camp records compiled by the Dachau Memorial site based on 170,000 prisoner cards and supplemented with other camp records including transport lists, "protective custody" lists, death books, lists of forced labor and witnesses.

[1] Information received from U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, International Tracing Service.

Heinrich POLLAK

PLACES
Prewar Residence: Austria

DATES
Date of Birth: 05/17/1909 [May 17, 1909]

NUMBERS
Account Number: 90
Line Number: 23587

OTHER INFORMATION
Prisoner Category: U3/15

SOURCE INFORMATION

Source Name:	Recht als Unrecht
Source Description:	An alphabetical name index of records of the "Vermögensverkehrstelle" / Assets Transfer Office of the Nazi-era "Ministerium für Handel und Verkehr" / Ministry of Commerce and Transportation now held by the Austrian "Archiv der Republik" / Archives of the Republic.
Notes:	Decree concerning the Reporting of Jewish Assets of April 26, 1938 required all Jewish citizens to report their total domestic and foreign assets, where such assets exceeded 50,000 Reichsmarks, and the Vermögensverkehrstelle was created three weeks later to oversee the transfer of such Jewish assets into Aryan hands. The name index includes last name, first name, date of birth and archival file number.
Source Information	USHMM Call Number DS135.A92 V523 1993 von Hubert Steiner und Christian Kucsera. "Recht als Unrecht: Quellen zur wirtschaftlichen Entrechtung der Wiener Juden durch die NA Vermogensverkehrsstelle. Tell 1 : Privatvermogen, Personenverzeichnis. Wien: Osterreichisches Staatsarchiv, 1993.
Contact Information:	Archiv der Republik Nottendorfer Gasse 2, A-1030 Wien, Austria Tel: (0043 1) 79540 251 Fax: 22/01/2008 (0043 1) 79540 109

Heinrich POLLAK

PLACES
Place of Death: Zasavica bei Sabac

DATES
Date of Birth: 17.05.1909 [May 17, 1909]

Date of Death: 12.10.1941 [October 12, 1941]

SOURCE INFORMATION

Source Name:	Deportation Cards DöW-Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes
Source Description:	A digital list compiled from index cards of those deported which are held by the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde in Vienna. Created from an unknown source between 1945 and 1947, the cards and database include c. 64,859 individuals deported from Vienna.
Notes:	Data also available at DöW website, see http://www.doew.at/.
Credit:	Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes