

20 / 8 / 1940<sup>1</sup>: My dear, dear child I've been thinking about you the whole day! Today little Sybille<sup>2</sup> will be one year old! She looks neither like you nor Dorothee. But what makes the little thing more dear to me than anything else: she has your eyes, so big, so dark blue, so serious and then so radiant! When I took her into my arms for the first time in May I couldn't stop looking at them. The child stared at me so earnestly and questioningly, so long and then the eyes brightened up and she leaned her little head on me, quite firmly. That's exactly what you used to do and you won people's hearts that way. And Ernst<sup>3</sup> was quite right when he said: she doesn't look like Marianne but she has the most beautiful part of her – her eyes – the older, the more solitary, the more contemplative one gets. And it's occupied me the whole day: I pray to God that the child will be so good, so clever, so reliable and faithful, so diligent and skilful as you. May God grant that she takes life less seriously than you, and that it is easier for her than it has been for you. How often you used to say: if I hadn't had a wonderful childhood, what would I have had from life?! Now you've gone from one war to another – and why? – it is an eternal riddle to us. One cannot comprehend life, the world, people any more. Nor destiny which has separated us from our dearest child. Will we ever see each other again? Everything is so dark, so desolate. Nations are tearing each other apart, summer is so miserable, cold and rainy, there's worry and grief in every home. Sybille was born during the war. When will she see the first day of peace in her life? When will peace and tranquillity return? When will people be able to breathe freely again and when will we finally, finally receive word from you? It is almost unendurable – and yet one must bear this burden in an impossibly difficult life like so much else before. But this must be the most, most difficult thing of all. -

I believe children and their parents remain together even if they are worlds apart. And I believe you feel that you are always together with us, day by day. Perhaps you are writing down what you are going through, perhaps our thoughts are intersecting. Our life is so very lonely, so far from everything. You understand that well, my dear child. But you ought to know that you are amongst us and I will now write of everything, the when and where, how we were and are ...

On 24 and 25 March we met you both in Brussels. Now it is 1½ years later and isn't it as if, in that short period of time, the world had been turned on its head?

On 23 / 8 / 40 I'm beginning to recall everything that has happened since we saw each other in Brussels -

Outside it's 9 degrees, in the room it's 13 degrees. I'm writing with clammy fingers wearing a woollen jacket and a woollen rug over my knees: outside a storm and rain are lashing down. In the park it's roaring through the tall, old trees as if one were at the seaside. In the garden the storm has torn a little apple tree from its support. The only apple it had is lying on the grass and the tree is on the verge of breaking. What's going to happen?

On 30 March 1939 we returned from Brussels. Barely 8 days later negotiations began with Prague. Night after night massive trucks headed for the border: troops, artillery etc.

---

<sup>1</sup> From this point until the end of the journal in 1946, no direct contact with Marianne was possible.

<sup>2</sup> Sybille Wiesmüller *née* Schnabel (Berlin 1939 – Merano 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Marianne Angermann's brother-in-law, Ernst Schnabel (Moscow 1902 - ?).

We heard the rumbling and saw it from the window, almost ghostly in the moonlight. The occupation of the Sudeten-German area followed rapidly and in 14 days they'd created the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia with the seat of the Reich Protector in Prague. We couldn't believe it.<sup>4</sup>

In June 1939 the Polish negotiations began, without success. An 18 day war in August [sic] and now Poland is finished.<sup>5</sup> Jochen B.<sup>6</sup> took part in this whole short campaign. Again motorised troops rolled by ceaselessly. One day the whole train was reinforcements from Bavaria. Our Wehrmacht has something impressive about it in its freshness, determination, its excellent equipment.

The food ration cards came on 27 August 1939, quite suddenly. It was announced on the radio on Sunday morning.<sup>7</sup> At the same time the ration coupons arrived. After being assessed, you could get what you needed at certain times and places. On 4 September came the declaration of war from England and France. We didn't believe it right to the last! Now there was war again and the horrors of the World War had still not healed.

On 1 October, as a complete surprise, soap and clothing ration cards arrived, 100 points per person. 1m of fabric 94 cm wide e.g. cost 8 points, double the width 18 points, 1 pullover 25 points, 1 woman's suit 45 points, a woollen dress 40 points, 1 pair of stockings 4 points, 1 pair of gloves 5 points. A useful form stated what you can claim for one year e.g. for 100 points:<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> As a consequence of the infamous Munich Agreement in September 1938, Nazi Germany had annexed the Sudetenland, a substantial portion of Czechoslovak territory on the Germany border that was home to 3.5 million German speakers. In 1939, German pressure on the rump Czechoslovak state increased still further and by mid-March Germany had completely disposed of Czech sovereignty by imposing the so-called Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia. A small Slovak state emerged also which was sympathetic to the National Socialists, while remaining territories were annexed by Hungary and Poland.

<sup>5</sup> The elimination of Czechoslovakia was an important step towards Hitler's next objective, the invasion and dismemberment of Poland. Towards the end of the 1930s Germany massively increased pressure on the Polish government to cede the Free City of Danzig and the Polish Corridor separating the exclave of East Prussia from the rest of the Reich, and to guarantee the rights of "oppressed" ethnic Germans in Poland. Calculating that these demands would not be acceptable to the Poles, Hitler had instructed the military to prepare plans for an invasion which was launched on 1 September 1939. Since they had given guarantees to Poland to protect its territorial integrity, Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3 September.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Joachim Beutler, who seems to have been known within the family as Jochen. Later entries indicate that he is Charlotte's nephew, the son of her brother, Friedrich, and his wife, Anna.

<sup>7</sup> The figures for food rations, which were generally smaller in Germany than in Britain, are provided by Richard Overy: "Rationing was introduced for a wide range of goods in September 1939, although some goods, notably butter, had been rationed earlier than this. Only bread and potatoes remained unrationed, and bread was later rationed as well. The bread rations were set at a high level so that calorie intake would remain relatively stable early in the war, despite the disappearance of many foodstuffs and shortages of others; but the result was a monotonous, grain-based diet. Meat was restricted to 500 grammes a week per head, butter to 125 grammes, margarine to 100 grammes, sugar to 250 grammes, cheese to 62.5 grammes, and eggs to one a week. There were special rations for those with physically strenuous jobs and for night-shift workers. The standard ration for meat and fats was much the same as in Britain, but food rationing in Germany covered a wider range of products than in Britain and was introduced much earlier in the war." (Overy, R. J. *War and Economy in the Third Reich*, Oxford University Press, 1994. 283)

<sup>8</sup> It is useful to compare Charlotte's account with that of the professional historian. Richard Overy sets out the national clothing allowances in some detail, and again emphasizes that German conditions were harder than those in Britain: "Clothing was not only rationed but very difficult to obtain once stocks had been bought up. Sales of the textile industry fell 40-50 per cent in the first months of war, those of the clothing industry by 70 per cent. On 1 November 1939 clothes rationing was officially introduced to replace temporary controls on sales introduced in September. Each man and woman had a limited clothing allowance of 100 points a year. For women a dress cost 40 points, a suit 45 points, a blouse 15 points. For men a suit or coat cost 60 points, and could only be obtained, as could shoes, after giving up the old ones. This reduced average clothing consumption by half in 1940, and after stricter rationing in October 1941, to

Nov. Dec.	1 pair of stockings	4 points
	1 additional pair of stockings	8 points
	1 pair of knickers, wool	10 points
	1 girdle	8 points
Jan. Feb.	1 pair of stockings	4 points
March Apr.	1 set of underwear	12 points
	1 pair of men's trousers	10 points
May July	200 g yarn	14 points
	2 pairs of socks	8 points
Aug. Oct.	1 handkerchief	2 points
	1 skirt	<u>20 points</u>
		100 points for the year!

Lucky for those who had a well-stocked wardrobe – we didn't! And especially for those who had shoes. They're now an extra, only with a ration coupon.

This is how the year ended, fearful and full of real worries. Those dear, dear letters have not arrived since August. If we didn't have the good Frau L and news from her!

The only highlight was the birth of Sybille Schnabel on 20 August 1939. During the trip to the hospital, on the Avus,<sup>9</sup> Dorothee had the sudden idea: if it's a girl – Sybille – then we have d' Peta an' d' Billa<sup>10</sup> - real Schnabels – But no one writes to say we should come and see the little one, no one –

The year came to an end. On Christmas Eve, at the church service, all our thoughts were with the children far away. Life is so terribly hard – and one is so alone! On Christmas Day we were at the Zieglers and came home in the storm and rain – and were horrified at what we found. The spouting had frozen. In father's study everything was afloat, water was pouring from the ceiling. Vases, ashtrays were overflowing, the big rug was like a sponge. Everyone in the building helped to stop the flooding. It was dreadful! We didn't get to bed till 3 am. On the 26<sup>th</sup> Father called our guests to cancel and we worked until 2 in the afternoon to get the living room halfway clean. The top of the writing desk split, the big picture of Meissen, Dresden bubbled up, the oil paintings were full of water streaks, the copper plate of the smoking table was a mountain. Just unspeakable.

The new year, 1940, dawned. It was ice cold, as much as 33-34 degrees below zero.

Coal was short. It was 13 degrees in the house and we couldn't even warm ourselves up in bed. Potatoes were short because the tremendous cold meant the storage pits couldn't be opened up. Potato rationing came in: 1 pound per person per week. On one occasion that meant 7 big potatoes, 2 of which were frozen so that made 5. Like the little children lying in bed who roll over and one falls out. All the waterways are frozen over and in Berlin there are no vegetables available. We often obtained 50 pounds a week for Dorothee, but she had to send back the string, packing paper and cardboard because you can't get them anymore. Our paper shop provides ration cards for toilet paper,

---

a quarter of peacetime levels (against a fall of only 16 per cent in Britain during 1940). Quality also deteriorated with the compulsory use of synthetic materials. Other minor regulations were introduced to make sure clothes lasted as long as possible. Shoes or boots issued at work could not be worn outside the office or factory. Many families made do with clogs or metal and wood shoes, while government propaganda highlighted the importance of mending and making do." (ibid, 284.)

<sup>9</sup> Located in the southwest of Berlin, the AVUS (Automobil-, Verkehrs- und Übungsstraße) was opened in 1921, and was the first highway in the world reserved exclusively for automobile traffic.

<sup>10</sup> The German has a phonetic rendition of the children's names as they might be pronounced in Berlin dialect.

greaseproof paper, letter writing paper. Good Frau L sent tea, coffee, cocoa, soap and razor blades and pink wool for little Sybille. How can we thank her?

The months dragged by – skirmishes on the Siegfried Line, Maginot Line.<sup>11</sup> Sister Elisabeth has to give up the children, the boy to Würzburg, the girl to Munich.<sup>12</sup> They were waiting on their evacuation every day with packed bags of 30 pounds. They were too close to the Siegfried Line and could scarcely catch their breath. Column after column drove through, planes were roaring over the house, they could hear the thunder of guns day and nights. His country practice is unbelievably difficult, she gets all het up.

Zur Nieden is on active service again, transferred to Essen.<sup>13</sup>

Herr Hermes died quite suddenly from a stroke.<sup>14</sup>

On 9 April 1940 our troops marched quite suddenly into Norway and Denmark. Denmark surrendered, there was tough fighting in Norway.<sup>15</sup>

Frau L. wrote so sadly: they were on their own a lot and thought so much about the children far away and all their friends. – if only Hardy<sup>16</sup> for heaven's sake weren't to turn up unexpectedly one day.

On 10 May we occupied Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland. One couldn't believe it. As if a miracle had happened! After 20 days Belgium laid down its weapons, Holland already after 10.<sup>17</sup> All our thoughts are now with good Frau L. How terribly divided she must now feel!<sup>18</sup> Now everything came in a rush and one held one's breath. Jochen B. entered an undefended Paris.<sup>19</sup> His grandfather<sup>20</sup> was there in 1870, his father<sup>21</sup> didn't get there in 1918 but Jochen entered in 1940. 3 generations and every one a war!

On 6 June there came a request for a truce from Marshall Pétain to Germany and Stalin who had waited for the last trumpet blast and had entered the war.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The Siegfried Line in Germany (Ger. Westwall) and the Maginot Line in France were a complex series of fortifications designed to deter an attack from opposing forces. The French had invested vast sums in the creation of the Maginot Line in the inter-war period, but it proved of little use in countering highly mobile German units in 1940 who simply outflanked the line to the north.

<sup>12</sup> Sister Elisabeth may have been the family's nanny in earlier years.

<sup>13</sup> Dieter Zur Nieden (16 / 2 / 1918 – 26 / 7 / 1941). Zur Nieden, a native of Essen, was a lieutenant in the 1 Anti-Tank Company Unit 560. He was killed by machine gun and pistol fire at a line of Russian bunkers 3 kilometres southeast of Belotche on the Dniestr River in what is today Moldova. (*Kartei der Verlust- und Grabmeldungen gefallener deutscher Soldaten 1939-1945 (-1948)*, Bundesarchiv B 563-2 Kartei. Berlin, Deutschland: Deutsches Bundesarchiv.)

<sup>14</sup> This was probably Friedrich August Hermes (1867 – 1940). He was a resident of Vohwinkel in Wuppertal near Langenberg.

<sup>15</sup> Fighting in Denmark lasted only a few hours on the day of invasion. Norway capitulated on 10 June.

<sup>16</sup> Hardy Schmitz, a family friend.

<sup>17</sup> Belgium surrendered on 28 May 1940, preceded by the Netherlands on 17 May.

<sup>18</sup> Frau Laubmeyer was Dutch, but her husband was German. See the entry for October 1940.

<sup>19</sup> Paris had been declared an open city on 10 June 1940 and German troops marched in four days later.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Richard Beutler (? – 1910) was also Marianne Angermann's maternal grandfather.

<sup>21</sup> Friedrich Karl Moritz Christian Beutler (1886 – 1958). He was Marianne Angermann's maternal uncle.

<sup>22</sup> The request was made by Pétain, French hero of the First World War, on 17 June 1940. Marianne's mother here confuses Stalin and Mussolini, since the Soviet Union was never a belligerent in the war on France. Italy had entered the conflict on Germany's side on 10 June just as France was nearing defeat.

On 15<sup>th</sup> July 1940 the armistice was signed in the forest of Compiègne. We saw the film, just amazing.<sup>23</sup> Then the air attacks started both here and over there.<sup>24</sup> Night after night the poor people of the Rhineland<sup>25</sup>, Hamburg<sup>26</sup>, Bremen<sup>27</sup> were in their cellars. Frau Morgenstern's old parents in Godesberg<sup>28</sup> were hardly able to bear it. Frau Außem wrote that she was dead tired and couldn't do anything during the day. Grete Funke-Nieden in Essen has had it, and all the guesthouses here are full of Rhinelanders who just want to sleep. In Bonn, the street sweepers are cleaning up the flak shrapnel, fruit and roof tiles in the morning. The sirens went off in Berlin once.<sup>29</sup> They were all asleep at the Schnabels. And then there was Peter standing by Dorothee's bed: Mum, there's an air-raid, hurry and take Lillie down to the cellar. It hadn't disturbed his composure! Day after day we read of the terrible air-raids on England. We thought there can't be a single stone left standing on another over there. And how much we are thinking of you. Whether you are still alive, whether you have enough to eat, whether you have a bed. It is almost unbearable, but outwardly we are always calm. One gets so terribly tired and thinks: why bother getting up in the morning? Just one word, one sign of life [from you]. And we just sit here so quietly and can do nothing, nothing to help.

One experiences everything over again when writing it out, so that one scarcely catches one's breath, and yet all sorts of personal things have still been forgotten. On 6 February 1940 for example we had a second flooding disaster, once again a broken pipe, much worse than the first time, the study, the dining room, half the bedroom under water, indescribable. Two walls were warped and in May we had to clear out the apartment for

---

<sup>23</sup> The armistice that brought World War One to an end was signed on 11 November 1918 in a railway carriage in Compiègne Forest. Since the National Socialists came into existence to avenge what they saw as the national humiliation of their defeat, it was important for them to stage the French surrender in theatrical terms. The original railway carriage was transported back to Compiègne Forest where French defeat was formally acknowledged on 22 June in the presence of Hitler.

<sup>24</sup> At the beginning of the war Britain and France, at the behest of President Roosevelt, had ruled out attacking any undefended towns or bombing any targets which risked incurring civilian casualties. Effectively, that meant aerial warfare was restricted to naval vessels which were under steam or at anchor in harbours. (Middlebrook, Martin, and Chris Everitt. *The Bomber Command War Diaries. An Operational Reference Book 1939 - 1945*. New York: Viking, 1985. p. 11) This policy changed rapidly after the German attack on France on 10 May, 1940. On 15 May the British War Cabinet voted to extend the scope of bombing beyond military targets to include Germany's industrial capacity. This date therefore marks the start of the Allied strategic bombing campaign. (BCWD, 40)

<sup>25</sup> The heavily industrialised areas of the Rhineland would be a frequent target of Allied aircraft from 15 May 1940 until their occupation in early 1945. The first major raid on the Ruhr area of the Rhineland came on the night of 15-16 May when 99 aircraft attacked 16 different targets including factories at Dortmund, Sterkrade and Castrop-Rauxel. (BCWD, 43)

<sup>26</sup> Hamburg was first targeted in a bombing raid on the night of 17-18 May 1940 when 34 people were killed and 72 injured. (BCWD, 44)

<sup>27</sup> The first bombing raid on Bremen was on the night of 17-18 May 1940 when 13 people were killed. Fires were started which destroyed warehouses holding the furniture confiscated from emigrating Jews. (BCWD, 44)

<sup>28</sup> Bad Godesberg is located just to the southwest of Bonn and Cologne. As Cologne was the target of persistent heavy raids from May 1940 onwards – 20 000 of its citizens were to die from bombs and artillery shells during the war (BCWD, 43) – frequent air-raid sirens would also have made sleep difficult for the residents of Bad Godesberg.

<sup>29</sup> The first bombing raid on Berlin was carried out on 25-26 August 1940. The only bombs falling within the city limits destroyed a wooden summerhouse in a garden in the district of Rosenthal, and two people were slightly injured. Many bombs fell in the country area south of the city, some on large farms owned by the city. According to the Bomber Command War Diaries, Berlin was a specific target in a further 18 raids during the remainder of 1940. (BCWD, 76-77)

9 weeks, worse than shifting, all the furniture stored in the attic. We were exhausted. The apartment was cramped, sunless, the beds were bad, the weather cold and dismal. One just froze, nothing more. Eating out was expensive and food so dreadfully scarce, 3 half potatoes. Time dragged by, we had no help, there were no workers. It was a terrible struggle, doing everything on one's own: clearing out the building waste because 2 walls had to be redone, 3 ceilings replastered, 2 walls given new insulation. The cleaning woman couldn't wash the blinds because they clattered so much! We did it ourselves. Our strength wouldn't hold out any longer [we thought], all this slaving from morning till night. But it passed, as does so much in life that at first seems like a huge mountain, and on 23 July we were completely finished, as far as that's possible at the moment, and everything was again in order.

The apartment is clean and very cosy. The renovations cost almost 3 000 M: 2 complete new walls, 2 walls re-insulated, 3 new ceilings, everything re-wallpapered, the parquet resurfaced. One has nothing more than one's 4 walls, and some people don't even have that. Do you have them? Dear child, we think of you constantly: now Uncle Fritz has been transferred to Dresden again, as a division head in the ministry. The local branch of the Reich Audit Office has been transferred from Leipzig to Dresden as the Sudetenland now falls under its control.<sup>30</sup> They are living very poshly, Lipsiusstrasse,<sup>31</sup> big garden, a huge apartment, old and magnificent. Dark, a rabbit warren, not at all comfortable. We don't see each other very often. We think they are being cautious! Jochen is with the army, Erika has finished her Abitur and work service<sup>32</sup> and is enrolled for the technical university on

---

<sup>30</sup> The Fritz in question here was Friedrich Karl Moritz Christian Beutler (1886 – 1958), Charlotte's brother. The Sudetenland was an area formerly belonging to Czechoslovakia which had a significant ethnic German population. It had been forcibly annexed to the Reich in 1938. Dresden is closer to this area than Leipzig, so presumably the office relocation had been for greater ease of access. Though it had existed already in the Weimar Republic, legislative reform after 1933 greatly reduced the independence of the Reich Audit Office by bringing it under the control of the new National Socialist government and providing it with a strict hierarchical structure to reflect the Nazis' adherence to the Führerprinzip (Führer principle). Further changes dissolved the independent regional auditing offices and turned them into mere branch offices. (These were the 'Außenstellen' or local branches that Charlotte mentions here.) Since the Nazi government had power to set and pass its own budgets after 1933, control of the Audit Office meant that the National Socialists were in the position of being their own financial inspectors. Although Reich auditors retained nominal independence, in reality there was no oversight of government finances: even payments to the Party were agreed between the director of the Audit Office and the Party treasurer and audited only by the institution receiving the funds (Bergel, Philipp. *Rechnungshöfe als vierte Staatsgewalt? Verfassungsvergleich der Rechnungshöfe Deutschlands, Frankreichs, Österreichs, Spaniens, des Vereinigten Königreichs und des Europäischen Rechnungshofs im Gefüge der Gewaltenteilung*. Götting: Univ.-Verlag Göttingen, 2010. pp. 13 – 14.) Götz Aly points out that Nazi objectives often ended up being optimised as a result of the conflicts between impatient Party reformers and bureaucrats – such as auditors – who insisted on adhering strictly to protocol. He cites the example of the Judenbuße (Jewish Levy), a fine announced by Göring in 1938 in which he sought to extract 1 billion Reichsmarks from German Jews. The Finance Ministry reworked this decree into a series of four compulsory instalments over a year that ended up collecting more cash than originally foreseen by Göring. It was in this spirit of profit maximisation, writes Aly, that the Reich Audit Office, for which Friedrich Beutler worked, managed the expropriation of the Belgrade Jews, the administration of the deportation camps for Dutch Jews, and oversight of the Lodz Ghetto in Poland. (Aly, Götz. *Hitlers Volksstaat*. Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 2006. 18.)

<sup>31</sup> A street in the Johannstadt district to the east of the Old Town of Dresden. The Beutlers lived at no. 10 on the ground floor. (*Adreßbuch der Landeshauptstadt Dresden-Freital-Radebeul, mit umliegenden 6 Städten und 24 Gemeinden Dohna, Heidenau, Klotzsche, Rabenau, Tharandt*. Deutsche National Bibliothek; Leipzig, Deutschland; Publisher: *Güntzsche Stiftg.*; Bestand: 1941; Signatur: ZC 2382)

<sup>32</sup> From February 1934, any woman intending to study at an institution of higher learning had to complete ten weeks of Arbeitsdienst (labour service), a period that was increased to six months from 1935. (Klinksiek, Dorothee. *Die Frau im NS-Staat*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010. 43).

1<sup>st</sup> September. She wants to study chemistry. Will she last it? August was a tough month. Aunt Gretel, at 82, was here for 3 weeks. She still thinks we're young and doesn't understand that we can't run and jump about the whole day anymore. Especially with my bad feet. Aunt Gretel is unpleasant, she complains from morning till night, although the Chemnitzers with their fat wallets and their country estate don't have anything to worry about<sup>33</sup> -

Mary Piegler is with us a lot.<sup>34</sup> Her husband died in May. Now she's sitting alone in their little house. But she is very canny, pays few taxes, rents out every little corner. We are worlds apart in our views. She is a German Christian, "curses" her English mother and so on.<sup>35</sup> We often breathe a sigh of relief when the door closes behind her and everything had gone well. She is counting on our planes razing England to the ground so that we can easily land and in 4 weeks at the most finish everything off. It must be dreadful at the moment. On 28 / 8 there were bombers over Sheffield.<sup>36</sup> Were you unharmed? Those poor parents in London!<sup>37</sup> And now English planes are over Berlin every day, on the edge of the city, in the central city, over Neu-Kölln.<sup>38</sup> Dorothee has been in the Zugspitz village Unter-Greinau for 5 weeks already.<sup>39</sup> We're surprised that she's left Ernst on his own for so long. Who is looking after him? We don't know anything. And how we could help. Uncle Adolar is here.<sup>40</sup> He's a major in the District Air Command, Dresden. He lives in the

---

<sup>33</sup> The 'Chemnitzers' were the branch of the Beutler family from the city of Chemnitz in Saxony. They were well-to-do and owned the estate of Herold near the town of Thum. It is not possible to identify 'Aunt Gretel' with any certainty. 'Gretel' is derived from 'Margarethe', so the closest individual may be Charlotte's paternal aunt, Agnes Margarethe Beutler (1861 - 1941).

<sup>34</sup> Throughout the journal Charlotte refers to 'Mary' Piegler, but her name on her husband's death certificate is given as May Emily Piegler *née* Hacker. She had married in 1934 when her husband was already 67 years old. They lived at 32 Neidenburger Straße - today, the Großschönauer Straße - in the eastern district of Bühlau. Gottfried Leopold Arthur Piegler (Schleiz in Thuringia 23 / 9 / 1866 - Dresden 14 / 5 / 1940) was a commercial agent. (Stadtarchiv der Landeshauptstadt Dresden; Dresden, Deutschland; 6.4.25 *Sterberegister/ Sterbefallanzeigen*)

<sup>35</sup> 'Deutsche Christen' ('German Christians') were a National Socialist-inspired faith movement within the Protestant Church in Germany. Its aim was to combine the 28 different regional churches and movements within the Church under the banner of a Nazi ideology that foregrounded the unifying role of the Führer. A resolution passed at the Prussian General Synod in 1933, which called for all ministers to prove that they were "Aryans" ("ethnically pure" Germans), led to a split within the Church and the formation of the anti-Nazi Bekennende Kirche (Confessing Church). The German Christian movement eventually fell apart into various smaller factions. (Kammer, Hilde, and Elisabeth Bartsch. *Lexikon Nationalsozialismus. Begriffe, Organisationen und Institutionen*. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1999. p. 59 ff) The history of the national Church was reflected at the regional level in Saxony where the local party encouraged the Church to reconfigure itself as a new National, German Protestantism. In line with these developments, in 1934 [!] the Frauenkirche in Dresden was made the cathedral of the Landesbischof (regional bishop), Friedrich Coch, who was the leader of the German Christian faction within the Saxon Lutheran Church. Subsequently, the church would become "the venue of the sharpest disputes between the collaborating nationalist and anti-Semitic Deutsche Christen and a resisting Bekennende Kirche (Confessing Church) movement that was supported by a significant number of Saxon theologians." (Sorensen, Marie Louise Stig, and Dacia Viejo-Rose, eds. *War and Cultural Heritage. Biographies of Place*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. p. 117.) See also Charlotte's entries for Christmas 1942 and 21 May 1945.

<sup>36</sup> London, Liverpool and the Midlands were also heavily bombed on this day. <https://www.battle-of-britain.org.uk/history/august-1940-day-by-day> [Accessed: 15 December 2021]

<sup>37</sup> Charlotte refers here to Franz's parents who had both managed to leave Germany for Britain.

<sup>38</sup> A suburb of Berlin to the southeast of the city centre.

<sup>39</sup> Untergrainau is a small municipality in lower Bavaria at the foot of the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain.

<sup>40</sup> Adolar Edgar Theodor Angermann, (1884 - ?), first cousin of Konrad Angermann.

doctor's house in Blasewitz,<sup>41</sup> works in Strehlen<sup>42</sup> and flies from Heller.<sup>43</sup> He is still the same reliable old fellow. He is an aerial photographer. He was in Hela [?], in Sweden and in Kiel. His eldest, Edgar, is a signals pilot.<sup>44</sup> He suffers greatly from the death of his 12 year-old.<sup>45</sup> He went off healthy and happy in the afternoon to the Hitler Youth and never returned home. The next day he was found dead on the railway tracks. Whether an accident, suicide, murder we don't know. It seems he can't talk about it. The poor things

–

Aunt Ottilie,<sup>46</sup> with her 83 years, is still holding the whole family together, sharp as a pin. Hilde<sup>47</sup> is working herself to the bone for the Party. Otti and Rehse<sup>48</sup> are living quietly like us. Edgar<sup>49</sup> has been in Danzig, in Bergen and is now in The Hague as an economics officer. Konstantin<sup>50</sup> has been in active service, chief staff surgeon, the lovely house in Hemer<sup>51</sup> has been sold. Ilse<sup>52</sup> is now 26, a Red Cross sister in Belgium. Günther is with an anti-tank unit. Margarethe, 20, is in a munitions factory!<sup>53</sup> The Freibergers<sup>54</sup> are all in the army, sons, sons-in-law and grandsons.

Ernst [Schnabel] has been mustered out, temporarily in a reserved occupation because his business is critical for the war.<sup>55</sup> In May he was in Jüterbog<sup>56</sup> for 6 weeks, they flew him in for machines of every size and now on Saturdays and Sundays he retrieves military planes. How long still before he'll have to go to the front as a pilot? [On missions] to you over there, always on the way to you over there, oh if we should at least be spared that. Just what is going to happen?

September 1940

Today, 9 September, is your wedding anniversary! We wonder how you are? We can send you no loving words, cannot provide the slightest joy for you. Will we see each other again in this life? Dear child, how we long for you –

---

<sup>41</sup> An eastern suburb of Dresden on the Elbe River.

<sup>42</sup> A suburb in south-central Dresden.

<sup>43</sup> In 1926 a new airport was built on the Heller, a sandy open area to the north of the city. Because this area had long been used for military exercises, the German army sought the removal of the civilian airport, which was relocated to Klotzsche, slightly further to the north, in 1934. (Starke, Holger. „Dresden in der Weimarer Republik. Wirtschaft und Verkehr“ In: Starke, Holger, ed. *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden. Von der Reichsgründung bis zur Gegenwart*. Vol. 3. Dresden: Stadt Dresden, 2006. 284 – 298. Here, 290)

<sup>44</sup> Edgar Angermann (8 / 9 / 1921 – 7 / 11 / 1942), member of a Luftwaffe Signals Regiment.

<sup>45</sup> The reference is to a son of Adolar Angermann. Unfortunately, the historical record is blank concerning the death of this boy.

<sup>46</sup> Ottilie Angermann *née* Brockhaus, (1858 - 1960). An aunt of Konrad Angermann.

<sup>47</sup> Hildegard Ottilie Amalie Angermann (1883 – 1964), daughter of Ottilie and Edgar Angermann.

<sup>48</sup> Information in Charlotte's family tree is insufficient to allow these two people to be identified. Charlotte makes a reference to Rehse's membership of the notorious Volksgerichtshof (People's Court), a tribunal that dealt with resistance to Nazi rule. See the annotated family tree at the end of this journal for a discussion of this possibility.

<sup>49</sup> Edgar Ludwig Theodor Angermann (1882 – 1963), a first cousin of Konrad Angermann.

<sup>50</sup> Konstantin Angermann (1886 – 1974), a first cousin of Konrad Angermann.

<sup>51</sup> A town in North Rhine/Westphalia around 30 km southwest of Dortmund.

<sup>52</sup> Daughter of Konstantin Angermann.

<sup>53</sup> Presumably Günther and Margarethe are also the children of the aforementioned Konstantin Angermann.

<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, Charlotte's sketch of the family tree does not allow this branch of the family to be identified. Freiberg is a town in Saxony about 35 km southwest of Dresden.

<sup>55</sup> Later entries indicate that he was in the aviation business.

<sup>56</sup> A former military air base in Brandenburg.



11<sup>th</sup> September: how terrible the reports from London are.<sup>57</sup> How long will it go on for? The Stukas' sirens are said to drive people and animals mad with their howling.<sup>58</sup> This morning I found your dear picture had fallen over. Child, if something has happened to you – One does one's duty mechanically, the endless worries make one so unspeakably tired. – It must have been dreadful in Berlin last night.<sup>59</sup> Bombs on the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, the Academy of Arts, the House of the VDJ,<sup>60</sup> residential districts attacked. Now we are concerned about Dorothee. She was with the children in the Tyrol,<sup>61</sup> they needed to eat their fill after this awful winter. Now she has left the children there with the nanny. She wanted so much to be with Ernst, and quite rightly.

In October 1940

One month passes like another, dreary and sad. Now dear Herr Laubmeyer is dead and you don't know it.<sup>62</sup> Right up to the end he said: "Marianne is our fourth child." He was cremated. And once all 3 children get there they'll strew his ashes to all 4 winds according to his wishes. What is a grave today, she<sup>63</sup> writes sadly, and where is our Fatherland, our homeland? It has been so hard for her! He lay in hospital in Leyden for 15 weeks. None of the children got a visa to see their terminally ill father again. None could go to the funeral. At the hour of death only Hardy Schmitz was with her, who was an air force captain in Holland at the time. There's so little one can say to each other: I can only write 2 pages. I have to go to the Post Office with my passport to check that it's the same handwriting<sup>64</sup> -

Peter is already 5 years old. Dorothee was in Grainau for the birthday. Sybille is a sweet thing. She has eyes just like yours. We saw the wee thing [just] once! Oh, how our flyers are buzzing over us tonight. Child, child – if only there were peace! The second year of the war is coming to an end! What we would give for a single word from you.

---

<sup>57</sup> On 7 September 1940 the Luftwaffe began an intensive bombing campaign (the Blitz) which targeted population centres in Britain, especially London. Attacks on London, including the use of V1 and V2 missiles, continued until May 1945. It is estimated that by December 1943 already over 977 000 houses in the Greater London area had been damaged (42% of the total) with over 60 000 completely destroyed. (See: Marmaras, Emmanuel V. "The War Damages and the Problems of Central Areas." *Planning London for the Post-War Era 1945-1960*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2015. 15-23.) Around 30 000 Londoners were killed by German bombs during the war, half of all UK civilian air raid fatalities. (Dear, M, and M.R.D. Foot, eds. *The Oxford Companion to World War II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. p. 886.)

<sup>58</sup> Stuka is an abbreviation of Sturzkampfflugzeug i.e. dive-bomber. Sirens built into the wheel cowlings operated under air pressure during a dive to produce a high-pitched scream.

<sup>59</sup> There was a small attack by 17 aircraft on the Potsdamer Bahnhof (railway station) in Berlin on the night of 10 / 11 September. (BCWD 81)

<sup>60</sup> VDJ (or VdJ) was an abbreviation for Volksdeutsche Jugend (National German Youth). The expression was used to define a specific social grouping rather than a National Socialist organisation. It may be that Charlotte meant to refer to the Haus der Reichsjugendführung (House of the Reich Youth Leadership), a converted department store at Lothringer Straße 1 (today, Torstraße 1). The Reichsjugendführung was the body with overall responsibility for the Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth – for boys aged 14-18), Jungvolk (for boys aged 10 – 14) and Bund Deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls – for those aged 14 – 18).

<sup>61</sup> A region of western Austria and northern Italy. After the war, Dorothea Schnabel and her family settled in the Italian city of Merano in South Tyrol.

<sup>62</sup> Conrad Julius Laubmeyer (Königsberg, Hesse 6 / 2 / 1866 – Leiden, Netherlands 19 / 9 / 1940). Conrad was the husband of the Angermanns' frequent correspondent "Frau L".

<sup>63</sup> That is, Frau Laubmeyer.

<sup>64</sup> This must have been to fulfill a censorship requirement, and ensure that Charlotte was not passing on a message to Marianne from a third party.

December 1940

Child, it is really going to be Christmas again, even this year! The park is like an enchanted forest. Not to be able to walk through it with you just once! How often we say: to come into the room just once and you would be sitting on your blue armchair or on your little brown sofa – that will probably never, ever happen. If you only knew how much we long for you – We couldn't light an advent wreath, our hearts were too heavy. The war goes on. The children are still in Grainau. We send Dorothee vegetables so that they don't have to eat cabbage every day. Father is losing weight terribly. In his clothes he still weighs 132 pounds. He's getting so old and quiet. My gallbladder is really giving me gip. And the darkness both outside and in falls so heavily on the soul. What, actually, is the point of getting up in the morning?

Dear, dear child, today is 14 / 12. In the newspaper there was a big story "Massive attack on Sheffield, waves of sorties on heavy industry with great success".<sup>65</sup> Child, one's heart stands still. What awful things you must have experienced. And are you still alive? One is so dreadfully worried. What we would give for a single word. If only you had followed Frau Laubmeyer's advice back then.<sup>66</sup> How are the parents doing, the lonely old grandmother?<sup>67</sup> We don't have a single agreeable thought, we are only thinking: Why? Ernst is in Paris on business. On the way back he is picking up a French airplane in Bordeaux. May God grant that he gets home safely. It's so cold and stormy outside. We hardly have any coal, we can only get a fire going at 2 o'clock and at around 7 it's gone cold again. We're always so tired and we're freezing as if we had a layer of ice in our heads. I'm not baking for Christmas, I'd rather leave the bit of fat we have for Father to eat. I am really worried. Child, if he could just hold you once more he'd be healthy again. Until we fall asleep at night – [we are thinking] are you together or interned? Do you have a warm room, a bed, clothes, shoes, food? Do you? And in 10 days it's supposed to be Christmas. The Schnabels are travelling to Grainau on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Peter is skiing, and Sybille says, when she wants to get something open or lift something up, "heave ho" like the woodcutters in the Bavarian Forest. Dorothee can't get a maid, she has to take a girl doing her year of obligatory labour,<sup>68</sup> the daughter of a senior railway official. Of course she's only half-

---

<sup>65</sup> The most serious German attacks on Sheffield occurred on the nights of 12-13 and 15-16 December 1940. Casualties were heavy with nearly 700 killed. Around 82 000 homes out of a total of 152 000 were damaged. (See: Sheffield City Council. "Sources for the Study of the Sheffield Blitz of 1940." Ed. Sheffield Libraries Archives and Information. Sheffield: Sheffield City Council, 2016.) Charlotte preserved several news clippings from December 1940 in her journal which report on the German raids on Sheffield. The source of the two articles from 14 December cannot be identified, but Charlotte's gloss of their headlines gives an accurate impression of their triumphant tone: Clipping 1. "Sheffield the city of Great Britain's heaviest armaments. Berlin, 14 December (special report). The systematic destruction of British armaments potential is continuing ruthlessly." Clipping 2. "City of heavy industry in flames. Deathly silence over Sheffield. Attack has same effect as in Coventry. Berlin, 14 December. On the night of 12-13 December, Sheffield, the centre of British heavy industry [...] was struck by a major attack from German combat units."

<sup>66</sup> Perhaps this refers to the attempt to persuade Franz and Marianne to emigrate from war-torn Madrid to Honduras where, Charlotte had claimed, work was available for a medical practitioner. See entry for 22 October 1938.

<sup>67</sup> Franz's maternal grandmother, Bertha Schlesinger. See entry for 12 February 1941.

<sup>68</sup> A Pflichtjahr (obligatory year) for young women had been introduced as part of the Nazis' four-year plan mainly, though not exclusively, to compensate for a shortage of female workers in agriculture. From 1 January 1939 all single women up to the age of 25 were required to do an obligatory year, though it was generally served after an apprenticeship. Skilled women on their obligatory year could be transferred at short notice to work in an essential industry. (Klinksiek, 52 – 53.)

time. If only you were both here right now. – Father has air-raid [practice] tonight. A clerk is going to explain the air-raid legislation.

29 / 12 / 40 Well it was Christmas again, thank God that it's over! We were all on our own. And I just didn't get around to writing in your book. No word from you! A lot of people got 20 words from the Red Cross. But in our case everything is so gloomy, so hard. You won't have dared because of us, and we don't dare because of you. On Christmas Eve we went to the evening service and then recklessly ran a big, hot bath, sat close to the oven in "the kitchen" where it was warm and went to bed and read. I'm reading a lot at the moment about Napoleon. Often one stops and says to oneself: "today".<sup>69</sup> How our thoughts were with you. It's good that you had a quiet night.<sup>70</sup> How you must be tired and nervous. We have had it good, undeservedly. We were in the cellar 6 times. In the Old Town an apartment building was hit at 36 Wernerstraße, during a raid on the main railway station.<sup>71</sup> But it's bad in Berlin! Opposite Dorothee, the little coach-house is gone. Bombs have fallen on Osdorferstraße<sup>72</sup> where Frau Schieber lives. The Botho Schwerin Hospital<sup>73</sup> had to be evacuated for 14 days because of an unexploded bomb. The Charité,<sup>74</sup> the State Hospital and many others are damaged.<sup>75</sup> The cathedral is said to look bad and the lovely old City Castle in Mannheim.<sup>76</sup> Just why can we not keep the peace? All this senseless destruction in the world. The cultural and industrial treasures that are being destroyed. In infant care sessions and in schools children are receiving vitamin supplements and any natural way of eating has gone out the window. Life has become so senseless. Ernst came home at the last moment from Paris. He just brought a suitcase of oranges and chocolate for the children. Everything else was too scarce and expensive. People are queuing up in the shops. Dorothee queued for 4 ½ hours for a train ticket. She sent such lovely pictures of the children. Peter is enormous, healthy and robust. The little one is quite delightful, clear skin, red cheeks, quite big blue eyes, black eyebrows and an almost white head of curls. Like a pastel drawing. But with the energy and independence of two. If we could only be together with the children. But we've only got enough to get by from day to day. If one were to get sick one wouldn't know what was going to happen. How different we thought our old age was going to be.

---

<sup>69</sup> i.e., the history of Napoleon appears to be repeating itself "today".

<sup>70</sup> Charlotte had obviously not heard any reports of air raids on Sheffield that day.

<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately, the Bomber Command War Diaries do not specify many of the German towns targeted in late December 1940.

<sup>72</sup> A main road in Berlin-Lichterfelde, close to where Charlotte's daughter, Dorothee, and her family lived.

<sup>73</sup> Graf-Botho-Schwerin-Krankenhaus. Later renamed the Königswarter Krankenhaus, this hospital was situated on the Königsberger Straße in Lichterfelde in the southwest of Berlin. The building was demolished in 2018.

<sup>74</sup> One of Germany's, and Europe's, most famous teaching hospitals. In 1940, most of its buildings were located in the centre of Berlin.

<sup>75</sup> Berlin was targeted on the night of 15 – 16 December along with Frankfurt and Kiel. The RAF was still very inexperienced at this stage of the war which shows in their results for the two raids prior to December: on 14-15 November only half the aircraft reached Berlin, while on 6-7 November only one plane managed to do so. (BCWD, 95 ff)

<sup>76</sup> Mannheim was targeted in Operation Abigail Rachel on the night of 16 – 17 December in retaliation for German attacks on cities such as Southampton and Coventry. It was the largest raid organised by the RAF to date, and the first time a mainly civilian target was selected. The raid was not considered a success by the RAF as they did not manage to create the firestorm they had intended. Bombs fell mostly in residential areas; 1266 people had their homes destroyed and 34 were killed. Mannheim was the subject of three subsequent raids in December. (BCWD, 111-113)

New Year's Eve 1940. The old year is coming quietly to a close, dear child. We went to church in the deep snow and icy wind. We set ourselves up in the kitchen around the half-warm stove for dinner because it is only 11 degrees in the other rooms and now we want a hot bath and to go to bed just to get warm for once during the day. We want to sleep through the New Year ... All our thoughts are with you. What may the New Year bring to us all? Peace is still so far off. And when will we see you again, when? Child, how hard and tough life is. May God grant that you remain healthy and see it through. For if there is justice then finally, finally the sun will have to shine into your lives –