

9 January 1941. Now everything is over, Christmas, New Year, only the worries have stayed the same – It snows and snows, you can hardly get out the door. From Chemnitz to Dresden takes 15 hours. People coming from Munich are deposited at Hof¹ and only the military travels on. To get from Munich to Berlin took Ernst from Saturday morning till Sunday evening. We're staying quietly at home and only attend to what is necessary due to the weather and money. Inflation is terrible! Today I bought something on the doorstep because the poor woman wept so bitterly: 1 m of narrow, white elastic, something quite, quite rare; 1 little card of grey darning wool; 1 strip of half-linen; one pair of shoe laces – 1 mark 58 pfennigs! Deductions and the increase in the cost of living have reduced our income by 46% at the moment.² The worst is the freezing cold. Coal is so short that it scarcely gets above 11 or 12 degrees in the apartment. From the feet to the knees it's like ice and even in bed you can't get warm. My gallbladder is taking everything badly: the cold, the margarine, Savoy cabbage and white cabbage. Father does most of the shopping. Today he came back with "nothing", not even soup greens.³ Cooking has become an art again. I'm writing everything "new" in my "Old Cookbook" for you. It's good that Father is modest. How else would we get on? We're always thinking about moving again. A living room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom would be enough. Why have a guest room and a dining room? You get so tired of everything when you have one child so far away and the other child hardly cares about its parents. -

16 / 1 / 41 We read in the evening paper that there's a shortage of doctors in England and that according to a government decree foreign doctors are to be immediately admitted to practice and employed in hospitals. All our thoughts are with you. Perhaps

¹ A town in north-eastern Bavaria.

² Charlotte's willingness to buy these meagre items stems from the major shortages consumers experienced in Germany's wartime economy. For some decades after 1945 orthodox opinion held that the German economy in the first years of the war was managed much as it was in peace-time: since Hitler wished to retain popular support, he was reluctant to limit the consumer economy or draft women into the workforce. It was these considerations, so the argument ran, that inspired the Nazis' Blitzkrieg (lightning war) strategy which required only short but intense periods of war-related production. German consumers such as the Angermanns, therefore, were no less constrained in their habits than they had been prior to the outbreak of war. Recent analysis by historians such as Richard Overy has come to a different conclusion altogether: "The impact on the German consumer between 1939 and 1941 was not 'very small'. Civilian consumer standards were cut by a considerably wider margin than in Britain. Labour was diverted to war tasks well before the Speer era, so that by the summer of 1941 almost two-thirds of the industrial workforce were working on military supplies and war work. The proportion of women in the German workforce remained higher than that in Britain throughout the war." (Overy, R.J. *War and Economy in the Third Reich*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. 261)

The statistics certainly bear out Charlotte's complaint here that deductions (taxation of all types) had greatly reduced their capacity to spend. Between 1939 and 1941 anyone earning between 1 500 and 3 000 marks a year faced a 20 percent increase in tax; those with an annual income between 3 000 and 5 000 marks saw tax increase by 55 percent. (ibid, 271) For the Nazis, a radical reduction in the production of consumer goods was necessary both to repurpose industrial plant for the production of armaments and to channel surplus income into savings and investment. In 1940, for example, some 13 billion Reichsmarks were removed from the consumer economy (a figure which included 5 billion Rm in the clothing sector and 4 – 5 billion Rm in foodstuffs) with the aim of redirecting this financial resource to the war effort. (ibid, 275) When any goods, such as the minor haberdashery items mentioned in this entry, become scarce it inevitably leads to a rise in prices. By October 1941 consumption of clothing was only one quarter what it had been in peace-time; prices increased 30% between 1939 and 1942 while quality had deteriorated due to the requirement to use synthetic materials (ibid, 284) – hence Charlotte's willingness to buy the necessary materials for patching and mending.

³ Availability of basic foodstuffs was a constant problem, writes Overy: "Supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables [...] were irregular and of poor quality". (ibid, 284)

Franz has been given a position in which he can finally apply his wealth of knowledge and you have a secure income.⁴ How we wish that with all our hearts. It's almost as if we could breathe a little more freely! And us? We're worried about our allies.⁵ They've given up Bardia,⁶ now we're waiting on Tobruk.⁷ And our brave soldiers are now supposed to pluck the coals out of the fire for them. What sacrifices that will cost us! It is icy cold, 12 degrees. Father is sitting by the lukewarm heating in the hope that it must provide some warmth. Some days we don't even raise the blinds, the icy wind is so cutting. Father is getting terribly thin and I am so tired, child. Today, Frau Laubmeyer wrote that she got express letters from Helma and Clara on Christmas Eve and had an advent wreath from the big fir tree in the garden which had been broken off by a storm. We had no word from Dorothee, on 3 / 1 / 41 a short letter. Oh dear child, how lonely we are, how lonely -

12 / 2 / 41 Time passes, dear child, one can barely keep up. One day like the next, sad and dreary, no word from you! Do you know or sense how often we are thinking of you? Can't you find a way to send us a message. Child, how terribly we yearn for you. Are you healthy, do you have a home to live in? One doesn't feel at home in life anymore. And the question of Why? is gigantic. I'm constantly thinking of the old grandmother, of her awful

⁴ Though Charlotte was not to know this, by this time Franz had indeed secured a research position at the University of Sheffield.

⁵ The German ally meant here was Italy.

⁶ Bardiyah, a harbour town in the east of Libya on the border with Egypt. The site of an Italian fortress, it was captured by the Allies in early January 1941.

⁷ A harbour town in Cyrenaica, eastern Libya, 120 km to the west of Bardiyah. Another Italian strongpoint, Tobruk fell to Australian forces on January 22, 1941. It was taken by the Germans in June 1942 before being finally being recaptured by the Allies in November 1942.

loneliness.⁸ How I hope that she has passed on. And how is the sick father, the mother.⁹ One doesn't think clearly anymore, day and night, although one is so terribly tired in both body and soul. The household consumes so much energy. We have no help and there's so much running around. For meat, for bones, for sausage, a separate trip for each. One day we have to drag around 10 pounds of potatoes, the next vegetables, the third day all the rations for the month. Every day looking in vain to see whether there's any fish – we had the last lot on 10th July 1940 – and the prices! I always say we didn't have it this bad in the World War. Was it because we were younger? That we had you children? Now it's unspeakably dismal and difficult. Thank God it's spring in 6 weeks. The freezing cold, the shortage of coal makes me so tired and dull. And to think you are colder still, you have even less to eat and that you – still miserable from Spain – are even more tired. Child, what's it all in aid of?

12 / 4 / 41 Easter Saturday. Dear child, are you celebrating as well? My thoughts are with you so much, with you and with Dorothee. If only I knew where I should look for you if I were to get one word from you. For weeks I haven't opened this book. To what end? My heart is so unspeakably heavy, what in God's name is going to happen? Will there ever be peace again in the world? We went to see the film *Victory in the West*.¹⁰ So brutal that for

⁸ Charlotte must be referring to Franz's maternal grandmother, Bertha Schlesinger née Guttentag (1856 – 1941), since his paternal grandparents, Edouard and Natalie, had been dead for many years at the time of writing. Bertha Schlesinger's lot was indeed a tragic one; an elderly Jewish widow, she died on 15th May at the age of 85 in Breslau – three months after this entry was written. The cause of death was suicide from an overdose of sleeping pills. Her death certificate gives her middle name as "Sara", an identifier that had been imposed on all Jewish females by the Nazis. (Landesarchiv Berlin; Berlin, Deutschland; *Personenstandsregister 1876-1945*; laufende Nummer: 7569) The place of Bertha Schlesinger's death was no. 9 Wallstraße (now Pawła Włodkowica). This was the administrative headquarters of the Jewish Community Centre located in the precincts of the Synagogue "Zum Weißen Storch" ("White Stork") which had been gutted by fire during the Kristallnacht pogrom on the night of 9 November 1938 and demolished the next day. It was here that most of Jewish life in Breslau began to be concentrated as the Nazis pursued their reign of terror. On 1 January 1939 a national Decree on the Provision of Care for Jews (Verordnung über die Fürsorge der Juden) meant that no state funded care services could be provided to Jews. Those who were infirm or unwell and in state, church or private institutions now needed to be transferred en masse to Jewish care. By the end of 1939 both the Jewish hospital and hospice (Siechenheim) had been expropriated by the state, and patients were moved to the Community Centre in the Wallstraße where a ward of 80 beds was set up in extremely cramped conditions. (See Reinke, Andreas. *Judentum und Wohlfahrtspflege in Deutschland. Das jüdische Krankenhaus in Breslau 1726-1944. Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden*. Ed. Haverkamp, Alfred together with Helmut Castritius, Pranz Irsigler and Stefi Jersch-Wenzel. Hanover: Verlag Hahnsehe Buchhandlung, 1999. 260 - 281.) Just how brutally these measures were effected by the Nazi authorities can be read in a description of the hospice closure recorded by the Jewish diarist Walter Tausk (1890 – 1941): "Saturday, 30 / 12 / 39. Jewish hospital: its pitiful remnants were evacuated yesterday and today. In the course of this, all beds and bedding not in private ownership were confiscated. Same for the X-ray room which had only just been set up [...] and the linen belonging to the institution, as well as the entire kitchen inventory including crockery. A number of invalids had no beds, and nor did many of the sick when they were evacuated just now. Even the "special beds" for the lame who have to lie in a kind of form made of plaster were not released." (*Breslauer Tagebuch 1933 – 1940*. Ed. Kincel, Ryszard. Berlin, 1975. 250. Quoted in: Reinke, 277.) These ruthless evictions surely also affected Bertha Schlesinger. Given her advanced age and lack of close family support, she was probably a resident in one of the city's Jewish old people's homes which were seized by the Nazi state during the period 1939 – 1941 and their residents dispersed to one of four hastily established alternative sites. The address on Bertha Schlesinger's death certificate indicates, however, that in her final days her condition had deteriorated to the point that she required hospitalisation.

⁹ Franz's father, the histologist Max Bielschowsky, died in London in 1940. His mother, Elsa, survived the war and died in London in 1947.

¹⁰ This film was *Sieg im Westen* (Svend Noldan, 1941)

days we couldn't get rid of [the images] of Stukas, paratroopers, flame-throwers, tanks. That's no longer a war, it's just dreadful brutality. To think that you've experienced all that in Spain already and now perhaps have to go through an even more awful version again. So often, so often I think of the parents and the old, lonely grandmother. One can't go on – Ernst and Dorothee are in Bavaria with the children. They have no rest at night, no maid, Dorothee can't go on. And we old people have it so good, undeservedly. Quiet every night, the house all cleaned, big fresh pine branches from the forest in every room, a real aroma of pine sap and the forest. The 12cm long veal roast is ready and the cake baked with Milei G instead of eggs!¹¹ We'll have a bath soon – while you both have no peace at Easter! At Dorothee's the windowpanes in the conservatory and in Ernst's room are kaput and the garden is peppered with flak fragments. Now the opera house, the university, the New Palace, Sanssouci have been hit.¹² Why all the destruction here and over there. When we drive over the Elbe – the Catholic Cathedral, the Church of Our Lady, the Zwinger, may they all be spared!¹³ Oh children, how we are with you in our thoughts and what we would give for your lives to return to smoother paths. Franz and you, child, how you both deserve peace and tranquillity. And no one can help you, no one. -

8 May. Would you believe it, child?! Today is 8 May and it's snowing outside like there's no tomorrow. In the mornings it is minus 2 degrees and the sun shines only occasionally. It's just as dreary inside as it is out. Yesterday was our 38th wedding anniversary. How lonely and alone we were! Today I've spent the day being so worried about you. I hope to God that you are healthy and remain so. Every day there are these dreadful news reports on the radio – people think there's nothing left standing in England. And then we hear that it's been awful in Bremen and Hanover, the airport in Frankfurt is kaput.¹⁴ No one knows anything more. And that's what's unnerving. Child, if only we had word from you. It's scarcely to be endured and so one scrapes together all the good and beautiful things one has. I often think back so gratefully to our summer tour, that beautiful, peaceful evening on the water at Potsdam where we lived so "bon". To all our cosy weeks together in Berlin which made up for all the hard, loveless times with Dorothee and our trip to Dresden in December 39. Will I have to make do with that for the rest of my life? Will I ever be permitted to be together with you both again in times of peace? What am I supposed to say about our life? It is lonely and full of worry. Old friends are getting fewer. Dr Michael is dead as well. Uncle Hans is seriously ill, he had a stroke.¹⁵ At first he was in the local military hospital at Suresnes near Paris, but now he's been transported home.

¹¹ An egg substitute made from skim milk. The name is derived from the German word Milcheiweiß (milk protein). A number of variations were produced; the product Charlotte mentions here, Milei G, was a yolk substitute – 'G' stands for 'Gelb' or yoke. (Shenstone, F.S. "Egg White and Yolk Substitutes." *Food Preservation Quarterly* 13.3 (1953): 45 - 49. Here, 48.)

¹² This remark is mysterious. The New Palace (das Neue Palais) and Sanssouci (a royal summer palace) were built in the eighteenth century under Frederick the Great in Potsdam, to the southwest of Berlin. However, the town of Potsdam was spared any bombing raids until a massive 500 plane attack at the very end of the war, on the night of 14 – 15 April 1945, when as many as 5 000 people were killed. (BCWD, 695-696) In the year of 1941, up until the date of this entry, Berlin had been hit on 12 – 13 March, 23 – 24 March and 9 – 10 April. (See: BCWD, 134 ff.)

¹³ For information on these buildings and their eventual fate, see the entry for 15 February 1945.

¹⁴ Bremen was attacked on the night of 8 – 9 May with 133 aircraft. Bombs fell over a wide area of the town but the main target, the AG Weser submarine yards, was not hit. (BCWD, 153). Hanover had not been targeted since 23 – 24 March when it was attacked by a small group of 26 aircraft. (BCWD, 138) The last raid on Frankfurt prior to the date of this letter was a small-scale sortie on 29 – 30 December 1940. (BDWD, 113)

¹⁵ Hans Beutler (1893 – 1941), Marianne's maternal uncle. See the entry for 23 November 1941.

Aunt Mieke was called to Suresnes; he was unconscious, completely paralysed on his left side, 48 years old. As unpleasant and nasty as both of them have been towards us, we are terribly sorry for them. How much sorrow there is everywhere! Hardy Schmitz is on Sicily. He preferred Nice. They've been out there for years again.¹⁶ One is so torn. One is concerned for them and worried about you! There's been no news of Jochen.¹⁷ Since March, he's been in the Balkans. Dorothee is in Grainau with the children. They've been away from home now for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year. Peter is a big lad and the little one is so sweet. We saw her a year ago for 3 days. Father is so terribly in need of a rest, just to eat his fill for once would do him good. But the simple life we have is so terribly expensive, we can't just travel off. And we have to be so grateful that we're still able to live in such peace. -

1 / 6 Pentecost, we are quite on our own! We've done a bit of house-cleaning that is such hard work when there's nothing – no soap, starch, turpentine, floor wax. We're getting ready to travel. We want to go to Grainau on 6th for 3 weeks with Dorothee and the children. Child, if I could tell you how reluctant I am to go. Dorothee invited us for 3 weeks. But you know her cold manner, and I am dreading it. We've never had a day in Dorothee's house like we had with you in Cologne, in Berlin. And I imagine what it would be like if we were able to come to you. Just to have a little affection, what we would give for it ...

30 / 6 Now we are back home! They were 3 hard weeks and bore no relationship to what they cost us. We breathed out when we finally opened our own door. Now it's your birthday today dear, dear child. We can't do anything nice for you, nothing, nothing. We don't even know if you're still alive, whether you're well. Will we see each other again? I don't believe it anymore. Are the parents still alive, the grandmother? My heart weighs a ton. What is going to happen with Russia.¹⁸ You have no idea how dreadfully tough daily life is. I queue up for 1 – 1 ½ hours in the ferocious heat. They open at 3 o'clock. Yesterday the results were: 1 lettuce, 1 little white cabbage, 1 bundle of wilted dill, 1 pound of half-rotten peas. We get 1 pound of potatoes per person per week. Sometimes I literally don't know what to cook. The strawberry harvest is very peculiar. We got 2 x 1 pound, squashed and rotten. Every evening our neighbours get 10 pounds. We queue up for half-rotten runner beans, they get them ready preserved in jars from Coswig¹⁹ for the winter. If you have money you can get anything. I'm worried about Father. In his suit he weighs 128 pounds. I have nothing to feed him. Yes, child, they were difficult weeks with Dorothee. [illegible text] ... if it has to be that way then rather here than in Berlin. She arrived 10 days after us, unexpectedly, we were out, she didn't even come to greet us, a frosty "Good Day". We were never alone, the nanny was always there, the two of them ahead of us arm in arm, both of us old folk following behind. We had breakfast together in the morning, but with her pot of good coffee, we with our schnapps. Then we were her guests for lunch. I was very disciplined, always ate the cheapest thing with no dessert and was ruthlessly diligent: knitted, mended, altered clothes in order to give something back to her. In the evenings I mostly did the shopping. I felt so sorry for Father! Once we were on our own together in Innsbruck, it was such a relief not to be snapped at. Of course the nanny quickly adopted the same tone towards us. The children are magnificent! Peter is 123 [cm] tall and wears size 35 shoes. But his upbringing! He's the boss! Ice cream twice

¹⁶ That is, German soldiers serving abroad.

¹⁷ Charlotte's nephew, the son of her brother Friedrich Beutler.

¹⁸ Operation Barbarossa, the German attack on the Soviet Union and the largest invasion in history, had been launched eight days earlier on 22nd June 1941.

¹⁹ A town on the northeastern outskirts of Dresden.

a day, constantly buying things, then everything ends up strewn around. When you get him on his own he's so nice and considerate. If I could have the child here ... How undisciplined they are growing up. In the morning at 8 or 8.30 the nanny gets the children ready though she is still not dressed, her hair uncombed, in her dressing gown. Every morning the cot is wet because the little one is not put on the potty again at night. She's [i.e., the nanny] started an affair with someone down in the village that hopefully leads to marriage, and she goes out every night until 1 and so can't be fresh in the morning. The little one is pretty as a picture, sweet, clever and amusing, stubborn as its mother and father put together. How quickly the child thinks at the age of 2, how easily it learns and understands. But the disorder, the messiness around the children, no set meal-times, no schedule. No one has time to read to the boy. It breaks your heart, child, honestly. What the household must cost, constantly shopping but not keeping anything – Dorothee has become very elegant. Ernst brought back wonderful things from Paris, a dress by Gerson²⁰ the likes of which I've never seen. If Father only had a pair of elastic braces for his trousers. I'm still wearing things from Else Kamm. Dorothee couldn't really show off much with us, but we're still clean and tidy. Father was actually up on the Zugspitze!²¹ The trip cost 21 M, I gave it to him for his birthday. On the way home we visited the Eversbuschs in Munich. Just think, the Thannhausers²² lived next door to them and they were close friends. We hadn't seen each other for 25 years and it was so satisfying to be of the same mind on everything, just everything. We spoke with Else about you at length. She had a lot of sympathy for you. Child, I wish she lived closer. Now Father has added up his travel expenses: the expensive tickets there and back, all the bits and bobs, we would have had a more relaxing time staying somewhere close by without being humiliatingly dependent. But it was about the children whom we hadn't had seen for a year and whom we won't see for ages. Can you still remember that Sunday when apparently Malschick had knocked over the telephone, and they were on their own the whole day and couldn't tell us what time we were supposed to come out? You rang up, Dorothee was on the phone, and you heard laughter and strange voices! It's still the same, child.

27 / 7 / 41 Today is „dear Sunday“ you used to say as a little child. You always had such a feeling for Sunday – do you still have it? Now our birthdays are over again – two such lonely days – It's better, much better that you have Franz. But we are egotists and think back to that time in Cologne when we were so often and so happily together. And those weeks in Berlin. I think you never learn to be without your darling child. Now I've turned 60 years old and there's no news from you. Can you find no way to get the tiniest message through? It's almost unbearable. Other people seem to get news. Dorothee didn't remember my sixtieth. We had a bet on it and Father lost the bet! But this morning at 8 o'clock some magnificent dahlias arrived from good Frau Conze, letters from Frau Funke, Frau Hermes and Frau Außem.²³ Oh, how tough they have it down there! Air-raids every night. Lots of people in Cologne travel up the Rhine in the evening to the Siebengebirge²⁴ where they rent a room in order to be able to sleep peacefully before returning the next

²⁰ Herrmann Gerson, a Jewish merchant and fashion designer, established what was considered Berlin's first department store in the 1840s. The clothing brand that bore his name was popular well into the twentieth century. (See: Kessemeier, Gesa. *Herrmann Gerson: das erste Berliner Modekaufhaus*. Berlin und Leipzig: Hentrich und Hentrich Verlag, 2016.)

²¹ At 2962 m, the Zugspitze is Germany's highest peak.

²² See Journal 1 for further information on Siegfried Thannhauser, physician and close colleague of Franz and Marianne.

²³ Friends of the Angermanns from the Rhineland.

²⁴ A range of hills on the east bank of the Rhine, southeast of Bonn.

day to work. Cords' House of Silk²⁵ is a ruin. It's dreadful in Cologne! Eigelstein, Hohe Straße, Breite Straße, Neumarkt, Severinsviertel, the harbour, Bürger Hospital, Martha-Stift all badly hit.²⁶ Everyone avoids the cellar because the bombs go straight through, the building collapses like a house of cards and the people in the basement drown miserably. Dear child, what is going to happen? The misery and suffering here and over there, and no end in sight.

Sunday of the Dead,²⁷ 23 / 11 / 41. I haven't opened this book for so long, dear child. Everything is so hard – one drags oneself through the days and constantly asks: why all the misery and suffering in the world? I wonder how you are? May God grant that you are happy and together. Dorothee was seriously ill, a false pregnancy and just can't seem to recover. And how is she supposed to without a maid – only Schiebert 3 x a week – the household, the heating, the dog and old Frau Schnabel who, instead of helping, just makes more work. We are so terribly worried. If you were to get this book, how many are missing already in the family. You won't believe it – Uncle Hans is dead, on 17th October. In a field hospital in which he was head doctor, he had a stroke in March, completely paralysed on the left side in Suresnes near Paris, then in Kassel and it was there that it came to an end. Mentally he was completely lucid to the end and it was so hard for him to leave Aunt Mieke²⁸ on her own.²⁹ Uncle Hans was 48 -

Deaths this year: Curt Reinhardt, almost 85 years old,³⁰ his wife, Aunt Hilde, your godmother, almost 76 years old.³¹ Then their eldest daughter, your cousin Elsbeth, Frau Studiendirektor Winter in Stollberg, 51 years old.³² Winfried Treptow, the eldest of Brigitte Treptow née Reinhardt,³³ was killed in the West.³⁴ Quite sad: the young wife of Dieter Angermann, a few days after the birth of her first child. She was a war bride, he's a widower at 26.³⁵ – In Langenberg, Hermann Mühlen³⁶ has fallen, as well as Walther

²⁵ The Seidenhaus Gustav Cords (Gustav Cords' House of Silk) was a retail outlet in the centre of Cologne on the Neumarkt which specialised in fabrics for women's dresses. (Klapheck, Richard. "Das Seidenhaus Gustav Cords in Köln Und Berlin Von Architekt Dr. Otto Schulze-Kolbitz, Berlin-Halensee." *Moderne Bauformen. Monatshefte für Architektur und Raumkunst* XII Jahrgang.Erstes Halbjahr (1913): 101-21.)

²⁶ Cologne was hit five times between the 7 and 31 July 1941. The raid on the night of 7-8 was conducted in good weather conditions and so was particularly severe: 62 large fires were created, 5450 people lost their homes, and 45 were killed. (BCWD, 176 – 186)

²⁷ Ger. Totensonntag. A Protestant religious holiday in Germany and Switzerland devoted to honouring the dead.

²⁸ Mieke Beutler née Meier.

²⁹ Dr Hans Karl Adolf Beutler (1 / 2 / 93 – 17 / 10 / 41) was Charlotte's brother. For further information, see her family tree at the end of this journal.

³⁰ Curt Reinhardt (1855 – 1941) was the husband of Konrad's first cousin, Anna Reinhardt née Zocher.

³¹ Anna Hildegard Reinhardt née Zocher (1865 – 1941), Konrad Angermann's first cousin.

³² Elsbeth [Elisabeth?] Winter née Reinhardt (1890 – 1941) was Marianne Angermann's second cousin.

³³ Hildegard Brigitte Treptow née Reinhardt was Elsbeth Winter's sister.

³⁴ This may be an error in Charlotte's recall: Brigitte Treptow did indeed have a son killed in 1941, but his name was Max Wolfram. Born on 13th October 1920, he died on the Eastern Front near Busovaya, Soviet Union on 17 July 1941.

³⁵ Unfortunately, there is no record of Dieter Angermann or his wife.

³⁶ Karl-Hermann Mühlen (1921 – 1941) was a Corporal in the 11 Company of the 77 Infantry Regiment. He was killed in action on 30 July near Klin, Soviet Union. (Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt); Berlin-Reinickendorf, Deutschland; *Gräberkarteikarten gefallener deutscher Soldaten 1939-1948.*)

Colsmann,³⁷ Carl Friedrich Closset,³⁸ the Witte boy. Mätze Arnhold is a Russian POW. District Judge Closset is dead.³⁹ One ought not to call the dead back, who knows what they are being spared, who knows what we still have to go through. -

Christmas Eve 1941. 6 years ago today, dearest child, you flew to Spain. – We spent so many happy Christmases together, then a few tough ones, but we were together. Now we two old folk are alone – Father sits in the blue armchair and is enjoying the fragrance of a yellow candle in a silver candlestick holder. I’m sitting at the writing desk and we are both constantly thinking of you – whether you are healthy, together, happy despite all the terrors of the world. Will we be together again? It is our only wish. And then I’ll give you everything that’s been collected over the last few Christmases: in 1939 the second wool and fur blanket. 1940: a big white hemstitched tablecloth. And today in 1941: that silver candlestick like Father’s, a fine silver thimble, a warm knitted bed jacket. Dear child, may you have a nice, quiet Christmas, may you look positively towards the future, and never lose hope that things will get better. We always think that two such clever, hard-working people as you will scrabble through and find recognition. That we don’t know what your life is like, where you are – Sometimes it’s as if one can’t bear it anymore. Just one word about how you are – it’s a strange Christmas Eve – 12 degrees, a storm is raging, the clouds are racing, everything is groaning and creaking in the park. The big old trees are bending as if they were going to break. Rain is lashing the windowpanes. And our soldiers in Russia, at sea, in Africa. Those poor, poor people and all those who are worried about them – Aunt Annie⁴⁰ went to hear the motet at the Church of the Holy Cross.⁴¹ It was harrowing, hundreds of people, the magnificent building, the unearthly music – and weeping: a tormented congregation that doesn’t know how to go on and can’t go on. We were in the little Hirsch church.⁴² During the sermon all the lights were extinguished, only the candles at the two Christmas trees at the alter were burning, that was so sombre. But here as well – tears, grief, worry, desire, desperation. – What is going to happen. – 15 candles burning on every tree, poverty everywhere. – The storm was literally driving us home on our walk back. Now we’ve heated the room as a special occasion and do you know what we had for supper? Frankfurters! We’ve saved up for them for a long time. The Schnabels are in Grainau with the children. Peter has gone to school after all. His parents are quite happy about it, he’s looking forward to the holidays. We have pictures. They’re quite stylish children, so well turned out. Peter, self-confident: just do it well, he

³⁷ This may be Robert Colsmann who was born in Neviges, near Langenberg, in May 1904. He was an Engineer (Ger.: Pionier) in the 655 Bridge Construction Battalion and died of a coronary-pulmonary disorder in a military hospital in Craiova, Rumania on 15 March 1941. (Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt); Berlin-Reinickendorf, Deutschland; *Gräberkarteikarten gefallener deutscher Soldaten 1939-1948*.) The Colsmanns were a very well to do family in the area who, in 1913, had donated funds for the construction of Langenberg’s Bürgerhaus (assembly rooms and recreation centre) when Konrad Angermann was mayor.

³⁸ Correctly: Friedrich-Karl Closset. Born in 1923 in West Barmen, near Langenberg, he was a Corporal in the 9 Company of the 102 Infantry Regiment when he was killed at Johanovka/Bryts’ke to the east of the city of Vinnitsya in Ukraine on 22 July 1941. (Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt); Berlin-Reinickendorf, Deutschland; *Gräberkarteikarten gefallener deutscher Soldaten 1939-1948*.)

³⁹ Friedrich Karl Closset (1872 – 1941) lived at Hauptstraße 109 in Langenberg and was therefore a close neighbour of the Angermanns during their time there. (Deutsche National Bibliothek; Leipzig, Deutschland; Publisher: J. H. Born; Bestand: 1925/26; Signatur: ZA 7114)

⁴⁰ Anna Charlotte Ilse Beutler née Waurick (1890 - ?), Charlotte’s sister-in-law.

⁴¹ The Kreuzkirche (Church of the Holy Cross) is the main Lutheran church in Dresden. Situated on the Altmarkt, it was severely damaged in the February 1945 air raids, but was reconstructed by 1955.

⁴² Charlotte refers here to the small Lutheran church (Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche) in the Weißer Hirsch district where she and Konrad lived.

says, I can take photos too. And Lilli: suspicion on her face about what's going on. Lilli is a sweet thing. Peter is like you two: clever, terrific memory, and lazy. So he'll go his own way in life. He's interested in everything sporting and technical. He swims, skis and is constantly getting into scraps. But everyone likes him. Lilli is like Dorothee. Where I'm sitting is the top! Always in a good mood, head-strong, kind and wraps her father, who's not easily impressed by anything, around her little finger. Farewell, darling, it is late already. If I only had some news from you -

Christmas Day 1941. Today I didn't want to write. Then the early post arrived with the news that Leonhardt Schulz, Sister Elisabeth's dear boy, has been killed in Russia: 19 years old, a volunteer, a corporal and officer candidate, nominated for the EK II.⁴³ On 22nd November 1941 in the Crimea.⁴⁴ How terribly sorry we are for them. The boy had turned out so well, wanted to be a doctor. He was her only joy. And now it's all over! For what? Just now at Christmas she was quoting to me from his letters. I'll write to her today, to see if she'll come visit us.

Frau Laubmeyer is in Langenberg. She's got a visa for just 4 weeks. She wrote me a long, long letter. – If you knew ... During the day I'm cheery and bright to everyone – at night I weep – How tired and exhausted, how worried, how old everyone has become – No one has time, there's no pleasure anywhere anymore. The dear old town looks dirty, the shops are empty. She says she shouldn't have come back right now.⁴⁵ At 4 o'clock we're getting a visit for coffee, old friends: the Heydens, the successors to the Angermann grandparents in Plauen. Frau Hubert. They were the successors to the Beutler grandparents at the castle.⁴⁶ Frau Zobel,⁴⁷ grandmother's young friend, Father's age! All lonely people – like us –

New Year's Eve 1941. Another year has ended – We were at church at 6 o'clock – weather was like the world was coming to an end: rain, snow, storm – is the old year sweeping everything away? Or is it an evil omen for the new? One is not capable of thinking anymore, child. Worries about you, worries about Dorothee's health and what is going to happen both inside the country and abroad. One can't go on. May God grant that there'll be peace in the new year – it doesn't look like it: the retreat in Russia, the over-hasty collecting of woollen things, furs, since we didn't know that there wasn't a surplus of

⁴³ EK II = Eisernes Kreuz Zweiter Klasse (Iron Cross Second Class).

⁴⁴ Leonhard Luitpold Karl Wilhelm Schultz. Born in 1922 in Annweiler, near Landau, in the Rhineland-Palatinate, he was a Lance Corporal in the 9 Company of the 437 Infantry Regiment when he was killed at Mekenziye (Ger. Mekensia) on the outskirts of Sevastopol on 22 November 1941. (Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt); Berlin-Reinickendorf, Deutschland; *Gräberkarteikarten gefallener deutscher Soldaten 1939 – 1948*)

⁴⁵ The sentence appears to refer back to Frau Laubmeyer and her report of life in Langenberg.

⁴⁶ If the reference is still to Plauen, then the castle is likely to be Schloß Plauen (Plauen Castle) which served for several centuries as the seat of the local administration and courts until its near complete destruction in air raids in April 1945. (<https://www.plauen.de/index.php?object=tx.3317.1&ModID=9&FID=3317.2922.1> Accessed: 15 December 2021)

⁴⁷ Margit Anna Zobel *née* Blochmann (10/12/1876 – 10/07/1945). Born in Hungary, Margit Zobel was the widow of the factory owner, Johann Gustav Paul Zobel. She lived at Hegereiterstraße 18 in Buehlau (Dresden). (Stadtarchiv der Landeshauptstadt Dresden; Dresden, Deutschland; 6.4.25 *Sterberegister/Sterbefallanzeigen*) See also Charlotte's entries for 29 July 1944 and 15 July 1945.

everything for a winter campaign in Russia,⁴⁸ the resignation of v. Brauchitsch⁴⁹ and many other generals about whom we don't know much – everything is so hard and dark – If you just stay healthy, are together, have an income, a home – if we only knew that!

If only Dorothee were to keep well, the children were to come home and she were to be relieved of some of her workload. She can't cope. And we are not allowed to help. Child, how superfluous we have become – why do we two old people keep on living, without any joy, so lonely from one day to the next? -

⁴⁸ The “over-hasty collecting of woollen things” was part of a desperate attempt on the home front to secure items of clothing that would benefit troops fighting in the open in a Russian winter. German military strategy had been based on the confident expectation that their forces would capture Moscow before the onset of winter so that warm clothing and other essentials would not be immediately required. When resistance stiffened in the approaches to the capital and a successful Soviet counterattack was launched, German troops were left exposed and without the necessary supplies to withstand the elements. One soldier later recalled that his battalion had received only sixteen greatcoats and sixteen pairs of winter boots – for a total of eight hundred men. As David Stahel writes, the problem with German logistics lay as much in the difficulties of transporting supplies to the front by rail as it did in securing these essential items in the first place. (Stahel, David. *The Battle for Moscow*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 132-133)

⁴⁹ Field Marshall Walther von Brauchitsch (1881 – 1948). Hitler held him responsible for reverses suffered at the hands of the Soviets in the winter of 1941 – 42 and dismissed him from his position as Supreme Commander of the Army (Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres).