

1945.

The new year started quietly: no mail, no sirens. We were at home because Father was not well. We thought of you, Dorothee and the children. We've had no message from you, no word from Dorothee since 14 December. How lonely one is! We had everything and now we have nothing: We haven't seen Dorothee and the children for 2½ years.

17 / 1 / 45

What will the new year have in store for us? Father had a bad case of the flu, a fever of 39.7, narrowly avoided pneumonia. He had to visit the doctor when it was minus 12 degrees outside because no one is making house calls any more. I've got an awful inflammation of the middle ear, had a fever of 39.5 for 8 days. The cleaning woman is sick. I am cooking, doing the laundry, and keeping the apartment in order. I go to bed once it's all finished. Yesterday at 10.00 o'clock in the evening the alarm sounded. How very tired one gets with this fever and cold. They were here for 1½ hours and started where they stopped on 7 October.<sup>1</sup>

12 / 2 / 45.

My dear, I wasn't planning to write anything about the unspeakably difficult things which have burdened us for years. But now, as the enemy is only 150 km away from us, when they're reporting a front along the Elbe – what am I supposed to write now? These are frightening days. And never did we love the Fatherland more than now. We have just heard that Liegnitz<sup>2</sup> has been taken. Everyone here is getting ready to leave. They have all packed their things and are looking for a safe place to stay. We couldn't imagine that such awful things would come. For days this hopeless file of refugees from Upper Silesia<sup>3</sup> passed through here.<sup>4</sup> It was shocking, and Father said: better to die at home than perish on the road. And we wouldn't know where to go anyway. We have always been straight up, we have suffered so much without complaint and have become more and more isolated. I think it is time that those who caused all this misery should be brought to justice. Why should we flee? The enemy must be human too. Child, do you sometimes think of us? God give you peace and a tolerable life. Who knows what the next few days have in store for us -

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<sup>1</sup> This attack by 133 aircraft of the US 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force focused on the city's marshalling yards; over 320 tons of high explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped. (Angell, Joseph. *Historical Analysis of the 14-15 February 1945 Bombings of Dresden*. Washington DC: Department of the Air Force, 1962. 3) Victor Klemperer reported this attack in a diary entry for 16 January: "the Americans not only bombed the Friedrichstadt station, but also the railway tracks at the main railway station, at the Hohe Bridge and at the Nossen Bridge [...]" He described his relative indifference to the raid: "I had not been very agitated, at any rate much more impassive than the previous time." (Klemperer, 823). According to Thomas Widera, this raid claimed 334 lives. (Widera, 505)

<sup>2</sup> This town is now in Poland and is called Legnica. It is situated around 180 km east of Dresden. Klemperer had heard of the Russian occupation of Liegnitz on 29 January already. (Klemperer, 827)

<sup>3</sup> Upper Silesia is a former German territory which is today in south central Poland.

<sup>4</sup> The relentless Soviet advance pushed a massive wave of German refugees before it. Terrified both by the blood-curdling stories of Josef Goebbels's propaganda machine and by the accounts of the survivors of Soviet atrocities exacted in revenge for earlier Nazi savagery, the East was emptied of ethnic Germans. It is estimated that around 12 million Germans fled or were expelled from territories in Eastern and Central Europe; around three million of these were from Silesia. (Demshuk, Andrew. *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 1.)

15 / 2 / 45.<sup>5</sup>

Dear, dear child, now it was Dresden's turn. All the beautiful things, which everyone loved and admired from childhood on, have been reduced to a heap of rubble. – Seldom have things been so drastically swept away as they have been here with us. – There is the alarm sounding again on the 18 [sic] Feb. at 8.15. I am writing dressed in 2 pairs of knickers, 2 undergarments, the dress, the woollen jacket, 2 coats, one of them has the money and papers sewn into it. You can imagine how confused everything is here. Thankfully things passed us by. It is said that it was the heaviest air raid yet on the Reich. In Dresden we were so carefree – they won't come [we said] – Churchill's aunt lives on the Weißer Hirsch.<sup>6</sup> But they did come nevertheless – more terribly than ever before. Child, one didn't have the feeling that they were enemy airplanes, because they are human beings too – it was like something supernatural, as if God's judgement had been discharged onto the city. The first attack came on 13 / 2 in the evening from 9.40 until 11.15., the second one from 12.30 until 2.15. On the 14 / 2 the attacks were carried out from 11 – 12 mornings, then from 1 – 3, from 9 – 9.40 in the evening and then again from 12 – 12. 55. On the 15 / 2 the first attack lasted from 8.45 – 9.30, the second 10.40 – 12.20, the third 1.30 – 1.50. And now nothing whatsoever is left of our very beautiful Dresden. Out here we were spared all that.<sup>7</sup> A burning house, smashed windows are nothing. We were sitting in the cellar, the house literally trembled and shook, the doors slammed, the windows rattled, we ducked from the blow that was to come. When everything was over a storm raged, the heavens were red with fire, smoke and fumes made it difficult to breathe, paper and burning debris were flying about and then there was a downpour like we've never seen. Those were days we still can't comprehend, child. It feels as if they have brought about a change in life. And there is the tragic situation that the Elbe divides the city into two halves. Now there is no going back and forth anymore. There is a tram shuttle between Weißig and Lahmann,<sup>8</sup> there are no trains into the city and back. No bridges for traffic, just a narrow pedestrian pathway over the Blaues Wunder<sup>9</sup> in Blasewitz. Everything is

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<sup>5</sup> The following entry refers to the infamous series of attacks on Dresden that took place on 13–15 February. These combined raids by the RAF and US Air Force began at around 10 pm on the night of 13 February and continued intermittently for the next two days. After the apocalyptic attacks on Hamburg in July 1943, it was the single most devastating raid on a German city conducted during the war. Around 4 500 tons of bombs were dropped on the centre of Dresden by a combined force of 1100 aircraft. As Charlotte writes in this and subsequent entries, the raid effectively wiped historic Dresden off the map. It is thought that around 25 000 people were killed in the bombing. See the introduction for a more detailed discussion of the attack.

<sup>6</sup> This appears to have been a rumour, taken more or less seriously, that circulated as a way of explaining Dresden's light treatment by Allied air forces up until February 1945. Victor Klemperer wrote on 29 May 1944: "The latest joke: Churchill's grandmother is buried here – another version: Churchill's aunt lives here." (Klemperer, 752) Again, on 15 September 1944 Klemperer wrote that he would "go on placing my hopes in 'Churchill's aunt'", even after bombs had fallen on the nearby town of Freital to the southwest of the city. (789) (The Freital raid on 24 August 1944 was carried out by the USAAF's 486 and 487 Bomber Groups and killed 241 people. It targeted the Rhenania Ossag hydrogenation works.)

<sup>7</sup> The Angermanns' apartment at Silberweg 1a was on the fringes of Dresden in a wooded area around 7 km to the east of the city centre.

<sup>8</sup> Two districts in the east of the city close to where the Angermanns lived.

<sup>9</sup> Engl. blue wonder/miracle. A colloquial name for the Loschwitz Bridge (Loschwitzter Brücke) which joins Blasewitz on the left bank of the Elbe with Loschwitz on the right.

totally destroyed: the castle,<sup>10</sup> Hofkirche,<sup>11</sup> Taschenberg-Palais,<sup>12</sup> the Opera House,<sup>13</sup> the Bellevue,<sup>14</sup> the Italian Village,<sup>15</sup> the Terrace,<sup>16</sup> the Governor's Palace, the art gallery,<sup>17</sup> the new picture gallery, the Albertinum,<sup>18</sup> the Cosel Palais,<sup>19</sup> the Kurländer Palais,<sup>20</sup> the Stallhof,<sup>21</sup> the Old<sup>22</sup> and the New Town Hall,<sup>23</sup> the Kreuzschule,<sup>24</sup> Kreuzkirche,

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<sup>10</sup> Residenzschloß. Built in Renaissance and Baroque styles, the castle was once the seat of the Dresden court and the Saxon Prince Electors. It was reconstructed from the late 1980s onwards.

<sup>11</sup> Dresden's Catholic Cathedral built in the Baroque style in the eighteenth century. Rebuilt in the 1960s, it was further renovated after German reunification.

<sup>12</sup> A Baroque palace of the nobility built in the eighteenth century. Reconstructed from wartime ruins in the 1990s, it is today a luxury hotel.

<sup>13</sup> The opera house destroyed on the night of 13 February 1945 (Semperoper) was the second on the central city site. Built in the 1870s, it was reconstructed under the East German regime in the 1970s and 80s.

<sup>14</sup> A Baroque residence on the banks of the Elbe constructed in the early 1700s. In fact, the Bellevue was the only one of the connected ensemble of buildings on the Große Meißner Straße to survive the bombing. It narrowly escaped demolition in 1950 and, again, in the 1980s. Today it is a hotel.

<sup>15</sup> A popular public house on the Theaterplatz (Theatre Square) near the Catholic Cathedral. It is thought the name ("das italienische Dörfchen") derived from the collection of temporary houses that sprang up to accommodate Italian craftsmen working on the construction of the Catholic Cathedral in the eighteenth century.

<sup>16</sup> The Brühlsche Terrasse (Brühl's Terrace) designates a section of the left bank of the Elbe between the Augustus Bridge and the Carola Bridge dominated by an architecturally important collection of buildings. From summer 1940 Jews were forbidden from using the Brühlsche Terrasse.

<sup>17</sup> One of the main exhibition spaces for the Dresden State Art Collection. The art gallery is housed in the Lipsius Building (Lipsiusbau) of the Academy of Art and is located on the Brühlsche Terrasse.

<sup>18</sup> Built in the late nineteenth century in Renaissance Revival style, the Albertinum housed the sculpture collection of the Dresden State Art Collection. It has been restored on various occasions since the Second World War, most recently between 2006 and 2010.

<sup>19</sup> A former residential palace in the centre of the city, the Cosel Palais was built in the Dresden Rococo style in the mid-eighteenth century. It was reconstructed in stages after the Second World War and now serves as a restaurant and office building.

<sup>20</sup> Considered the first of Dresden's Rococo structures, the Kurländer Palais was built in the 1720s. It was the last of Dresden's ruins to be reconstructed; work finished in 2008. The building today houses a restaurant, offices and event spaces.

<sup>21</sup> The Stallhof (Horse Yards) formed part of the city castle (Residenzschloss) and was used for horse shows. Reconstruction of the ruins began in 1957.

<sup>22</sup> Situated on the western side of the Altmarkt in the centre of Dresden, the Altstädter Rathaus (Old Town Hall) was built in 1745. Severely damaged in the February raid, the ruins were demolished in 1949.

<sup>23</sup> The Neues Rathaus (New Town Hall) was built in 1910 and reconstructed during the Communist era; restoration work was completed by 1965.

<sup>24</sup> The Kreuzschule was a school for the choirboys of the Kreuzkirche (Church of the Holy Cross). Founded in 1300, it is the oldest school in Dresden. Initially situated to the south of the Kreuzkirche, it relocated to new premises on the Georgplatz in 1866. Both sites were badly damaged in the war and today the school occupies the former Freemasons' Institute on the Eisenacher Straße.

Frauenkirche,<sup>25</sup> Sophienkirche,<sup>26</sup> the uniquely beautiful Zwinger,<sup>27</sup> the market hall,<sup>28</sup> the railway stations,<sup>29</sup> the Munich Quarter<sup>30</sup> and the Swiss Quarter,<sup>31</sup> where Nana used to live. Where we lived: Stephaniestraße,<sup>32</sup> Dürerstraße, everything around the big garden, the great G. Palais,<sup>33</sup> the Exhibition.<sup>34</sup> Child, why am I writing all this, it is easier to say that Dresden has been wiped off the face of the earth.<sup>35</sup> On Thursday towards evening, Uncle Fritz came – we are alive, [he said], but have nothing whatsoever, could not save

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<sup>25</sup> Internationally, the Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) is the most famous of Dresden's churches. Built in the 1740s, this Baroque structure initially survived the February 1945 raids intact, but fire penetrated the interior, and the intense heat caused the dome to collapse. The ruins were preserved as a memorial to the horrors of war by the East German regime. Reconstruction work began after the collapse of Communism and the restored church was dedicated in October 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Located on the northeast side of the Postplatz, the Sophienkirche (Saint Sophia's Church) was damaged in the February raids though its spires and external walls were left standing. Despite the efforts of local conservation advocates, the remains of the church were torn down at the direction of the SED (Socialist Unity Party) in 1962-63.

<sup>27</sup> Zwinger is the German word for the outer area of a defensive fortification (Engl. bailey). Located in the heart of the Old Town, Dresden's Zwinger is a large, palatial complex whose buildings also house the Old Masters' Collection and the Porcelain Collection. Almost completely destroyed in the February 1945 raids, work quickly began on its restoration and was completed by 1964.

<sup>28</sup> The Markthalle (Market Hall) was on Antonsplatz in the centre of Dresden and was built in the early 1890s. Covering an area of over 2 500 square metres it was severely damaged in the February raids and the ruins demolished in 1951 to make way for other urban development projects.

<sup>29</sup> The Hauptbahnhof (Main Railway Station) is on the Wiener Platz, just outside the Old Town. Though services had operated from that site since the middle of the nineteenth century, the new station was finally completed in 1898. Already badly hit in the raid of October 12 1944, it was almost totally destroyed in the February 1945 raids. At the time of the first night attack, the station was teeming with travellers and refugees, many of whom were trapped in the overcrowded express service to Munich which was unable to depart. In desperate attempts to reach the cellars underneath the station – which were already full beyond capacity – many hundreds of people were trampled to death or suffocated when a fire started in the steep stairway. (Taylor, 254-55) Work on reconstruction began under the East German regime with all signs of war damage eliminated by 1960. It was redesigned and extensively reconstructed again in the period 2001 – 2006.

<sup>30</sup> The Bayerisches Viertel (Bavarian Quarter) lies to the south of the Old Town and the Swiss Quarter. Originally agricultural land, it was purchased in the 1870s for housing with the streets named after large Bavarian towns (Münchener, Bayreuther, Bamberger Straßen) which pointed to the sympathies felt at the time between Saxony and Bavaria. Like the Schweizer Viertel, the area was home to the prosperous and professional classes. Devastated in the February 1945 raids, the Bayerisches Viertel was cleared of rubble in the 1950s and redeveloped for modern housing.

<sup>31</sup> The Schweizer Viertel (Swiss Quarter) was a district to the south of the Old Town which contained a high concentration of mansions. One of its most famous former residents was the Jewish academic, Victor Klemperer, who has been extensively quoted in this work; he lived at Hohe Straße 8. The Schweizer Viertel was severely damaged in the February raids, and much of it was levelled in the 1950s for new housing developments.

<sup>32</sup> The Angermanns had previously lived in the central Dresden district of Johannstadt at the beginning of the century when Marianne was born at no. 13 Stephaniestraße in 1904. Almost all of the Johannstadt area was destroyed in the February raids.

<sup>33</sup> = das große Garten Palais (The Great Garden Palace). Located in the city's main botanical gardens near the Old Town and built in 1679, this pleasure palace was one of Dresden's first Baroque structures. Almost completely destroyed in the February raids, the palace was slowly reconstructed over the years and finally rebuilt in 1966. Further renovation has continued since German reunification.

<sup>34</sup> The Städtischer Ausstellungspalast (City Exhibition Palace) was situated in the northwest of the Great Garden. Completed in 1896 the Palace's main hall had an area of 1260 m<sup>2</sup> and could accommodate 2 000 visitors. In addition, there were numerous adjoining spaces, pavilions, and meeting rooms as well a concert hall for 900. Destroyed in the February 1945 raids, the site is now occupied by the Gläserne Manufaktur (Transparent Factory) which produces electric vehicles for VW.

<sup>35</sup> As Thomas Widera notes: "Four air-raids in 48 hours had wiped out Dresden's Old Town, killed thousands of people and destroyed irreplaceable works of art." (Widera, 508)

anything. Do you have anything with which we could make nappies for our grandchild [he asked].<sup>36</sup> On Thursday morning Frau Wengler came, Getrud Körner, lost everything, eyes all glued shut, feet burned, she lost her shoes and had to run through fire, water and mud. Today we had to get her to the military hospital, at the Parkhotel, with a 40-degree fever.<sup>37</sup> At 4 o'clock in the morning Frau Hertzsch's grandchildren, 10 and 6 years old, came and were looking for their mother. They had head wounds and a triple arm fracture. The mother was found with a double fracture of the skull and smoke inhalation. Child, I could write pages of the misery and unspeakable calamity which has befallen us. And that is not all. One has to see the poor people passing through: desolate, sick, injured, dirty, in rags – with horses, men and carts. God has smitten them thus. It is unimaginable. 100,000 humans are said to be lost.<sup>38</sup> The corpses lie on the street, without heads, arms or legs. Parents are crying out for their children, children for their parents. And what for? One cannot comprehend it anymore. At home it is difficult too, no gas, no electricity, no water. But this one has to accept quietly. We are so tired, so unspeakably tired. What lies ahead of us? Dresden has been declared a frontier town.<sup>39</sup> The Russians have almost reached Görlitz, about 100 km from Dresden.<sup>40</sup> What do they want with us? Here there's nothing but a pile of rubble.

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<sup>36</sup> This was Charlotte's brother, Friedrich Beutler, and the baby, Elke Zöllner (b. 1944).

<sup>37</sup> This was Gertrud Auguste Wengler *née* Körner (1895 – 1945). Her death certificate indicates that she lived in Comeniusstraße, a street that runs parallel to the Great Garden. Her home, therefore, would have been directly in the centre of the bombing. Although Gertrud Wengler clearly survived the events of 13-14 February, she died only a few days later on 25 February at Bautzener Landstraße 3, the address of the Lahmann Sanatorium which was then being used as a military hospital. The sanatorium was immediately next door to the Parkhotel. The cause of death is given as "enemy air-raid". Given that Dresden was not raided again until April 1945, one can assume she died of injuries received on the night of 13 – 14 February. (Source: Stadtarchiv der Landeshauptstadt Dresden; Dresden, Deutschland; 6.4.25 *Sterberegister/Sterbefallanzeigen*)

<sup>38</sup> The casualty figures for the raid on Dresden have long been controversial. The Dresden Historikerkommission (Dresden Commission of Historians) came to the conclusion that "up to 25 000" people died in the raids between 13-14 February 1945. The scholarly consensus is that around 25 000 people were killed in these attacks. (See: Reichert, Friedrich "Verbrannt bis zur Unkenntlichkeit" (61) in: *Verbrannt bis zur Unkenntlichkeit. Die Zerstörung Dresdens 1945*. Ed. Stadtmuseum Dresden (Dresden, 1994). 40 – 62.) The controversies concerning the enumeration of the victims are discussed further in the introduction.

<sup>39</sup> At Army High Command, General Heinz Guderian had given orders to make ready the Verteidigungsbereich Dresden (Dresden Defensive Area) from 1 January 1945 but he had concealed this decree from the inhabitants in order to keep up morale. (Widera, Thomas. *Dresden, 1945-1948: Politik und Gesellschaft unter sowjetischer Besatzungsherrschaft*. Dresden: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004. 68)

<sup>40</sup> Victor Klemperer had been told on 11 February already that Russian tanks had reached Görlitz. (Klemperer, 832)



The Angermanns' residence at Silberweg 1a, Dresden, as it is today. The couple occupied an apartment on the ground floor. This building was largely untouched during the raids of 13-14 February and is now under historic places protection Photo: Moritz Engel, 2021.

24 / 2 / 45

My dear, here's our daily routine! On 16. 2. 45 air raid warning in the morning from 11.30 until 1 o'clock. During the night 3.30 until 5 o'clock.

17 / 2 / 45 – morning 11 – 12 o'clock, evening 9.30 – 11 o'clock

18 / 2 / 45 quiet

19 / 2 / 45 quiet

20 / 2 / 45 11 o'clock – 1 o'clock in the morning

9.30 – 11 o'clock in the evening

21 / 2 / 45 12.30 – 1 o'clock in the morning

1.45 – 2.30 at night

21 / 2 / 45 12.30 – 1.30 in the morning

1.45 – 2.35 midday

22 / 2 / 45 10.30 – 12.35 in the morning

23 / 2 / 45 3.30 – 5 o'clock in the morning

10.50 – 1 o'clock in the morning

24 / 2 / 45 quiet for once, thank God<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The alarms listed by Charlotte would have been sounded as a precautionary measure whenever aircraft were spotted approaching the region. Dresden itself was targeted twice more after this entry was written: on 2 March and 17 April. (Angell, 3)

2 / 3 / 45

Dear child, we were all still suffering from those dreadful days of 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February 45, when today, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 45, another dreadful terror attack took place, 1½ hours, from 10 until 11.30.<sup>42</sup> This time they targeted the Neustadt, the railway station, which had just been repaired so that trains could run again,<sup>43</sup> and the military barracks and industrial district. When will we be hit, when will we be made homeless? But then I always think, just as the world around us seems to be collapsing: our end cannot come to meet us from where you live.<sup>44</sup> We would like to be together with you again just once more. But what fate can the poor Fatherland expect, and what can we expect? The Russians are at the gate

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5 / 4 / 45

My dear, we've had 5 air raid warnings since yesterday evening at 10.30. We are dead tired and not capable of doing any kind of work. We wanted to go out to eat because one just doesn't know what to cook any more. At the Erholung<sup>45</sup> a placard had just been put up: for soldiers only, people injured in air raids etc. As the sirens then started to sound we hurried home. I wanted to cook something quickly – but no gas. The only solution was to go to the Parkhotel.<sup>46</sup> We just managed to get a table when the sirens went off again. A glance at the menu showed – regular dinner: turnips, 50 grams of bread. Where are you supposed to get 50 grams of bread? We went home again, drank a bottle of beer, ate a few pieces of bread and were hungry until the evening meal. Yes, child, we are more or less always hungry! In period no. 75 from 9 - 29 April we will get per person per week: 5 100 grams or per [?] 100 grams[,] 75 grams of rye flour, 250 grams of meat, all together counting the butter that's 125 grams of fat, 225 grams of cereals, 250 grams of jam or 125 grams of sugar, 62.5 grams of cheese, 125 grams of quark and 100 grams of ersatz coffee.<sup>47</sup> We have no reserves whatsoever, I don't really know what to do. What, for heaven's sake, is going to become of us? We are terribly worried about Dorothee and the children, terribly. What is going to happen, child? They are advancing towards Berlin,

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<sup>42</sup> This was a raid by 406 aircraft of the US 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force on Dresden's marshalling yards. (Angell, 3)

<sup>43</sup> The Neustädter Bahnhof on the Schlesischer Platz was the smaller of the two intercity railway stations and connected Dresden with Leipzig and Görlitz. It was from here that Dresden's Jewish community were deported to the death camps further east; the raids of February 1945 prevented the forced removal of the city's last 230 Jewish citizens. Today, almost all long-distance trains, both national and international, stop at the Neustädter Bahnhof. ([https://www.stadtwikidd.de/wiki/Neust%C3%A4dter\\_Bahnhof](https://www.stadtwikidd.de/wiki/Neust%C3%A4dter_Bahnhof) (Accessed 11 November 2021))

<sup>44</sup> That is to say: Charlotte cannot image her death coming from bombers operating out of England.

<sup>45</sup> "Erholung" was a name given to a public area of rest and recreation which may also have had a restaurant or café. This must have been close to the Angermanns since the bombing would have made movement within Dresden very difficult.

<sup>46</sup> The Parkhotel was located at 7 Bautzner Landstraße, a 200 metre walk from the Angermanns' apartment in the Silberweg. An inn called 'Zum Weißen Hirsch' ("The White Stag") had stood on the site of the Parkhotel in the seventeenth century, and eventually this name came to refer to the entire district. Extensively rebuilt in 1914, the hotel became a popular location for dinner and dancing in the 1920s and '30s with both locals and guests at the nearby sanatoria. Occupied in 1945 by the Soviets as officers' quarters and a cultural centre, it reverted to being a hotel and entertainment venue in 1952. (See: <https://www.stadtwikidd.de/wiki/Parkhotel> Accessed 18 March 2021)

<sup>47</sup> This entry is rather confusing. Presumably the figure of 5 100 grams (5.1 kg) relates to the three-week allocation per person for the period 9 – 29 April. The figures subsequently provided must then only give examples of how the individual ration was composed since they do not add up to 5 100.

they are in Cologne, Düsseldorf, Münster, Bielefeld, in Gotha, Suhl, Meiningen, Eisenach, and in Kassel.<sup>48</sup> Who will get here first? The Russians or the Americans?

14 / 4 / 45

My dear, now the time has come – it is 12 o'clock midnight. We sit here and wait for the enemy. Dresden has been declared a fortress city that is to be defended – this poor, poor city, which has been reduced to rubble. 480 000 dead<sup>49</sup> – what is a second rampage of murder supposed to achieve, why add a new misery to our boundless ones? Jochen is serving as sergeant of a signal company in Übigau<sup>50</sup> with local troops defending the fortress of Dresden – God help him. We anticipate the Americans arriving tonight. They have bypassed Leipzig through Lorna, Chemnitz, Mittweida, Freiberg, just another 35 km. It is a triumphal march – hard to believe! All of us are so tired, exhausted and worn out, we just can't go on. This is a strange Saturday, there was brilliant weather – just like summer. We got up before dawn. Father went out shopping and I, perhaps for the last time, got the flat into readiness for Sunday and put some greenery into the vases. Shopping was very difficult today. We got all the rations for the coming week, and sugar for May and June. But one had to queue for hours in an agitated [...]

[text missing in the original]

Then we had a bath, perhaps for the last time, and enjoyed it in spite of the sirens which hardly ever stopped today. For the evening meal we had mushroom soup again, potato salad, cooking cheese – then we discovered that there wasn't any light anywhere, a short circuit – and then that Captain Hänsel's family above us<sup>51</sup> – ever so 'stumm' as Maria would have said – had got themselves ready for a night in the cellar. So we did the same: 2 chairs, a deckchair with blankets and pillows, all our food such as: bread, sugar, butter, jam, the rest of the mettwurst,<sup>52</sup> the remaining potato salad, the little loaf of wheat bread for Sunday, 3 bottles of ersatz tea. It could very well be the case that we have to camp in the cellar for days. -

22 / 4 / 45

- here I fell asleep. And only today, after 8 days, have I found time to continue writing. These are strange days. One just can't finish anything. We have got the cellar nice and set up – night after night things are being stolen. The soldiers are looking for civilian clothes so they can desert, others are looking for food. We have now decided to bring the suitcases and preserves up to the flat again, it is just too exhausting. They say the Russians are smoking out the cellars because they fear hidden cells of resistance there. The valuable old pieces of Meissen, your old coffee service, your Madonna, books which we would like to keep for you – everything we had carefully stored in the cellar using up all

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<sup>48</sup> The cities named are in both West and East Germany and indicate that territory was being relentlessly lost to the Soviets and the Western Allies.

<sup>49</sup> See introduction on the question of estimating the number of dead in the February air raids.

<sup>50</sup> A district in the northwest of Dresden.

<sup>51</sup> Gustav Ferdinand Martin Hänsel occupied an apartment on the first floor of Silberweg 1a. In the Dresden Address Book for 1943-44 he is listed as an "agricultural official." *Adreßbuch der Landeshauptstadt Dresden-Freital-Radebeul mit umliegenden 6 Städten und 24 Gemeinden Dohna Heidenau Klotzsche*. Deutsche National Bibliothek; Leipzig, Deutschland; Publisher: Güntzsche Stiftung.; Bestand: 1943/44; Signatur: ZC 2382

<sup>52</sup> Sausage made from pork mince.



our strength. We just can't bring it all up again. The Russians are in Radeberg,<sup>53</sup> 12 km from us. We are expecting the bridges to be blown up. Everyone is getting out. Tomorrow we will be alone in the house. Dresden is a fortress; everyone is afraid of artillery bombardment. Where would we go? The misery along the highway is terrible. Father is right: better to die at home than to perish out on the road. It's as if our rooms dispensed calm! Everybody comes to us and we tell them: the people who are coming are human beings too. We never whipped up hatred against others, we quietly minded our own business. At some point there has to be justice. I am always entertaining this silly idea: that surely we will not have to suffer the worst at the hands of the country you both live in! The most idiotic rumours are circulating that the Russians and the Americans are supposed to have parted company, that Ribbentrop<sup>54</sup> is said to have gone to London for peace negotiations. That a cease-fire has been agreed to. I cannot imagine that an enemy would give up the fruits of their victory once they had a grip on Berlin! Today we lived well once more. The people who had fled left us a bottle of sparkling wine, others a jar of preserved pears. That was a real feast for us who suffer so from hunger. So Dresden is now a fortress – apart from the area from the Mondgrund bridge up to the tram station at Bühlau, which has been declared an open city.<sup>55</sup> There is probably some security in that. How much I would like to keep your possessions safe. Now we are off to bed, fully dressed, and we'll wait and see what tonight has in store for us. There is no electricity, no radio, no siren – strange times. We are thinking of you, Berlin is under fire<sup>56</sup> – Dorothee, who is with the children down there in Grainau, is totally isolated – we are thinking of you and hope to see you again.

26 / 4 / 45

Dear child, these are strange days! [This] book<sup>57</sup> is in the rucksack to make sure it doesn't get lost. It is still quiet! The weather is very warm and sunny. The fruit trees are in reckless bloom, tulips, cowslips, daffodils, violets, lilies of the valley, magnolias, forsythia, cornelian cherry – one might think that never, ever has spring been so beautiful. But is it? Or does one only feel it with gratitude because it could all be lost at any time? We go about our work as we always do, and not because the Russians could be here any moment. Except for one family everyone in the building has returned, worn out and tired – they say it was terrible on the roads, nowhere to sleep, nothing to eat. How fortuitous that we remained at home. One is so very tired, all day we have to run around and queue for every little thing for hours. And in the end, we managed to get some things for 12 pfennigs. They are not distributing much: flour, sugar, semolina, pearl barley, but everything long-term, sugar until August. Sardines can be had with meat coupons, 100 grams of prunes for 84 pfennigs. Tinned milk instead of normal milk. One runs around for one's daily bread and has such a heavy heart. Ernst in Berlin, Lichterfelde gone, Köpenick gone - the house, the

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<sup>53</sup> A town to the northeast of Dresden.

<sup>54</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893 – 1946), Nazi Germany's Foreign Minister. One of the main accused at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, the court found von Ribbentrop guilty as charged of war crimes and he was executed on 16 October 1946.

<sup>55</sup> An open city is one that is not being defended in order to save it from destruction. As it will not put up any resistance the declaration of 'open city' status is intended to signal to enemy forces that it can be peacefully occupied without the use of violence. The Angermanns' apartment was directly in the middle of this zone: the Mondgrund Bridge was to the west, and Bühlau to the east.

<sup>56</sup> The Soviet assault on Berlin began on 16 April and ended on 2 May.

<sup>57</sup> i.e. the letter journal and diary.

new factory??<sup>58</sup> Dorothee completely cut off with the children in Grainau. We heard from them last on 2 March. The terror attack on Munich has been extended: to Garmisch, Partenkirchen and surrounding places. O God, how worried we are about all three them. Glauchau<sup>59</sup> is in American hands. Uncle Fritz was there as head of the commissariat [Intendantur] which was moved there from Dresden. We hope he isn't now a prisoner of war. Now, child, something gruesome follows: the statistical data of the terror attacks on 13 and 14 February. On 14 February 572 000 incendiary bombs were dropped, on 16 February 37.000 explosive bombs, the incendiary bombs were filled for the first time with phosphorus and Indian rubber.<sup>60</sup> There are 300 000 registered dead, 35 000 of whom are from Dresden. All together 600 000 including those who are missing. Dresden had 850 000 inhabitants and at the time of the terror attacks it had grown to 1 250 000 with refugees and foreigners.<sup>61</sup> Child, this was the biggest calamity that has befallen your hometown. What else will it have to endure?

27 / 4 / 45

Today at 6 o'clock in the morning the Augustus bridge was blown up.<sup>62</sup> Not because of the Russian advances but because it had taken a pasting during one of the terror attacks and had become very unsafe to use.

28 / 4 / 45

We were in the city – this was not a terror attack, this was a crime. Child, you cannot imagine anything more terrible. From Strießen almost up to Plauen there's not a single house left standing. It is just unimaginable. Narrow footpaths in the middle [of the road] bordered with mountains of rubble and stones. Windows blown out, gables about to collapse. My composure lasted as far as the Frauenkirche, when I had to weep bitterly. Will it ever be possible to remove this mountain of rubble and stone? In the narrow streets around the church the rubble is as high as a mountain. I wonder who is lying at rest there now and what they suffered in those hours? We were quite alone on Schloßstraße. The castle, the uniquely beautiful Hofkirche, everything, destroyed. The Zwinger – it is a dismal sight – and the magnolias, the pears everything is blooming in

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<sup>58</sup> Presumably Charlotte is referring here to the house and factory in Dietz an der Lahn to which Ernst Schnabel was supposed to relocate.

<sup>59</sup> A city in Saxony 100 km to the west of Dresden.

<sup>60</sup> According to Jörg Friedrich, the British had experimented in 1941 already with an incendiary bomb which contained a mixture of phosphorus and rubber, though it was not regarded as a success. It required tinder dry combustible material at the target and failed to set the rather damp German forests alight, as was intended. Instead, they were used on urban targets such as Wuppertal. Benzol and rubber were found to be a more effective incendiary because viscous flammable liquid could be sprayed over an area of two thousand square metres when each thirty pound device detonated. Three million bombs containing this solution were dropped by 1944. (Friedrich, 15 – 16)

<sup>61</sup> The figures for the numbers of refugees temporarily sheltering in Dresden in early February 1945, and the number of victims of the bombing raids, must be regarded with some caution, for reasons explained by Thomas Widera: "Determining the correct number of victims proved difficult for several reasons. Many bodies could not be identified, family members who had been found again should have had their names taken off the register of missing. Some residents were outside the city on the day of the attack and were therefore considered missing, no one knew the number of refugees in the city. The disproportionately large number of several hundred thousand advertisements for missing people (up to twenty enquiries could be received for one person) is one reason for the exaggeratedly high numbers of victims. Another is the tendentious depiction of the bombing in the National Socialist press, which, though initially hesitant, portrayed the destruction of Dresden in shrill tones on the instructions of the Propaganda Ministry." (Widera 2006, 508)

<sup>62</sup> See entry of 7 May.

glorious beauty. The birds are singing. The dandelions have spread like a yellow carpet. Hardly any people, no clocks chiming – at 10.30 the clock at the castle stopped. – It is a horror. It is as if a line had been drawn between everything which used to be life and everything that is life. Where have all the people gone? Most of them are lying under the rubble. And when one walks through this emptiness, when the smell of decay wafts across everything, then you think you can hear these poor souls groaning and moaning.

30 / 4 / 45

Mussolini is dead! Some say: in Como, when he tried to cross the Swiss border – in German uniform – he was captured and taken to Milan and, together with 17 of his loyal followers, executed on the Piazzale Loreto – the corpses were left for public viewing. Others say he was murdered in Milan. This is how an idea ends! But Mussolini was great! Just think of the draining of the Pontine Marshes! And he let the people have their Emperor and Pope.<sup>63</sup>

2 / 5 / 45

Hitler is dead! Today, at 7 o'clock in the morning the news came over the radio. Some say, he fell at the front. Others that he died in the bunker of the Chancellery.<sup>64</sup> Either way, what is going to happen now? Göring is said to have resigned because of a heart condition. Others say he is in Sweden and some say he is dead.<sup>65</sup> Who is going to replace Hitler? How dark it is around us today. We are very worried about Ernst. Lichterfelde and Köpenick are obliterated. What has happened to the house, the new factory? Garmisch, Partenkirchen, Mittenwald, everything 30 km from Innsbruck is in American hands. Dorothee and the children. We haven't heard from them since 2 March. Letters we had sent to Langenberg have been returned, marked: unable to deliver. Child, one day is more worrying than the next! What is going to happen? – How long is this going to last? We don't have enough to eat. Father is really deteriorating. At night we are woken by hunger. Together we get 300 grams of bread a day which we divide up with a letter-balance. Nothing's getting to the greengrocers – today it is snowing so what can there be growing – It is dark in the world. There are days in one's life which demand something special. That's why we had a cup of real coffee with tinned milk today – It was a special ration because of the terror attacks in February and we had sugar for once instead of artificial sweetener. Each of us also had a piece of rye bread with butter!

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<sup>63</sup> The former Italian dictator and his party were stopped by partisans on 27 April near Lake Como as they were on their way to Switzerland. The next day, Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were summarily executed in the nearby village of Giulino di Mezzegra. Their corpses were taken to Milan where they were hung upside down in the Piazzale Loreto. Charlotte's admiring comments about Mussolini's alleged achievements indicate the depth of her own indoctrination by fascist propaganda.

<sup>64</sup> Adolf Hitler committed suicide in the bunker of the Reich Chancellery on 30 April.

<sup>65</sup> Hermann Göring (1893 – 1946). One of the earliest members of the Nazi Party, Göring held numerous State offices including President of the Reichstag and Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe (Air Force). In a 1941 decree Hitler had named Göring as his successor in the event that he should lose his freedom of action. Göring's attempt to trigger this clause at the end of April 1945 provoked a furious response from the Führer in his final days: Göring was compelled to resign all his offices and placed under house arrest. The public was told that he had stepped down for health reasons – almost certainly the origin of Charlotte's reference to a heart condition. Convicted of crimes against humanity in the Nuremberg War Trials, he committed suicide the night before his intended execution in October 1946. (See: Overy, R.J. *Göring, the "iron man"*. London, Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.)

6 / 5 / 45<sup>66</sup>

My dear, dear child, how often will I open your book? Since early this morning the thunder of the cannons has been roaring across the heath without a break. The windows are shaking. Your Madonna is in the cellar wrapped up in the guest duvet! The Russians are advancing towards the Protectorate,<sup>67</sup> Meißen<sup>68</sup> is supposed to be under heavy bombardment. Good old Meißen! The bridges have been blown up, the cathedral is said to have suffered a direct hit. We don't know anything for certain. The radio is not working.

7. 5. 45.

That was a lively Sunday! People came one after another came and there was much discussion whether they should go or stay. How rash the Saxons are in such situations. We have always said: we're staying. And this is what we are going to do no matter what. Father hasn't received his pension for April and May. What are we supposed to live on? Wouldn't it be better to be wiped out rather than worry about a miserable old age? The whole Sunday, all through the night, the cannons were blasting away. In the evening the barrage became so heavy that people rushed into the cellar – low-flying Russian planes!! I ran out onto the street, with all the others shouting at me to stop, and asked a soldier what was going on. He assured me that we had nothing to fear that night – but afterwards ... Then we slaved away until 12 o'clock midnight: To prepare for a possible evacuation we packed rucksacks, 2 suitcases, a small case with food, tried on the clothes and put out everything down to the last detail: 2 coats on top of each other, 2 shirts, 2 sets of drawers. At 6 o'clock in the morning we got up. The cannons and the work let<sup>69</sup> – Just now the order came: at 9.30 in the evening open all windows because the bridges will be blown up.<sup>70</sup> In the meantime it's now 11 o'clock. We were at the Blomberg Viewing Point<sup>71</sup> and watched the enormous fires in the new part of the town, in the industrial area. It was a blood-red inferno. It's said to be the food stores which have been blown up as the Russians approach. Child, what total confusion! Anyway, we got up at 6 o'clock and made the cellar habitable in case we had an artillery bombardment: we cleaned the walls, swept the floor, got a mattress, deck-chair, trunk to use as a seat, a small table, tea in preserving jars, water, all our preserves, a basket with some provisions, a basket with plates, glasses, cutlery etc. our 2 small cases, the rucksacks, first aid provisions, a temporary toilet – and at 9 o'clock we had finished. We then turned our attention to the household, and, to the dismay of the other tenants, we had a bath, washed our hair, had lunch and in spite of the cannons thundering, had a good sleep until 4 o'clock. We just couldn't do anything else anymore. Then we did our errands. There has been an order to leave town. Three trucks will leave in the direction of Marienberg.<sup>72</sup> People are supposed to take ample food, but

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<sup>66</sup> Although a military evacuation order was issued on this day it did not guarantee the peaceful occupation of the city. (Widera 2006, 511)

<sup>67</sup> Most of what is today the Czech Republic was occupied by the Germans in 1938 and named the Reich Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

<sup>68</sup> The site of the famous porcelain factories, around 25 km to the northwest of Dresden.

<sup>69</sup> This sentence is unfinished in the manuscript.

<sup>70</sup> Four of the five bridges over the Elbe (including the Augustusbrücke / Augustus Bridge) were blown up by German sappers on the penultimate day of the war to prevent Soviet troops from reaching the left bank of the river. (Widera 2006, 511)

<sup>71</sup> The Blomberg-Blick was a viewing point in the Weißer Hirsch area of Dresden close to where the Angermanns lived. Named after Werner von Blomberg (1878 – 1946), the Reichswehrminister (Minister of the Army) who served from 1933 – 1938 under the National Socialists. After the war it was renamed the Friedensblick (Peace View).

<sup>72</sup> A Saxon town around 80 km to the southwest of Dresden.

accommodation cannot be guaranteed. And people are leaving!! Locals and those from outside the town – they're all walking with hand carts, prams, scooters laden with bags and suitcases. They are walking with horses, with ox-carts, all pressed together like herrings, with the fat pig lying comfortable all on its own on the cart. The men swear, the poor women apathetic and tired, the children happy and eager for adventures. There is no end to the misery. Dresden is supposed to have been declared an open city, apparently the decision is to be made tomorrow at 8 o'clock in the morning. Everyone wants to stay awake tonight. We are going to bed. We are so unspeakably tired. And so hungry as well. Our potatoes that are supposed to last until 27 June will be gone in 14 days. What is going to happen then? Not even turnips are to be had. There is no butter or margarine. What became of Germany? Hitler said: give me 10 years and you won't be able to recognise Germany anymore. He had 10 years and soon we won't have a homeland anymore. We worry about the Schnabels. When everything is over they won't have a roof over their heads. We are so very sorry for them. They will have to start from scratch again. It is getting on for 12 o'clock and the cannons have stopped shooting. Maybe there is some truth in the suspension of hostilities by 8 o'clock tomorrow morning. We are now going to bed.

When we still had complete possession of the Ukraine, at New Year's Eve in 1942, Russian pamphlets in German were dropped. A soldier told me that they said:

German soldiers – consider the end!  
God cannot be mocked!  
You marched through our country –  
You have to leave your dead in our land –  
We can regain our country –  
But your dead in our land are not going to rise again -

8 / 5 / 45

Just now, at 6.30, the first Russians came through the Hirsch!<sup>73</sup> The night was quiet. At about 5 o'clock a mad noise from cannons or explosives started. It is a beautifully bright morning. Everyone is going about their work. If only the radio was working so that we knew what was going on in the world.

The Russians enter houses, make themselves at home, quietly, disciplined, not contemptuously and brutally as was the case with the French occupation.<sup>74</sup> They ask for watches. When they come to us, how will they react to that piece of paper with its Russian inscription on your large wardrobe? It is 9 o'clock. The whole of the Hirsch is on the move with kit and caboodle. How undignified the Saxons are. They should stay at home and reflect on what is going to become of us. When we suffered the occupation of the Ruhr in the Rhineland, all of us sat at home with the blinds closed and didn't venture outside for

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<sup>73</sup> Units of the Soviet Army reached Radebeul and the northern suburbs on 7 May where they continued to encounter resistance. German troops retreated over the Carolabrücke (Carola Bridge) which they blew up, but this only momentarily deterred the Soviets who gained the left bank of the Elbe during the night and the following morning and were able to occupy the whole city. As late as 8 May – the last day of the war – the National Socialist press was still urging Germans to fight for a “final victory”. (Widera 2006, 511 – 513)

<sup>74</sup> Charlotte refers here, in particular, to the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr from 1923 – 1925. See the introduction of Journal 1 for an account of this occupation and its effect on the Angermann household.

a number of days.<sup>75</sup> Here they move about outside as if it were a holiday. The Russians must be disgusted by that.

They say the Party has been dissolved.<sup>76</sup> Pray God that is true. They say that Goebbels has poisoned himself together with his wife and children. The bodies have been found. So far Hitler's corpse has not been found.<sup>77</sup> How easy it is in the last, difficult hour to leave the poor people alone to their fate.

People have been freed from the concentration camps:<sup>78</sup> Pastor Niemöller<sup>79</sup> after almost 8 year of imprisonment, Schacht,<sup>80</sup> General von Falkenhausen.<sup>81</sup> An order issued by Himmler has been found to dissolve all the camps but first to eliminate those in the worst condition. They say the Americans have found trainloads of corpses in Buchenhain near Weimar.<sup>82</sup>

The Queen of Holland is home again.<sup>83</sup> How pleased we are for our dear Mrs L. who had to endure such terribly bitter years.

Our flat has been searched thoroughly twice, father has been frisked from head to toe. They took his wristwatch and my beloved fountain pen from my desk. The first two, they come pointing their guns, were very disciplined. They read the note on your wardrobe and said goodbye when they left. Of the next two, one was less agreeable.

In the park, staff officers were discussing things over some maps. They're big, well-built, well-nourished people, faultless gear, their chests full of medals, wonderful, well-

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<sup>75</sup> As mayor of Langenberg in the Rhineland, Konrad Angermann had appealed for residents to remain indoors when the French occupation forces arrived in the town in 1923. See Journal 1.

<sup>76</sup> i.e. The Nazi Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei - National Socialist German Workers' Party)

<sup>77</sup> Josef Goebbels (1897 – 1945) was Reich Minister of Propaganda from 1933 – 1945 and one of Hitler's closest associates. Goebbels' six children were killed with potassium cyanide on 1 May 1945 while in the Führerbunker in Berlin. The children were aged between four and twelve. Goebbels and his wife, Magda, killed themselves later that day, also by means of cyanide. The badly burned bodies of another man and woman were found in a bomb crater in the same gardens on 5 May and were determined, on the basis of their dental work and the presence of glass fragments from cyanide capsules, to be the bodies of Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun. (Sharples, Caroline. "The Death of Nazism? Investigating Hitler's Remains and Survival Rumours in Post-War Germany." *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Mortality and Its Timings: When Is Death?* Ed. McCorristine, Shane. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017. 87-102. 93-94)

<sup>78</sup> The following three names mentioned by Charlotte were part of a group of 141 high-profile individuals from sixteen different nations who were taken hostage by the SS in April 1945 and transported to South Tirol. The head of the Gestapo, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, had intended to use these hostages as bargaining chips in negotiations for a ceasefire with the western Allies. Should these negotiations fail, the hostages were to be murdered. The group was eventually freed on 30 April by the regular German army under the command of Captain Wichard von Alvensleben. (See: Richardi, Hans-Günter. *SS-Geiseln in der Alpenfestung: die Verschleppung prominenter KZ-Häftlinge aus Deutschland nach Südtirol*. Bozen: Edition Raetia, 2015.)

<sup>79</sup> Martin Niemöller (1892 – 1984). Theologian and leading representative of the Confessing Church in Germany. Initially positively disposed to the National Socialists he later opposed their religious policies and was arrested in 1938 and held in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. After the war he became a prominent peace activist.

<sup>80</sup> Hjalmar Schacht (1877 – 1970). Banker, politician, member of the Nazi Party. President of the Reichsbank from 1933 – 1939 and Economics Minister from 1934 – 1937. Arrested after the failed assassination attempt on Hitler in July 1944 he was interned in the Ravensbrück, Flossenbürg and Dachau concentration camps. Charged with war crimes at the Nuremberg Trials, he was eventually acquitted. An attempt to hold him to account by the state of Württemberg-Baden during the postwar de-nazification process was similarly unsuccessful.

<sup>81</sup> Alexander von Falkenhausen (1878 – 1966). General, head of the German military administration of Belgium and Holland from 1940 – 1944. Suspected of support for the July Plot of 1944 he was arrested and held in the Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps.

<sup>82</sup> Correctly: Buchenwald concentration camp.

<sup>83</sup> Wilhelmina of the Netherlands (1880 – 1962).

groomed horses, a great number of dapple-greys among them. Everything is in good order: coats, uniforms, shoes, straps and belts, the carriages, especially the horses. And what a number of horses they have! The tanks are monsters, the house shakes whenever they drive by. The airplanes have the same sound as ours, but the car horns are quicker and brighter. Everything moves so quickly. The carriages, 4 horses in front, 2 behind, race madly along, the horses actually jump. Cars, motorcycles, cyclists – everything races along. Everything is in good order, well maintained, people and animals well-nourished. After all, they are the victors!

Just now, at 1.55 we had a 'visitor'. The doorbell rang furiously. A half-drunk, stocky Russian from Siberia. With a smile he sat down on my desk chair, and with a smile he asked us to sit down too. He started a conversation which we couldn't understand at all, produced a bottle of vodka from his pocket, and asked for 3 glasses. I had to pour, then he clinked his glass with us, we drank up, he said "patab"<sup>84</sup>, shook hands with us and left. A young Russian came and asked for water. Suddenly he became unwell. I gave him a painkiller, because he said: head hurts, head hurts. He was very grateful but said: "Woman first". So I took one too. He was very miserable and weak. I wonder how far he has come? He has a mother too who worries about him –

Then 5 of them came, "Where comrade?", very aggressive! When they saw that we had helped their sick friend, they were very polite. Then 3 came, searched the flat for "soldier". When they didn't find anything, they said "cigarette" and offered father a 2-rubel-note. But we didn't have any. In the evening another 2 came and politely asked for water. That way the day passed quite well, contrary to expectations! They say an agreement with the Americans has been reached. They are supposed to arrive today to take over the occupation and leave the Protectorate<sup>85</sup> to the Russians. They say the American flag is already flying over the Luisenhof.<sup>86</sup> It is 9 o'clock. Outside it is quiet and peaceful. It swept across us like a hurricane. How undignified people are. At a temporary camp a Russian smashed a window. He was immediately punished. German women climbed in, stole just about everything and almost killed themselves. They fetched a Russian officer. He smiled: Russian punished, German women bad, can do nothing. The Russians opened up the store of a bombed-out shoemaker, 4 Russian girls gave the shoes to people, without payment. One lady even took two pairs! We need to go to bed, we are totally exhausted. We just heard that the Russian<sup>87</sup> first went to the lady next door, took her schnapps, emptied half the bottle and then came over and served it up in a friendly way to us.

9 / 5 / 45

We had a quiet night, but sleep was out of the question. One heard every step, every noise. We were ready very early and that was good. The apartment was thoroughly searched once. Soon we will be completely exhausted. In the cellars they wrecked just about everything. They slashed open beds, took the wine, preserves, suits. It lasted until midday. Thank God they didn't make it into our cellar again. As quickly as we could we transported everything up into the flat: your Madonna, your old, precious Meissen coffee-set, our trunk with our clothes, Meissen porcelain, valuable books – we were at our limit. Such haste and fear that they would return. We sat behind closed shutters and didn't dare open

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<sup>84</sup> The handwriting also allows for "patsh" as an alternative. There does not seem to be an identifiable Russian word that would fit the context; perhaps the soldier was from one of the Soviet Union's many non-Russian speaking minorities.

<sup>85</sup> i.e. the Reich Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

<sup>86</sup> A restaurant in the district of Loschwitz which is situated in an elevated position on the banks of the Elbe.

<sup>87</sup> i.e. the half-drunk Russian soldier mentioned at the start of the entry.

them for fresh air. Midday today I lifted the shutters in the kitchen and opened the window for a moment and immediately there were 3 people there, a woman, a soldier and a civilian. The soldier shook father like a dog, demanded his watch, which had already been stolen, became enraged, drew his revolver and said: then killing you. In my despair I shouted – don't any of you speak German? At that the civilian spoke up and calmed the furious soldier. Slowly and quietly, I explained to him: the flat has been searched 14 times, everything has been turned upside down, the watch has been taken. Then my composure left me, and I had to cry. Then he said: woman not crying, everything good – he explained it all to the soldier until he, too, said – everything good – and he put his hand into a sack and gave us 2½ pounds of the most wonderful sausage, which they had just stolen from the butcher's opposite.

What misery there is up here.<sup>88</sup> 30 young women have committed suicide because they didn't want to carry on living after being raped.<sup>89</sup> A Czech who works at the cemetery stopped Father. He would have to come tomorrow morning and help dig graves with 3 Russian soldiers supervising. Now German men have to work, he said. There were so many corpses of people, including party members, who had been shot or committed suicide. For every Jew 30 SS-men would have to be shot, and for an officer 50! The SS had behaved like devils, murdered women and children, he said. How gruesome all this is. At the office of the head of the local Party branch in Bühlau<sup>90</sup> they found boxes upon boxes of provisions. We go hungry and this mob stashed away everything for themselves.<sup>91</sup> They have arrested the landlord from the Parkhotel. They said he mistreated the Russian girls who were lodging there.

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<sup>88</sup> i.e. in the Weisser Hirsch district.

<sup>89</sup> Death records support Charlotte's claims of suicide amongst young women. Although recordkeeping at this time was understandably less than comprehensive, nevertheless the twelve official death certificates in online archives for Dresden women between the ages of 15 and 25 on 8 – 9 May 1945 should be taken as representative of what was going on in the city as a whole. Occasionally the suicides of young women occurred because an entire family chose to take their own lives. There were also dreadful instances of murder-suicide, such as the family of five – including a three year old boy – who all died violently on 8 May at their home in Bühlau, close to where the Angermanns lived in the Weißer Hirsch. Such cases may be attributed to the despair felt by committed Nazis at the German capitulation and the arrival of the Soviets. Less likely to be motivated by ideology are those tragic cases where a mother and daughter killed themselves on the same day; these deaths were almost certainly a response to the trauma of rape suffered at the hands of Soviet soldiers. The records show two such likely instances on 9 May: Johanna Heinrich (38 years) and her 14 year old daughter, Gisela, were found dead at their home in the Schilfteichstraße, while 47 year old Paula Prüfer and her 24 year old daughter, Margarete, died at their address in the Tiergartenstraße. The cause of death for the Heinrichs was unambiguously given on the death certificate as suicide, whereas no details were provided for the Prüfers. (Stadtarchiv der Landeshauptstadt Dresden; Dresden, Deutschland; 6.4.25 *Sterberegister/ Sterbefallanzeigen*) See the introduction for a further discussion of the Soviet occupation of Dresden and the prevalence of rape.

<sup>90</sup> The next city district to the east of the Weisser Hirsch.

<sup>91</sup> It was well known that the Nazi Party hierarchy were able to exploit their connections and never had to make the sacrifices of the population at large. Christoph Buchheim cites the case of the Berlin delicatessen owner, August Nöthling, whose business came under investigation for fraud in 1942. It soon transpired that Nöthling had sold a huge amount of food to ministers, generals, and senior police and judicial officials outside the official rationing system. The Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick alone had accounted for 150 kilograms of poultry, 50 kilograms of venison, nearly 50 kilograms of sausage and ham, and around 13 kilograms of chocolates and tea. Hitler was informed but chose not to intervene for reasons of state – indeed, no high ranking official was called to account for their part in the scandal. Nöthling was taken into custody where he committed suicide. (Buchheim, Christoph. "Der Mythos vom Wohleben. Der Lebensstandard der Deutschen Zivilbevölkerung im Zweiten Weltkrieg." *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 58.3 (2010): 299 - 328. 322-323.)



Their harvest [i.e. the Russian girls'] is in full flower now. Well-groomed and elegant, they strut their stuff in stolen clothes, and they pilfer in all the shops protected by the Russians with whom they then make off.<sup>92</sup>

Today we spoke with some nice folk from D-Neustadt.<sup>93</sup> Terrible things went on there. On Monday 7 / 5 at 4.30 in the afternoon it was suddenly announced that the Russians were already there in their thousands on the Königsbrücker Strasse. On the Albertplatz there was wild shooting. The few people out there only just managed to save their lives and they've already been bombed out once, if not twice. If you knew what it looked like up here, the things that go on. The Russians organise the sale of goods in the front of the shop, while out the back German women and children are stealing whatever they can. Today I saw with my own eyes how 10, 12 year old children made off with everything from a soap store. It is so very sad, not even the Russians can have any respect for us anymore!<sup>94</sup>

We don't know what is going on in the world. There is no gas, no water, no electricity and no radio. They say there has been an armistice. The Russians are to withdraw to the Neisse<sup>95</sup> and the Americans, English and Czechs are supposed to come here. What is going to happen to us?

10 / 5 / 45

We had a dreadful night. We went to bed early dead tired, closed the blinds and the black-out curtains. It started at 10.30. Footsteps in the garden, voices, shouting, tramping of hooves. It was obvious that a camp was being set up. We listened with bated breath. A constant toing and froing, and there was a rattling at the shutters, then at the main door which was bashed against, and then there was a sound as if a crowbar were being used. There was a crash at the balcony door and some sawing but the door didn't give way. It was horrible: the shouting, the women's voices. Thank God things went quiet again at around 6 o'clock. We opened the door and saw the garden wrecked and full of rubbish. And what was the cause of all this? Some Ukrainians who were being led back home had suffered a broken cartwheel and their horse was exhausted. So they decided to settle down for the night right beneath our window, 11 people; 7 men, 2 women, 2 children, 3 and 5 years old. The poor children were freezing, and they wanted something warm to eat for them. That was the reason for the noise at the door and the windows. Then they repaired the wheel, which was the cause of all the hammering, smashing and sawing. And then the din of their departure. The whole neighbourhood thought like we did: now the Angermanns have had it. Then we got news that they had plundered Frau Meissner's place, the wife of the chemist. All her clothes, shoes, coats and fur coat were taken by 6 Russian women and 3 soldiers. The bedroom was totally wrecked. They came into our apartment twice but were very decent and orderly.

There were wild scenes at the Parkhotel, the Russians gave away all the stock, wine, food etc and the Germans didn't hesitate to plunder. They even stole all the tablecloths, crockery, hotel silver etc. I have never seen anything so undignified. They yanked wine

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<sup>92</sup> The life of female forced labourers from the Soviet Union was not always so easy after liberation, and they were often treated as badly as German women. See the introduction and discussion of Red Army rapes for further details.

<sup>93</sup> Dresden-Neustadt. A district about six kilometres to the west of the Weisser Hirsch.

<sup>94</sup> It would no doubt have been little comfort to Charlotte to know that similar events occurred in Britain during the Blitz. In Sheffield, where Marianne and Franz lived, the business of the Assize Court was taken up for two full days with cases of looting after the city was bombed in December 1940. (Gardner, Juliet. *The Blitz. The British under Attack*. London: HarperCollins, 2010. 326)

<sup>95</sup> A river in the east of Germany which today, along with the Oder, marks the border with Poland.

and champagne bottles out of each other's hands, broke them and then little children drank up the rest. A Russian film crew arrived and filmed these horrific scenes for an international audience. At around 10 o'clock there was a fire in the cellar. All shops are closed. There have been announcements from a

National Council for a Free Germany (Nationaler Ausschuss freies Deutschland)<sup>96</sup>

It's opposed to the terror of the Nazis and assures us that peace and order will be established. The black market is to be closed down and ration coupons will be re-established.

11 / 5 / 45

The night was quiet, but it is still difficult to sleep and we get up very early. Today this was necessary. To get the apartment into any sort of order required quite a bit of heavy and unpleasant work. Just as well I did it, because tomorrow, Saturday, by 9 o'clock in the morning the street has to be cleaned, all the green stuff removed and properly swept. By 10 o'clock all the radios have to be handed in. Serves us right. We did all these things first. Those damned SS<sup>97</sup> and SA.<sup>98</sup> Today a lady who was among the last people to leave Litzmannstadt<sup>99</sup> told us how the SS behaved there. Her 60 year old cleaning woman, a Pole, went to mass at 6 o'clock in the morning. The SS closed the church and took away all the people inside as a group. Dear child, what will you think of us abroad. These terrible sins will now have to be atoned for by those had nothing whatsoever to do with them.

In the Plattleite at Frau Dehn's, the President's wife,<sup>100</sup> they stole everything, and all her jewellery has gone. She jumped out the window and a woman who lived with her poisoned herself. Furniture belonging to Frau Hubert, wife of the public prosecutor, was

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<sup>96</sup> Correctly: Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland (National Committee for a Free Germany). The National Committee for a Free Germany was formed by exiled German communists and prisoners of war, with the support of the Soviet government, in the Krasnogorsk POW camp near Moscow in July 1943. Its aim was to overthrow Hitler, withdraw German military forces to the pre-war borders and form a democratic government. Higher ranked German POWs who had initially been reluctant to throw in their lot with those they regarded as "deserters", formed a separate group in September calling itself the Federation of German Officers (Bund Deutscher Offiziere). Both organisations worked together to play an important role in establishing a communist government in the Soviet zone of occupation. One of their main functions was to produce propaganda for flyers, radio broadcasts and the newspaper *Freies Deutschland*. (Bungert, Heike. *Das Nationalkomitee und der Westen. Die Reaktion der Westalliierten auf das Nkfd und die Freien Deutschen Bewegungen 1943-1948*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997. 9)

<sup>97</sup> Schutzstaffel. The chief instrument of terror and repression in the Third Reich, the SS controlled the state security apparatus, organised the deportation and murder of European Jews, and provided the most ideologically fanatical of the military's combat units.

<sup>98</sup> Sturmabteilung. The SA was the Nazi Party's main paramilitary organisation until 1934 when it was subordinated to the SS.

<sup>99</sup> This is the city of Łódź in Poland. It was called Litzmannstadt only in the years 1940-1945 under German occupation.

<sup>100</sup> The Dresden Street Address Directory for 1943-44 has Emilie Katherina Dehn resident at 52 Plattleite, a street in the Weisser Hirsch area about ten minutes' walk from the Angermanns' apartment. German wives traditionally took their husband's professional titles on marriage - her title is, therefore, Präsidentswitwe or President's widow. 'Präsident' probably meant a high-ranking civil servant. (Source: *Adreßbuch der Landeshauptstadt Dresden-Freital-Radebeul mit umliegenden 6 Städten und 24 Gemeinden Dohna, Heidenau, Klotzsche*. Deutsche National Bibliothek; Leipzig, Deutschland; Publisher: Güntzsche Stiftung.; Bestand: 1943/44; Signatur: ZC 2382)

in the garage. Everything, everything ruined. Daylight saving is going to be cancelled tonight. Perhaps this has something to do with Russian time?

So far Hitler's corpse has not been found. He is said to be in Japan. Goebbels poisoned himself together with his wife and 3 children. Göring has been caught with his wife and daughter. Keitel<sup>101</sup> and Rosenberg<sup>102</sup> have been caught. Bormann<sup>103</sup> and Terboven<sup>104</sup> committed suicide. They say 18 party members here have committed suicide. And also, this is the terrible thing, 30 raped women have done the same, among them a doctor's wife with her daughter.

How terrible that the people have to pay for the guilt of Hitler and his mob!

#### 12.5.45.

The night was quiet. We got up at 5 o'clock which was good. Our loyal cleaning lady is now refusing to work for all her Nazi clients. She's only willing to continue working for us because "we are decent folk". But today she didn't come because she's afraid of the Russians. So I cleaned the stairway myself. Then the order came to "clean and sweep the streets". That was a first for me, hot and strenuous. Then the order came to "surrender all radios". Poor Father had to queue for 2 hours in the hot sun until he finally handed over our broken radio. Summertime has been abolished! We stopped the grandfather clock, the clock in the kitchen unexpectedly stopped by itself, the watch has been stolen, so we have to ask the neighbours for the time. Patrols have just been sent out to catch the looters. It is said that last night was very bad. The most horrible thing are the raped women. Last night the widow of a doctor, over 60 years old.

Dear child, it's now 6.30. We went for a bit of a walk on the heath, but the constant worry about the flat and the constant shooting made us return home. We passed a grand villa, everyone had fled, now the Poles are occupying it and are removing all the rugs in hand carts. We are sitting in a darkened room, no electricity, I am writing by candlelight. Just now in the villa next door they smashed the windows and broke in. The poor people! But it had to happen this way! We had committed all these terrible deeds first. But it's bitter that we, who were decent and suffered terribly under this awful Nazi regime, have to pay for it as well!

Endless streams of Poles, Ukrainians and vast contingents of foreign workers accompanied by the Russian military are passing by. Today, 3 nice young lads asked for water, they wanted to go home to Breslau.<sup>105</sup> They had been stopped in the town to clear up the rubble and ruins.

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<sup>101</sup> Wilhelm Keitel (1882 – 1946). Chief of the Armed Forces High Command (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht) from 1938 – 1945. Captured in Flensburg on 13 May 1945. Tried and convicted of war crimes by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, he was executed on 16 October 1946.

<sup>102</sup> Alfred Rosenberg (1893 – 1946). Politician and leading ideologue of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party. Arrested on 18 May 1945 by the Allies, he was tried at Nuremberg and found guilty on all counts. Rosenberg was executed on 16 October 1946.

<sup>103</sup> Martin Bormann (1900 – 1945). Nazi Party functionary who held several important offices including Chief of the Party Chancellery and Hitler's private secretary. Tried in absentia at Nuremberg, Bormann was sentenced to death. For many years after the war, it was rumoured that Bormann had escaped Germany. His corpse was positively identified in 1972, however, after it was found during excavation work to lay telecommunication cables in Berlin. Bormann had committed suicide with a cyanide capsule on 2 May 1945. The rumour that Charlotte voices here turns out, therefore, to have been factually correct.

<sup>104</sup> Josef Antonius Heinrich Terboven (23 / 05 / 1898 – 8 / 05 / 1945). Reich Commissar for Norway during the German occupation from 1940 – 1945. Terboven blew himself up in his compound at Skaugum, south of Oslo, on 8 May 1945.

<sup>105</sup> Today, Wrocław in Poland. Breslau was the original home of the extended Bielschowsky family. Located some 270 km to the east of Dresden, Breslau had also been declared a "fortress city" by the Nazis and it saw

13 / 5 / 45

The night was quiet around here. But you don't sleep, and you hear the slightest noise. The dreadful cries for help from these poor women.<sup>106</sup> Yesterday a doctor poisoned his wife and 16 year old daughter and slit his wrists. Both women had been raped. You have to be careful on the heath, you can't stray from the path. Mines are buried everywhere. Yesterday a woman had her leg blown off.

All of us are sitting here as if we were on a lonely island: no railway, no mail, no radio, no electricity, no gas and only a little water. If we could only hear from Schnabels soon. Is Ernst still alive, and how are Dut and the children? Here the children haven't had any milk for 6 days. There are endless trains of Poles and Ukrainians going home: with German horses and German wagons packed with bicycles, quilts, household items and buckets. They won't arrive home empty handed. Father has just gone out. The shops are said to be open. The National Committee for a Free Germany says every day now would have to be a working day! Today we got up at 5 o'clock. I lit the fire for a bath, did the laundry, cleaned the flat, then we had a bath, I washed my hair – we were quite filthy after sweeping the street. But with what fears and misgivings one sits in the bathtub! The day passed quietly. No chance of cooking anything. A strange feeling not having anything warm to eat all day and being hungry. We are still waiting for the new orders which will be posted at 8 o'clock and then we'll go to bed. We can't very well undress without electricity, and we are running out of candles!

14 / 5 / 45

Was that a strenuous day! Up at 5 in the morning, cleaned the flat, Father queued from 7.15 until 10.15 for half a pound of margarine, I queued for 2 hours for laundry powder, prepared some food to take with us, and then both of us queued from 12.30 until 3.15 for 10 tomato plants. Then I queued from 3.45 until 6.45 for groceries. We are just dead tired. Otherwise, it was quiet. I pray that it remains so during the night. The Poles and Ukrainians keep marching and marching. How could we have ever made so many people homeless! The poor little children, the tired women, the overdriven animals. It is a crying shame. A Russian officer, billeted with acquaintances, said: war madness, Hitler mad criminal, Göring fat swine, Goebbels crooked little scoundrel, Hess decent but dead.<sup>107</sup> How right, how very right he is. How many bitter years we had to endure. How sordid and depraved the SS was. How can you blame other people for taking their awful revenge

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some of the most desperate fighting in the final stages of the war. By 15 February Russian troops had encircled the city but it was not to capitulate until 6 May, four days after the surrender of Berlin. In the meantime, most of this ancient town, once considered one of the finest of European cities, had been almost completely destroyed. "In early February 1945, Breslau was one of only two German cities with populations over 500 000 that were still intact (the other was Dresden); by the end of the war, it was one of the most severely damaged cities in all of Europe." (Thum, Gregor. *Uprooted: How Breslau became Wrocław during the century of expulsions*. Princeton University Press, 2011. 24.) The British historian, Norman Davies, estimates that between 10 000 and 80 000 civilians died in the siege, including 3 000 suicides. (Davies, Norman. *Microcosm. Portrait of a Central European City*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2002. 37.)

<sup>106</sup> The same awful night-time cries were heard in Berlin, writes Antony Beevor: "Berliners remember that, because all the windows had been blown in, you could hear the screams every night." Beevor, Antony. *The Fall of Berlin, 1945*. New York: Viking, 2002. 410.

<sup>107</sup> Rudolf Hess (1894 – 1987), National Socialist politician and one of Hitler's most fanatical followers. From 1933 he was a Reich Minister without portfolio and from 1939 a member of the Ministerial Council for the Defence of the Reich. Convinced that he had an historic duty to negotiate a peace settlement with Britain, he secretly flew a fighter aircraft to Scotland in 1941. He was quickly captured and became a British POW. Convicted at the Nuremberg Trials of planning a war of aggression and conspiring against peace, Hess was sentenced to life imprisonment. He eventually took his own life.

now? That coward Hitler is said to be in Japan where he escaped in a submarine specially built for him.<sup>108</sup> Apparently, he said: "God forgive me for the last 14 days of the war." We had to endure those last 14 days, which were so cruel, because the submarine in which he scarpered wasn't ready yet.

#### 15.5.45.

Today it was quiet, almost like peace time. We have electricity again. We got up at 5 o'clock, because that way you can get a lot done. It's a strange feeling not having to be afraid of air raids. And yet in spite of that, we can't get to sleep, we're too worked up. Today Aunt Anna visited. 6 battle-axes had ransacked their apartment: clothes, shoes, food, all their coupons – even the ones for clothes. They looked at Aunt Anna's pictures,<sup>109</sup> shook their heads and went "brrrr". Now they [Anna Angermann and family] are distancing themselves from Hitler although they flew the swastika at half-mast when Hitler was supposed to have died. Here, the flat of an SS-man on the 2nd floor has been confiscated. New people will be moving in tomorrow already, because all the Lahmann villas<sup>110</sup> have to be evacuated. Furniture, pictures, silver, clothes – everything has been confiscated by the occupying troops. Serves the scoundrels right who had been squatting in the Jewish houses.<sup>111</sup>

#### 16 / 5 / 45

The night was quiet but, in the morning, one hears all sorts of things. The villas situated around the Mordgrund Bridge<sup>112</sup> (because of the SS bunker there they were occupied by SS troops, who all fled en masse)<sup>113</sup> have now all been occupied. Whatever was not wanted was thrown out the window: curtains, rugs, items of clothing, everything was on the street. People came with handcarts and took it away. The apartments have been expropriated. We have Russian officers on 2 floors, clearly very tidy people. One of them

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<sup>108</sup> The highly unsettled environment of postwar Germany, in which all trusted sources of information had melted away, encouraged the proliferation of the kinds of colourful rumours Charlotte recounts here: "... in the absence of any forensic proof of death, the Allies continued to be inundated with stories that Hitler and Eva Braun had escaped the bunker altogether. Letters were received from all over Germany, describing supposed sightings of the former leader, or promising to divulge important "facts" about his fate. Some accounts had them fleeing by plane to Denmark and thence to Argentina by submarine. Others had them relocating to Munich, Hanover, or Hamburg, living under assumed names and the effects of plastic surgery. In September 1945, for example, the Hamburg story gained particular momentum through a series of sensational articles in the international media. Dr Karl Maron, Deputy Bürgermeister in East Berlin, inflamed matters by stating that he was "firmly convinced" that Hitler was still alive, and sea patrols began a search for the mahogany yacht believed to have conveyed the couple to safety." (Sharples, 96.)

<sup>109</sup> The painter, Anna Angermann. See the Angermann and Beutler family trees at the end of this journal.

<sup>110</sup> The Lahmann sanatorium had been a health resort on the Weißer Hirsch. It served as a military hospital during the war and continued to be one for the Soviets until 1992. See entry below from 6 June 1945.

<sup>111</sup> In early 1938 Jewish guests were denied entry to any of the resort facilities on the Weisser Hirsch. Jewish tenants and property owners faced an increasing barrage of restrictions on their place of residence. Following other institutional landlords, the city of Dresden terminated rent contracts with all Jewish tenants in the summer of 1937, and by the autumn of 1939 Jewish families were being forced to live in the first of what would become 32 Judenhäuser (Jew Houses). (Ulbricht, Gunda. "Dresdner Juden im Nationalsozialismus." *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden*. Ed. Starke, Holger. Dresden: Stadt Dresden, 2006. 488-94. 491 ff)

<sup>112</sup> The Mordgrundbrücke was a bridge over the Mordgrund stream and situated at the edge of the Dresden heath.

<sup>113</sup> After Dresden's police headquarters had been destroyed in the February 1945 raids, a 750 square metre underground complex was built to replace it in a former quarry near the Mondgrundbrücke. Equipped with an external observation post, this facility then served as the area's main SS and police HQ until the end of the war. Today it is used as a bat refuge. (<https://wanderweg.org/bunker> Accessed: 30 November 2021)

speaks very good German. Whatever he doesn't need in his flat, is shared by the others. It's hard to understand. Even the doormat has found a place in front of another door. Towards evening, Frau Kessler,<sup>114</sup> the colonel's wife, was fetched to clean the official villa of the Luftwaffe general Loerzer.<sup>115</sup> Apparently, it was in an unspeakable state: puddles of squashed blueberries on the carpets, the bathtub used as a toilet, vomit in the hand-basins, everything strewn with broken wine bottles.

17 / 5 / 45

This is because I have to write with Father's fountain pen! The night was quiet. We slept again after a long, long time. One gets so tired from all the queuing, running about and working at home. Cooking on the grill is so boring. And we have so very little to eat. Today Frau Meissner, the chemist's wife, had to leave her flat in the space of just an hour. "Russian officers have to get enough sleep." Our officer is kind and considerate. One notices that everywhere things are getting more and more quiet.

18 / 5 / 45

Today it was quiet, nothing of importance. Frau Meissner is back in her flat again, she has taken in 2 very decent Russian drivers. Everyone is collecting wood in the forest.

19 / 5 / 45

Whit Saturday! It does feel somewhat festive. My flat is cleaned, green birch branches everywhere.<sup>116</sup> The first edition of the News for the German People [Nachrichtenblatt für die deutsche Bevölkerung] just arrived. It's 20x18, printed on both sides, publisher: Soviet Military Authority [Sowjetische Militär-Behörde].<sup>117</sup>

1 230 000 German soldiers and officers have been captured, 101 Nazi generals among them. They demand the immediate execution of Göring and Dönitz.<sup>118</sup> The surrender was signed in a grey house at the corner of Zwieseler and Rheinsteine Strasse in Berlin Karlshorst,<sup>119</sup> the former training school for engineers of the German army.<sup>120</sup> At the end

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<sup>114</sup> Anna Elisabeth Kessler. A widow, she was a neighbour of the Angermanns, and lived on the first floor of Silberweg 1a.

<sup>115</sup> Bruno Loerzer (1891 – 1960). World War One flying ace and a colonel general of the Luftwaffe (Air Force) during the Second World War. A close friend of Hermann Göring, who was instrumental in promoting his career, Loerzer was not noted for his high work rate and was consequently made to stand down from his position as head of Luftwaffe personnel in late 1944. Transferred to the reserve, he was finally dismissed on 29 April 1945.

<sup>116</sup> Whit Saturday is the Saturday after Whitsun which marks the Christian holy day of Pentecost (the seventh Sunday after Easter). In Germany many of the rituals practised at Pentecost have their origins in pre-Christian celebrations of the return of spring – such as decorating one's home with birch branches (a fertility symbol) which Charlotte mentions here.

<sup>117</sup> Each of the major elements of the Soviet Army produced one or two of its own newspapers which were preceded by a smaller and less comprehensive Nachrichtenblatt (newsheet) such as Charlotte describes here. The newsheets were produced by the Soviets' Seventh Section, a group of German communists and German-speaking Soviet political officers operating within the Main Political Administration of the Red Army (GlavPURKKA). (Naimark, Norman M. *The Russians in Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945 - 1949*. Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard University Press. 17)

<sup>118</sup> Karl Dönitz (1891 – 1980). Supreme commander of the German Navy and from 5 to 23 May 1945 head of a provisional German government. Tried at Nuremberg and found guilty of waging a war of aggression and of war crimes, he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

<sup>119</sup> A district in the eastern central part of Berlin.

<sup>120</sup> This building was serving at the time as the headquarters of the Russian Fifth Main-Attack Army.

of the negotiations, the Marshal of the Soviet Union, Zhukov,<sup>121</sup> declared that the German delegation could leave – that’s the end of this wretched Nazi government that brought such unparalleled misery upon us. We’ve just heard of the expropriation of all flats. No one is allowed more than one room. We’ll keep the bedroom and the dining room with your furniture, because there’s a balcony there. It will be very hard for us to give up father’s room. We’ll try to move the writing desk into the dining room. We just don’t have the strength anymore. The new food rationing regulations have been announced, they’re very frugal. But we let the Jews starve. If they would only find Hitler. He should have to die a thousand deaths!!

20 / 5 / 45

Whit Sunday, it was a quiet night. How very thankful we are that there’s no siren wailing, that we don’t have to rush twice or three times a night into the air raid shelter, that we’re not surrounded by suitcases and rucksacks in our bedroom, that we haven’t got the basket with the allocated food rations under the bed and that we don’t have to put the bread for the day into the suitcase for food. The suitcases are emptied and slowly we can once again find the shoes, clothes and underwear we need. Today we did very well: calf liver with mashed potatoes. Frau Meissner has a driver, a Tartar, billeted with her. They slaughtered a calf and gave her the liver – the Russians don’t eat offal – and she gave a piece of it to us. We haven’t eaten liver for years. In the afternoon we visited someone, and her daughter and son-in-law told us how they escaped the Russians. It sounded so difficult and exciting and dangerous that one had to admire the bravery of the young woman. Now we have a new housemate, a Silesian woman from Sorau.<sup>122</sup> She is in her fourth year of service as a maid to people who have found accommodation on the first floor. She is an especially fine and lovely girl, 24 years old and has lost her mother. We will make sure that she likes it here.

21 / 5 / 45

Whit Monday. Hitler has been captured in Lisbon, together with Dönitz. An honest bullet would have been too good for him. We all knew that he didn’t have the courage to die a hero’s death. The one thing we respect is that Dönitz didn’t abandon him, although he knew that he would go to his death with him.<sup>123</sup> Mussolini had 11 followers around him, Hitler only one. The Russians are now polite, good to all the children and quiet at night. No curfew, freedom of religion and they make sure there is enough to eat. Today Mary Piegler visited. She, a German Christian, who had only abuse for the church and the clergy, came out of our church very humbly with a hymn book under her arm. She, who worshipped Hitler, as long as it was to her advantage, has no word of sympathy for him – she now says he was mad. When I asked her whether she had declared her party membership when registering,<sup>124</sup> she stomped off protesting wildly. I would never have thought her such a hypocrite. She always trimmed her sails depending on the way the wind was blowing and now she is doing it in double quick time. What wretched people there are!

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<sup>121</sup> Georgy Zhukov (1896 – 1974). Zhukov was the paramount Soviet military leader of the Second World War.

<sup>122</sup> Today: Żary in Poland. A city 130 km to the northeast of Dresden.

<sup>123</sup> Dönitz was arrested at Mürwik in Flensburg, home to the German naval academy, on 23 May.

<sup>124</sup> That is, registering with the municipal authorities under the occupying forces.

22 / 5, 23 / 5 / 45

The last two days were quiet. Daily life seems to be returning. Banks and government departments are working again, shops are open. The food rationing arrangements are now in force until 1 June. We are getting enough potatoes and much more bread. Conscious of the saying "You never know", I am drying out bread in the oven. What would we have given if we could only have had bread soup. All guest houses have to be empty of people by 30 May. Accommodation for 400 Russian officers has to be provided. It's quite cosy at our place now. My writing desk is now in our bedroom. I couldn't do without it. We have nicely set up the largest room as our lounge with everything Father needs and with all the old family photos. Oh child, we are terribly worried about Ernst, Dorothea and the children!

24. 5., 25. 5.

It was quiet and peaceful. We were not inconvenienced in any way. We have more bread than we've had for years and plenty of potatoes. But the total lack of fat and butter makes one so tired, so terribly tired.<sup>125</sup> And the queuing everywhere! Father and I queued today in the Weichsel from 12.30 until after 3 o'clock for 2 small heads of lettuces for 48 pfennigs. There are rumours that today an ultimatum was issued by the Americans to the Russians that expires at 12 o'clock tonight: if the Russians won't retreat to the Neisse, the Americans were going to advance. That meant that Saxony would become a theatre of war. God help us. Today we heard awful things: in Reick<sup>126</sup> 71 000 German soldiers are being held under the same conditions as the SS kept Russian soldiers. In the open, no protection from wind and weather, the living, the sick, the dead, hardly any food. They were crying and raging with hunger. People nearby were throwing bread and potatoes to them. Revenge! Yesterday I heard more about the deaths of Frau Niesel<sup>127</sup> and Frau Reuter.<sup>128</sup> On the third night it was terrible. The main door was kicked in by a mob, which searched and plundered everything. The brave woman managing the house locked a young girl and the young Frau Reuter in a wardrobe. But she, poor thing, was raped three times. The 4 old ladies had to witness all of this. Fearing that they were going to go through all this again, Frau Niesel and Frau Reuter poisoned themselves with Veronal<sup>129</sup> on the 9 May. The house manager had to promise them that she would let them sleep quietly. She checked them every 3 hours and, on the 11 May it was finally all over. She went for a doctor who confirmed the deaths. 2 handcarts transported the bodies to the cemetery, wrapped in sheets because there were no coffins. How difficult life has become!

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<sup>125</sup> The supply of fats, so important for maintaining energy levels, as Charlotte laments here and elsewhere, was a constant problem. Buchheim notes that by 1944-45 the animal fat content in the weekly ration had sunk to less than 60% of what it had been in the first year of the war and creative alternatives were sometimes found necessary: in the latter stages of the war, pork and bones were ground together to produce a spreadable dripping. Even this desperate measure was only possible because the herds from farms in the East were being driven back towards the Reich. (Buchheim, 312.)

<sup>126</sup> A district in the southeast of Dresden. A sub-camp of the Flossenbürg concentration camp was located there.

<sup>127</sup> Ferdinande Elisabeth Niesel *née* Hirsch (1884 – 1945). Frau Niesel lived together with her daughter at Bautzner Landstrasse 49 and was the widow of Heinrich Niesel, a businessman. The death certificate confirms Charlotte's account: suicide by overdose of Veronal on 11<sup>th</sup> May. (Source: Stadtarchiv der Landeshauptstadt Dresden; Dresden, Deutschland; 6.4.25 Sterberegister/Sterbefallanzeigen)

<sup>128</sup> Dorothea Flora Gabriele Reuter *née* Niesel (1921 – 1945), bookseller. Her husband was First Lieutenant Heinrich Willibald Friedhelm Reuter. The death certificate again confirms Charlotte's account: suicide by overdose of Veronal on 11 May. (Source: Stadtarchiv der Landeshauptstadt Dresden; Dresden, Deutschland; 6.4.25 Sterberegister/Sterbefallanzeigen)

<sup>129</sup> The first commercially available barbiturate and widely used in the first half of the twentieth century.



26 / 5

The night was quiet. There was quite a commotion among the Russians. General Timoshenko<sup>130</sup> came for an inspection and held a reception at the Parkhotel. Wonderful cars and great numbers of high-ranking officers. They all looked unpretentious, well-built, well-equipped, had straight military bearing and were well-fed. We were told that Russia was starving, in tatters, without any sort of discipline. How we were lied to!

27 / 5

A quiet night again. How really thankful one is for that. We are also slowly getting on top of all the filth in the house. But we do miss Father's lovely room very much. Today we read the Tagblatt für die deutsche Bevölkerung [Daily News for the German Population] with great interest.<sup>131</sup> How very different the speeches of Stalin, Churchill and Truman are from those of Hitler. How disgusted we were by his common and vulgar tone. How right Stalin is: Hitler has thrown Germany into the abyss. In our thousand-year history no enemy had plunged the great German people into such slavery, misfortune and shame as Hitler and his cronies and helpers have done. In an appeal to the German people on 10 May 1945 Stalin declared: It would be ridiculous to equate the Hitler clique with the German people or the German state. History tells us that the Hitlers come and go but the German people, the German state remains! The Red Army is bringing peace to all Germans who have distanced themselves from the Hitler clique and returned to peaceful work.

It is 10 o'clock in the evening. Outside it's quite noisy. The cars are sounding their horns loudly and impatiently. Across the road they're singing to the accompaniment of piano and balalaika. How quiet the Hirsch once was. Or, better, how quiet our life was, how oppressed, threatened and spied upon we were. How carefree and happy the Russians are. How well the Russian girls sing. I don't know when I ever heard a German girl sing. Father hasn't received any pension since March. What is to become of us when our last few pennies have been spent? That's a real concern to us. How many young people had to lose their lives and how willingly we would have gone – The Russians have revised the distribution of food, first for 12 days, then for a calendar month. Per day we get: 250 g of bread, 15 g of pulses etc. 20 g of meat, 7 g of fat, 15 g of sugar, 500 g of potatoes. Also 100 g of ersatz-coffee and 400 g salt per month. These are the rations for people who don't work. People who do heavy work, normal workers, salary earners, children, doctors, clergy, engineers, artists etc. receive quite a bit more.<sup>132</sup> Bread and potatoes are plentiful, but the rest doesn't satisfy our hunger.

31 / 5 / 45

The last day of May! Where have the days gone? I get up in the morning at 5.30 and cook lunch because there's only gas until 6.30, work all day without a break and at the end of the day I sweep the street. This has to be done daily. Life seems to be starting up again. Almost all the shops are closed for stock taking. The cinema is playing again, a film about Lenin. We have a Russian major billeted with us, very nice and modest, he even makes his bed himself. Today he's on an official flight to Moscow. Tonight 35 000 Poles will be travelling through. They have had to leave the American zone, they've been travelling in lorries for days and are said to steal and plunder. They have been stopped at the

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<sup>130</sup> Semyon Timoshenko (1895 – 1970), Marshall of the Soviet Union.

<sup>131</sup> Correctly: Nachrichten für die deutsche Bevölkerung. See entry of 19 May 1945.

<sup>132</sup> See the introduction for a discussion of rationing in wartime and during the Soviet occupation.

Saloppe<sup>133</sup> and are expected to be pushed through quite quickly. The city commandant has ordered that all front doors and garden gates have to be closed and that no one opens them. It is almost 9 o'clock and as yet nothing can be seen. Hitler's sisters have been arrested: Frau Hamitsch<sup>134</sup> who owned a fabulous villa in the Comeniusstrasse.<sup>135</sup> Roman tiles were cemented into the driveway leading up to the house – a present from the Führer. And Frau Wolf who used to be a cook in Vienna.<sup>136</sup> Quite correctly the Soviet newspaper wrote: “while Germany was starving and freezing Hitler was amassing millions through the forced sale of *Mein Kampf*,<sup>137</sup> enforced subscriptions to the *Völkischer Beobachter*,<sup>138</sup> and his participation through middle-men in all the large industrial companies.

[ink stain] Terrible without a fountain pen! Art works to the value of 200 million have been confiscated from amongst Göring's possessions, and the same from Himmler to the tune of 1 million. And we went hungry and cold, our shoes were falling apart and we wore rags. These scoundrels who were traitors to Germany and told us lies! The first cake in 1½ years is baking in the oven. There is gas from 9 – 11. 2 cups of water, 2 cups of flour, 2 semolina, 2 sugar, 1 baking powder, a pinch of salt, some milk powder, some powdered egg. What a Sunday this is going to be. We just received the new food coupons for June. They haven't come into force yet but the bread rations have been significantly increased, and a house wife is no longer classified as “without occupation” but is treated like a salary earner, meaning she gets more bread, fat, meat and sugar. So Father will be able to live a bit better. If only we didn't have to worry about the complete loss of the pension.

### 1 June

Didn't that day start well! During the night 6 Russians raided the wine cellar of Director Vogel on the second floor.<sup>139</sup> It was terrible. The men had to stay in the cellar with loaded

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<sup>133</sup> A former waterworks located on the right bank of the Elbe at Loschwitz. It lay 3 kilometres to the west of the Angermanns' apartment.

<sup>134</sup> Angela Franziska Johanna Hammitzsch (1883 – 1949). As the daughter of Alois Hitler and his second wife, Franziska Matzelsberger, Angela was half-sister to Adolf Hitler who was born to Klara Pölzl, Alois's third wife, in 1889.

<sup>135</sup> Comeniusstraße is situated in the Dresden district of Striesen and runs parallel to the northern side of the Great Garden. From 1937 Angela Hammitzsch and her husband, the architect Martin Hammitzsch, occupied no. 61 Comeniusstrasse. This was part of a terraced group of three villas, the facades of which were elaborately decorated in Neo-Renaissance and Art Nouveau styles. The house was destroyed in the raid of 13 February 1945 – as was the house of the Angermanns' friend, Frau Wengler, who also lived in the Comeniusstrasse. (See entry from 15 February 1945). Another notable resident on the Comeniusstrasse was Saxon's Gauleiter, the notorious Martin Mutschmann.

<sup>136</sup> This was Paula Hitler (1896 – 1960), the only one of Hitler's full siblings to survive into adulthood. In 1936 Hitler had requested that she adopt the surname of Wolf; this would have created the impression that he had no immediate family and lived, therefore, in the service of the nation. Paula Hitler worked as a typist and secretary. (See: Wolfgang Zdral, *Die Hitlers. Die unbekanntete Familie des Führers*. Frankfurt: Campus-Verlag, 2003)

<sup>137</sup> Engl. *My Struggle*. Hitler's autobiography, first published in 1925.

<sup>138</sup> Engl. *People's Observer*. The main Nazi Party newspaper.

<sup>139</sup> According to the Dresden Address Book for 1943-44, part of the second floor of Silberweg 1a was occupied by K.R. Walter, a businessman and director at the confectionery firm Hartwig & Vogel. It is presumably this part-owner of the firm to whom Charlotte refers here. (*Adreßbuch der Stadt Dresden*. Deutsche National Bibliothek; Leipzig, Deutschland; Publisher: Güntzsche Stiftung.; Bestand: 1943/44; Signatur: ZC 2382) Other residents at Silberweg 1a in the war years included Gustav Hänzel, an agricultural official (first floor); Werner Götze, a chemist (second floor); Albert Glöckner, a retired company director (first floor); and Franz Köhler, businessman (ground floor).

guns pointed at them, Frau Vogel was shouting for help. One slowly starts to lose one's grip. Early this morning everything that was left over, champagne, wine and a great quantity of cognac, was collected. And at about 7 o'clock 4 men came again, wouldn't believe that everything had been taken away and were livid. One reason was probably because everyone shouted at them wildly instead of quietly trying to communicate with them with hand signals. I took one of them, who looked nice, aside and he understood what had happened. But of course when Frau Vogel yanked open the little window into the stairwell and started shouting "Colonel! Colonel!", they got annoyed. We assume that they'll reappear tonight and inspect the remaining cellars. A pity that our major is not here. He comes from Odessa. Today 2 villas had to be evacuated again within 2 hours. If only we could be spared that. Today the Soviet newspaper published a short piece: near Berchtesgaden,<sup>140</sup> paintings to the value of 200 million dollars were exhibited which were in the possession of Göring: Rembrandts, van Dycks, Goyas. All the art Göring stole is said to be worth 500 million dollars.<sup>141</sup> That scoundrel! As the Rhineland says, child, "it don't stop happening". Indeed, it "don't stop"!

2 / 6 / 45. 3 / 6 / 45

We've just had two very lively days! On Saturday the cellar was inspected again. The shouting and crying of the people concerned really made these fellows mad. How is all this going to end? We had to fetch potatoes, 62 pounds of them, sort them and spread them out in the garden to dry.

Sunday didn't get off to a good start. At 8 o'clock 4 men appeared. We weren't yet presentable, the major was still asleep. It's always about the flat on the second floor. He is an SS man, she and the child are gone.<sup>142</sup> Finally, everything was ready for taking away in the afternoon. At 1 o'clock in the morning a Red Cross car came and by 4 o'clock it was all cleared out. Everyone in the house was up, because one never knows who is going to be next. Because we have to start cooking at half past 5, it was another all-nighter. In the morning we visited the Morgensterns. They are totally exhausted. No news from any of their 3 sons, one is missing, one is near Strasburg and the youngest was caught up in the final battles around Risa.<sup>143</sup> As a Party member, Ernst Morgenstern was made to cart stones for 7 days when anti-tank barriers were removed.<sup>144</sup> Today, both have to help to

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<sup>140</sup> Hitler's holiday retreat, the Berghof, was situated in the mountains at Berchtesgaden in southern Bavaria.

<sup>141</sup> Göring and Hitler were the main actors responsible for the plundering of Europe's art historical treasures. Hitler had intended this booty to be displayed one day in a vast Führer Museum in the town of Linz in Austria in order to represent himself as a defender of culture. The works amassed by Göring, on the other hand, were for his personal viewing pleasure. Göring's principal method of acquisition was to compel Jewish collectors to part with their property for prices well below market value; he often frequented the Jeu de Paume in Paris, which stored items stolen from Jewish owners, in order to select the most desirable objects. (Hartung, Hannes. *Kunstraub in Krieg und Verfolgung. Die Restitution der Beute- und Raubkunst im Kollisions- und Völkerrecht*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005. 29 ff) Günther Haase estimates that Göring's private collection was worth some 60 million pounds sterling at the end of the war. (Haase, Günther. *Die Kunstsammlung Adolf Hitler. Eine Dokumentation*. Hamburg: Edition q, 2002. p. 170)

<sup>142</sup> The Dresden street address directory for 1940 shows that the second floor of Silberweg 1a was occupied by F.W. Ernst, major. This is presumably the "SS man" of whom Charlotte writes. (*Adreßbuch der Stadt Dresden*. Deutsche National Bibliothek; Leipzig, Deutschland; Publisher: Güntzsche Stiftung; Bestand: 1940; Signatur: ZC 2382)

<sup>143</sup> This may be a misspelling of Riga, today the capital of Latvia. Riga had fallen to the Soviet army in October 1944.

<sup>144</sup> This was probably Ernst Moritz Morgenstern, company manager, resident at no. 3 Niederwaldplatz in the suburb of Striesen, across the river from the Weisser Hirsch. According to the Dresden Street Address Directory for 1943-44, the only other Ernst Morgenstern resident in the city was a tram conductor; he was

remove rubble caused by the terror bombing. The pile of rubble has to be completely removed between 7 in the morning and 6 in the evening. They're told: you dirty Nazi pig, shut up, you're here to work not to have a picnic. When the big truck is full they have to drive it away. Langenberg is said to look terrible. It had been declared a hospital town. It was all peaceful when the Americans arrived, but at the last minute some Nazi fired a Panzerfaust at them.<sup>145</sup> The poor town was bombarded by artillery for 24 hours. At the Schäfers', Papa Riecke started a political discussion with the American colonel who was billeted there. He was so pig-headed that the colonel lost his temper and demanded that they leave the house. It was only Gertrud's desperate begging that made him change his mind. Towards evening we were at Bühlau. It was an island of peace -

4 - 5 / 6 / 45

The last few days were quiet. Little by little we're getting on top of things. 100 officers have to be housed. 1 pound of strawberries costs 4.50. Our major has not yet returned from Glashütte.<sup>146</sup> Today the gas was on, thank God. Finally there's warm food at the right time, for a change.

6 / 6 / 45

This will interest you two. All welfare institutions are supposed to be resurrected within 4 weeks in order to improve the general health of the population. It is said that on 8 August the military will leave and be replaced by police, 2000 Russians and 500 Germans. The Möller,<sup>147</sup> Teuschers'<sup>148</sup> and Lahmann<sup>149</sup> sanatoria will become hospitals. Up here there'll be doctors' accommodation, apparently, with famous doctors. It's said everything will be done to control diseases and epidemics in our dead city. Even the Arnhold Baths<sup>150</sup>

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therefore unlikely to have moved in the same social circles as the Angermanns. (*Adreßbuch der Stadt Dresden*. Deutsche National Bibliothek; Leipzig, Deutschland; Publisher: Güntzsche Stiftung.; Bestand: 1943/44; Signatur: ZC 2382)

<sup>145</sup> Lit. "armoured fist". An anti-tank weapon, similar to the Allied bazooka. It was frequently used by the Volkssturm, the last-ditch German force thrown together to defend the home territory of the Reich.

<sup>146</sup> A town around 40 km to the south of Dresden.

<sup>147</sup> Siegfried Möller (1871 - 1943) founded his eponymous sanatorium in 1904. Located on the Alpenstrasse in Loschwitz, it was confiscated by the Nazis in 1940 and served as a military hospital until 1945. Today it is a residential complex. A follower of Heinrich Lahmann's naturopathic method (see below), Möller's approach placed an emphasis on discipline and abstemiousness. He occasionally required his patients to forego food and drink completely. (Heidel, Caris-Petra. "Zentrum der Naturheilkunde, Hygienebewegung und gesundheitlichen Volksaufklärung." *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden*. Ed. Starke, Holger. Dresden: Stadt Dresden, 2006. 213)

<sup>148</sup> Founded by brothers Heinrich (1862 - 1946) and Paul Teuscher (1864 - 1927) in 1896 and located on what is today the Chopinstrasse in the Weisser Hirsch district. A military hospital during the Second World War, most of the sanatorium's buildings were demolished in 1994 to make for a housing subdivision which has never eventuated.

<sup>149</sup> This was a very large (36 hectare) sanatorium complex established by physician Heinrich Lahmann (1860 - 1905) in the Weisser Hirsch district in the late nineteenth century. Like many of his contemporaries, Lahmann's prescription for good health focused on diet and exercise, but his foregrounding of a scientific approach to nutrition was unique and ahead of its time. He established chemical laboratories at the sanatorium for the analysis of food and many of his dietary recommendations have since become commonly accepted in the field of human nutrition. (Heidel, 212-213) The Lahmann sanatorium catered primarily to a wealthy clientele and a number of prominent literary figures took the cure there, such as Franz Kafka, Rainer Maria Rilke and Thomas Mann - as well as Reich Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels and his wife, Magda. Used first by the Nazis and then by the Soviets as a military hospital, it is now an up-market housing complex called "Dr-Lahmann-Park".

<sup>150</sup> The Georg-Arnhold-Bad (Georg Arnhold Baths) was opened in May 1926. Three quarters of the construction costs of 400 million marks were paid for by the Jewish banker, Georg Arnhold (1859 - 1926).

in Lennéstrasse<sup>151</sup> are to be rebuilt. Thank God our ration of potatoes is in the cellar! Whoever hasn't got any yet will have to collect them from Riesaer Platz, way off behind the Neustädter railway station.<sup>152</sup> Today we shall go to bed early. The street has been swept!

10 / 6 / 45

Today is "dear Sunday", as you always used to say as a child. We enjoyed it again for the first time in ages. Yesterday before we ate, we had a bath, then we rested for a bit, then walked in the forest, watered the tomatoes and "swept the street". Today, finally, we made it to church. It hasn't been very safe to leave the house. The new arrangements have made church-going much more attractive: it lasts only about an hour, no never-ending, bad church choir, there are a few hymns, and a short sermon that's to the point. You take something of value home with you. The hymns today were especially well selected! One of them really touched me. Then we went to the cemetery. The graves of the Russians with their red crosses look very peculiar. But they are always covered in fresh flowers. After our meal we had a good nap and now "dear Sunday" will soon come to an end. The daily newspaper for the German people is a good read. Yesterday they printed a story about the total reorganisation of the Berlin city council. There is a city councillor called "Pieck".<sup>153</sup> We thought we had heard this name before from Franz and his parents. How many people will come back home? Zietz, the owner of the big cigarette factory,<sup>154</sup> and the banker Arnhold<sup>155</sup> are supposed to be getting their beautiful houses back. I would never ever return to a country which had caused me such terrible grief. We remain under Russian occupation.

We hope to God that everything will turn out well. The first dreadful week of terror will be hard to forget, probably never. How everything has changed. The streets actually stink. People and animals defecate on the footpath, no one cleans it away. Cyclists, horses, cars,

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In the Nazi era the facility was renamed the Güntzwiesenbad in an attempt to expunge this act of civic generosity. In 1945 the proper name was restored to the baths. (See: <https://www.stadtwikidd.de/wiki/Georg-Arnhold-Bad> Accessed 10 March 2021)

<sup>151</sup> A street running along the northwestern side of the Großer Garten (Great Garden) in the centre of the city.

<sup>152</sup> A location in the distant northwestern suburb of Pieschen and around 9 km from the Angermanns' apartment.

<sup>153</sup> Arthur Pieck (1899 – 1970), functionary of the German Communist Party (KPD) and, later, the Socialist Unity Party (SED). After the reorganisation of Berlin's city administration by the Soviet military authorities in May 1945, Arthur Pieck had responsibility for personnel matters. He later became director of Lufthansa (1955) and the East German flagship carrier, Interflug (1958). From 1960 until his retirement in 1965 he was Deputy Minister of Transport. Arthur's father, Wilhelm Pieck, was the first and only President of East Germany from 1949 until his death in 1960. (<https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/arthur-pieck> Accessed: 6 December 2021)

<sup>154</sup> Christian Bernhard Karl Hugo Zietz (1858 – 1927), German businessman. Charlotte's claim that his house was to be returned must be based on a misunderstanding since, as can be seen from Zietz's dates, he had died long before the war began. Perhaps she had meant to say that the house would be restored to the Zietz family. In 1909, Zietz had opened his famous Yenidze plant in Dresden, a cigarette factory built to look like an enormous mosque, complete with dome and minarets. The Orientalist design was required, in part, to circumvent planning restrictions which prohibited the construction of anything that looked like an industrial facility in the inner city. The architect was Martin Hammitzsch, Adolf Hitler's brother-in-law, who would in 1939 be appointed head of the Office for the Redesign of Dresden by Gautleiter Mutschmann. Zietz sold the factory to the German firm Reemtsma in 1924. It is currently used as an office building. (See: Paul, Jürgen. "Stadtentwicklung und Architektur." *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden*. Ed. Starke, Holger. Dresden: Stadt Dresden, 2006. 73-103. 103.)

<sup>155</sup> See above as well as entry for 6 June 1945.

cattle, pedestrians, all are on the footpath. We have to sweep the street daily. In other places empty meat tins, beer bottles, paper are lying about – it looks dreadful. How is all this going to end? What is to become of us? Our money is running out. I am not sure we can keep our beautiful flat. I am on the lookout for a small flat with a bay window, 2 rooms, functioning amenities and help with the move as a condition for the swap. At the moment we're seeing how well we can manage with 2 rooms. And what a relief it is when you need so much time just to get the shopping done!

### 11, 12, 13<sup>156</sup>

Today I'm writing early in the morning. I got up at 5 o'clock hoping we would have gas – but no. This crazy blowing up of bridges<sup>157</sup> and the resulting destruction of the pipe network. If only my electric hotplate hadn't been stolen in Berlin.<sup>158</sup> Our Major is back from his work trip and brought us a whole loaf of bread. Yesterday he wanted to have a bath at 8 o'clock but he only came at 10. Today he wanted to be woken at 6 o'clock because he had to be at work at 7, but now, at 8.30, he's still sleeping like a stone. Just imagine how father is feeling with his sense of punctuality. He's almost frantic. He is so very tired. Father had to go and "register" again. He went on the first day, but now it turns out that another Russian signature is required. The poor man will have to queue again for hours. Our quiet Sunday was not so quiet after all – on the second floor, where the young couple live, things were looted again – for the fourth time. They say everything is gone: wardrobes, underwear, clothes, books, porcelain – everything, everything gone.

Did you hear that Hitler married a film star, Lucia [!] Braun, two days before the fall of Berlin?<sup>159</sup> One is at a loss for words and mourns ever more deeply for poor, poor Germany. Now there are new posters up: we are to accept house searches by the Red police. When will they come and what will we have to expect? It is said that safes that are still sealed shut will be lost. We will try to save your silver by declaring it to be foreign owned. Thank God everything is engraved. Foreign-owned accounts will not be devalued. Child, will there ever be any peace here? We are so very tired and worry about you, Dorothee, Ernst and the children. And how much longer will our few coins last? The black-out is no longer required. After 5¾ years we have brightly lit windows and streets again. How surprised Billy<sup>160</sup> will be after her little life has been in the dark for so long. When we were in Grainau in 1941, Peter, to whom I had to tell stories all the time, said: Nana, I'll tell you a wonderful story. When we have peace again and it's Christmas and Dad has a car again and can get petrol, then all of us will drive into town when it's getting dark. The streets will all be bright, the shop windows and shops will all be very bright. We'll be able to buy what we want without rationing coupons for food and clothes, jam, shoes, chocolate just whatever we want. When we're tired, we'll go to the confectioner's to drink chocolate and eat as much cake as we want without rationing coupons. You see, Mum told us this story and it's true. – And Billy's eyes shone with delight! It was touching, those poor mites, who in their narrow lives only had the bare necessities.

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<sup>156</sup> i.e. 11 – 13 June.

<sup>157</sup> See entries for 7 and 27 May.

<sup>158</sup> The Angermanns had lived for a time in Berlin after Konrad's retirement.

<sup>159</sup> Hitler married Eva Braun (1912 – 1945) on 29 April 1945. They committed suicide the next day. Braun trained to be a secretary at a Catholic institute for women's vocational training and worked briefly as an assistant to Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's personal photographer. (See: Heike B. Görtemaker. *Eva Braun. A Life with Hitler* London: Penguin, 2011)

<sup>160</sup> The Angermann's granddaughter, Sybille Schnabel.

17 / 6 / 45

The week went by quietly – or what one calls “quietly” these days. There was work and trouble from morning to evening. We cook in the morning between 4 and 6 o’clock, at lunch time we warm things up on the grill for ages. In the evening everything is arranged so that we don’t forget anything: bread soup or flour soup for the morning, lunch, tea, soup for the evening. Child, there’s just something about “dear Sunday”. Every time something happens it’s on a Sunday. Today we got the Russian kitchen installed on the 2nd floor for 10 Russian officers.<sup>161</sup> It’s a very lively place. The house has to be unlocked day and night. They’re up and down the stairs. We almost got dowsed with wine from above when we walked through the garden tonight. But we always have to say to ourselves: they won the war, they have a right to do what they want. Slowly but surely they are catching the Nazi gang. Now they’ve caught Ribbentrop<sup>162</sup> and Schirach.<sup>163</sup> Nothing is bad enough for these scoundrels who have caused all this unspeakable misery for us. If only we didn’t have to suffer so much hunger. It makes you so tired and listless. Every day we go collecting herbs in the meadow for our watery soup (that has no fat) and nettles [Brennessel-Spinat].<sup>164</sup> When you are cooking you realise just how long a week can be. Our Russian major is still a very agreeable housemate.

24 / 6 / 45

Dear child, another week has passed! Where is the time going? Today is the Feast of St John the Baptist, the longest day of the year. This week was just work and trouble. We got a second major, also very agreeable. But it’s work, a lot of work, serving, cleaning, washing dishes. They live very well: magnificent bread, eggs, butter, cheese, honey, sugar. I have to provide the tea, naturally ersatz, but given the quantities, very costly. Each of us receives for accommodation and food one pfennig.<sup>165</sup> No pension. We have 60 M left. On Monday poor father has to apply to the Poor Fund for family support. We are not spared anything. Those damned Nazi scoundrels. Mutschmann<sup>166</sup> has to sweep the streets on the

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<sup>161</sup> Presumably a communal kitchen of the type used in contemporary Soviet apartment buildings.

<sup>162</sup> See entry from 22 April 1945. Von Ribbentrop had attempted to go into hiding in Hamburg at the end of the war, but he was arrested after a tip-off in June 1945.

<sup>163</sup> Baldur von Schirach (1907 – 1974). Nazi politician, National Youth Leader of the Nazi Party and head of the Hitler Youth. Von Schirach was made a US Prisoner of War in July 1945 and was transferred to the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg where he was charged with crimes against humanity (for the deportation of Viennese Jews). Found guilty, von Schirach was sentenced in 1946 to twenty years imprisonment, a penalty he served in Spandau prison in Berlin.

<sup>164</sup> ‘Brennesselspinat’ is a dish made of boiled and puréed stinging nettles combined with a white sauce.

<sup>165</sup> As Silke Satjukow notes, Germans of both sexes were compelled to provide services for the Soviet occupation forces: “In the first months after the end of the war it became routine for work for the armed forces to be either unpaid or poorly paid. If they were not already tending to the children and the household of their new lodgers, women and girls were required to do clearing up or maintenance work (Aufräum- oder Versorgungsarbeit). Men of working age were allocated tasks in clearing up and transport or dismantling [of industrial plant as reparations].” (Satjukow, Silke. *Besatzer: >>Die Russen<< in Deutschland 1945-1994*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008. 52.)

<sup>166</sup> Martin Mutschmann (1879 – 1947) Nazi politician and Gauleiter of Saxony from 1925 – 1945. Mutschmann was an aggressive, ideologically-driven man whose accumulation of various offices meant that he was ultimately able to run Saxony as his personal fiefdom. His fanatical orders led to the summary execution of dozens of people who tried to surrender to the advancing Russians in the last days of the war. Mutschmann fled Dresden on 8 May but was arrested by German police and handed over to Russian troops on 17 May in Oberwiesenthal, on the southern Saxon border. He was publicly humiliated on the town square of nearby Annaberg the next day before being taken to Moscow where he was held in the Lubyanka prison. There, he was tried by a Soviet court, found guilty of capital crimes and executed in February 1947.

Pirnaischer Platz,<sup>167</sup> he has a huge swastika on his back and a placard in the front reading: "I'm working for my Führer!" And beneath it: "Do not disturb. He's still needed elsewhere!" During the nights he sits in chains in a small cell.<sup>168</sup> The Nazis should be made to wear the Star of David, though we think it is too good for this rabble. How many Jews wore it with their head held high through all this misery. Father is not well. He cannot cope with the hunger and is getting so terribly weak. The doctor did a blood count yesterday, and then father is supposed to get arsenic injections. I have nothing to give to him: in the morning gruel, for lunch potatoes, in the evening bread soup. How is he supposed to get strong from that? But it's all our own fault. There is no word from Dut. It's almost unbearable. Is Ernst, is Dut living with the children? Is she looking after her eye, does she have enough to eat, where is she? Good God, what is to become of us?

30 / 6 / 45

My dearest, today is your birthday.<sup>169</sup> We are not able to send you a message, nothing, nothing, we can only think of you with great love. We always hope that it will be possible for you to send us a sign of life. We do so hope that you are healthy and that your days are more cheerful than ours. We breathe out again after another week passes. What is going to happen? Not one pfennig of the pension and that's 6 months now. If only I had asked your father to let me have some of the poison he always carried with him, and that he showed me when we last met in Berlin.<sup>170</sup> One racks one's brains over how to part from this life without creating an inconvenience for someone else. Father is not well. On Monday he collapsed in the street. Not a stroke – exhaustion. He is so miserable and full of sorrow. If only we had something to eat. I scraped the remnants off the butter wrapper of our Russian majors to use for fat. I am toasting the old bread they give me for the chickens so we have it as bread soup in the winter. It's impossible to express just how badly off we are. Summer is passing, there's no fruit, no vegetables, only bad, blighted potatoes. No spices, no vinegar, only very coarse grey salt. Everyone is sick and miserable. Every day we have to sweep the streets. Yesterday we had to remove the blast protection from in front of the cellar windows, heavy wooden boxes filled with gravel. How hard all this is. And so heavy on the soul. Everyone who moved to Dresden after the 1 September 1939<sup>171</sup> has to leave the city within 3 days. They will lose their apartments and won't get any ration cards. The misery is never ending! We spoke to a young woman, 3 children and a fourth on the way, bombed out in Berlin. How will she get back there and where would she go in Berlin? Frau Zobel's cousin, Herr Krone from Breslau, 81 years old! He only got as far as Görlitz.<sup>172</sup> Everything within a radius of 25 km around Breslau is off-limits because they had an outbreak of the plague. Frau Zobel is in hospital, her house filled with bombed-out people. How she would need her old husband now! Uncle Fritz arrived on 1 October 39. Are they to be affected by this as well? We are terribly worried about Dut. If

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<sup>167</sup> A square in the centre of Dresden and an important traffic junction.

<sup>168</sup> Given what is known about Mutschmann's movements from the 8 May onwards, his reappearance in Dresden seems unlikely. The description of Mutschmann engaged in menial work may refer to his being put on public display in Annaberg.

<sup>169</sup> Marianne turned 41 this day.

<sup>170</sup> The plural possessive adjective "euer" for "your" used in the original, as well as the context, indicate that the reference here is not to Konrad Angermann but rather to Franz Bielschowsky's father, Max Bielschowsky (1869 – 1940). Fortunately, he never needed recourse to his poison. Bielschowsky senior was ultimately able to flee Germany for London where he died of natural causes on 15 August 1940.

<sup>171</sup> The date of Germany's invasion of Poland and the start of World War Two.

<sup>172</sup> A city 100 km to the east of Dresden, on what is now the Polish border. Görlitz lies around 170 km to the west of Wrocław/Breslau.



she has to leave Grainau with the children and, like millions of other people, live on the road ... We mustn't even think about it. Our majors went to the Parkhotel for a meal. We had unspeakable herbal tea with saccharine and dry toasted bread with salt and caraway seeds. We had to think of Dut: [she would say] that's not food, it's just passing through. What will next week bring -

### 15 July 1945

I haven't written for 14 days – I am lacking the courage, dear child. Life is getting harder and more difficult, there seems to be no point in carrying on. The newspaper writes: Life is pulsating. The gardener is free to sell his surplus at markets. Vegetable processors are producing delicious salads, chocolate factories are starting to manufacture sweets and ersatz honey! We don't get it. The potatoes have run out, there's not enough bread, we haven't seen a drop of milk since April, and there's no butter. The grocery coupons for the period from 1 July have still not been delivered. For 2 Sundays we got 50 grams of tinned meat each. We are hungry all day long. Today we had gruel with a lot of parsley and 7 carrots swimming in it, and we ate the last 9 potatoes, coloured grey, blue and green.<sup>173</sup> I admire the way Father patiently accepts all this. For 4 weeks we haven't been able to get soap. I soak the laundry twice, then boil and bleach it. It looks terrible. There's no end to the misery of all those who have to leave here and all those who come back. The ones who stay lose their apartments and don't get any ration cards for food. A woman with 7 children was forced to leave – the 8<sup>th</sup> was born dead on the Albertsplatz.<sup>174</sup> – An old friend, President Meier from Plauen, died.<sup>175</sup> He had an accident in May, the day the Russians arrived. There was no doctor to be found to issue a death certificate. He was lying in the cellar for eight days sewn into a bedsheet until some men from the neighbourhood took him to the cemetery during the night. On Tuesday we will bury our dear Frau Zobel.<sup>176</sup> They say it was unspeakable at the hospital, overwhelmed by flies. Her beautiful house will be given to the University of Vienna for research purposes. Isn't that nice? How much the dear woman must have loved her homeland – The concerns of her cousin, 83 years old, are not at all easy to deal with. He comes to us with all his problems and worries. I keep asking myself, why do so many people bring their worries and problems to us, when we have plenty to deal with on our own? There's not been a penny since March, no word from you, and none from the Schnabels. The enormous worry about Fritz's family, no word from Aunt Mieke. What's supposed to happen? And father is so frail. He looks terrible, he's constantly hungry. It's the third week now that I have been cooking without any fat at all – but [apparently] life is pulsating. Last week the Eckberg Palace, one of the

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<sup>173</sup> The absurd discrepancy between life as it was experienced by German civilians and the way it was represented in the media was, of course, the result of Soviet propaganda. As Norman Naimark writes: "Soviet newspapers depicted life as it was supposed to be, not as it was." (Naimark, Norman M. *The Russians in Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945 - 1949*. Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard University Press, 1995. 17)

<sup>174</sup> A square in the centre of the Innere Neustadt (Inner New Town) in Dresden.

<sup>175</sup> "Präsident" here is short for "Landgerichtspräsident" i.e. President of the District Court. This person was Ernst Meier (20/09/1871 – 08/05/1945). The death certificate states that he died on the Mordgrundbrücke (Mordgrund Bridge) but does not state the cause of death. Ernst Meier lived at 5 Souchaystrasse – today Tolstoistrasse – in the Weisser Hirsch district. (Stadtarchiv der Landeshauptstadt Dresden; Dresden, Deutschland; 6.4.25 Sterberegister/Sterbefallanzeigen)

<sup>176</sup> See entry for 29 July 1944.

3 Albrecht Palaces,<sup>177</sup> was cleaned out. The paintings on loan from the picture gallery have been found. Every day brings a sad new surprise for us.

31 / 7 / 45

My dear, I haven't opened this book for more than 14 days. What should I write? That we are constantly hungry, tired and beaten down? That we don't seem to get any rest at night? There's a racket in the Russian kitchen until 4 o'clock in the morning with the radio and dancing. They all look as if they would just tumble down the stairs. At 4 o'clock in the morning the drivers begin fixing their cars. Tonight, there are 11 of them parked along the garden fence. But last night we took a sleeping powder, we just couldn't go on like that. We are hungry, depressed, and we're freezing – it's just 11 degrees in August. It feels so autumnal, as if it's not just the year that has passed its peak, but that life itself is moving towards its end. Wherever you look there's nothing but grief and sorrow. There is no word from the 4 Schnabels. We've had people take 3 letters to Berlin, no reply. Soon, we won't be able to bear it anymore. They say Lichterfelde looks like a newly ploughed field<sup>178</sup> because of the SS barracks near the Zimmerstraße.<sup>179</sup> The men in this area are either dead or have been captured by the G.P.U.<sup>180</sup> Is Ernst still alive? What happened to his factories? On Sunday Aunt Ilse and Erika were here. It was upsetting. No news from Uncle Fritz, Aunt Ilse is totally apathetic, no hope of getting a flat. PGs<sup>181</sup> don't get one. She looks like an old woman, she's unkempt and falls asleep during conversations. I have the impression that one day she'll just slip away, and Erika will become our third daughter. We feel very sorry for her. And they're not getting a pfennig anymore. What is going to happen to all of us? Suicides are on the increase every day. Frau Meissner, the pharmacist's wife, had to leave her flat on Monday. The whole house has been occupied by Russian staff officers. I've been emptying rooms and packing for 8 days. You are only allowed to take food and clothing with you. As all houses with Russian kitchens are going to be needed, I assume we will have to leave too. It's said that it is better to be bombed out since the condition of these flats is going to be unspeakable.<sup>182</sup> Child, we hope you

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<sup>177</sup> A local term for the Elbschlösser (Elbe Palaces) constructed on the banks of the Elbe in the district of Loschwitz. The Eckberg Palace was built between 1859 and 1861 for the businessman Johann Daniel Souchay. Today it is a luxury hotel.

<sup>178</sup> Antony Beevor writes that in the first months after the war ended, Berliners' sardonic sense of humour transformed the name 'Lichterfelde' into 'Trichterfelde' or 'Field of Craters'. (Beevor 2002, 416)

<sup>179</sup> This is a reference to the headquarters of the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler – an elite, Praetorian Guard division. The unit was based in a complex of buildings on the Finckensteinallee that had previously been used as the main Prussian Military Academy (Preußische Hauptkadetenanstalt). After the war the site was occupied by the US military, and since 1994 it has been home to the central archives of the Federal Republic. (Donath, Matthias. *Architektur in Berlin 1933-1945. Ein Stadtführer*. Berlin: Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, 2004. 162-164) The Schnabel family's Berlin home was indeed in Lichterfelde, but the location was 2.5 kilometres from the Zimmerstraße and the SS barracks.

<sup>180</sup> The acronym used by Charlotte was out of date at the time of writing. The GPU (Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie / State Political Directorate) was the name given to the Russian, later Soviet, secret police in 1922-1923. By 1945 this work was being carried out by an organization known as the NKGB (Narodniy Komissariat Gossudarstvennoi Besopasnosti / People's Commissariat for State Security). (See: Ronald Hingley, *The Russian Secret Police. Muscovite, Imperial Russian and Soviet Political Security Operations 1565-1970*. London: Hutchinson, 1970.)

<sup>181</sup> PG stands for Parteigenosse or Party Member i.e., Nazi Party Member.

<sup>182</sup> Silke Satjukow notes that Soviet officers who squatted illegally in German apartments did indeed have a reputation for damaging and looting these properties: "It was not simply that [Soviet] troops appropriated these apartments, they lived in them – in the eyes of the German owners – in a predictably uncivilised way, and – as if that were not enough – on their departure they took the most valuable household items with them." (Satjukow, 57. My translation.)

have it better, with fewer worries. There is talk that the Russians are going to leave and be replaced by the English. Will we then hear from you? Today was an awful day: we had to queue for hours for 100 grams of meat and 100 grams of oil. Father got the remaining 200 grams of food from Machwitz.<sup>183</sup> He had to queue for 2 hours for pickled vegetables. In the evenings we are totally exhausted. – How is Dorothee supposed to cope? It'll be the same thing tomorrow: up at 5 o'clock and cook because that's when we have gas. Queue for sausage broth at 7 o'clock, check whether there are vegetables to be had at 9.30 – we haven't had any for 14 days. At 11 o'clock, queue for 100 grams of fish-oil. At midday we two old folk are utterly exhausted. How long is all this going to last -

2 / 8 / 45

“It doesn't stop happening”, Herr Blumacher in Cologne used to say. That's how it is with us. At 5 o'clock there was a terrible explosion. I was standing with a woman next to the greengrocer's. We were thrown hard against the wall. A huge cloud of smoke rose against the sky. On the Heller<sup>184</sup> the Russians have again been detonating ammunition – without prior warning – and in such quantities that it's caused considerable damage. What it looks like nearby we don't yet know. In the Hirsch it looks dreadful. Countless panes of glass, only repaired a short time ago, have been broken again. At the Parkhotel the curtains are torn and flapping in the wind. The “Hirsch”, only recently repaired, the big hair dressing salon, Wachendorf,<sup>185</sup> it's all kaput. We have cracks on the ceilings and walls, a shower of lime and mortar came down, half of the plaster in the kitchen is on the floor, 3 of the dragon plates are smashed: the grey, the yellow and the green. Will we ever have peace and quiet again? Will there be an end to this work? We can barely carry on. And this terrible hunger all day long. If we could only get a drop of milk for the ersatz coffee, a bit of margarine for the bread. If only we didn't have to wake in the night because of hunger. But it's getting worse and worse. On Saturday it'll be 3 weeks since we had any vegetables.

16 / 8 / 45

My Dear, I'm finding it more and more difficult to open this book. Thank God you don't have to experience all this. What is going to become of Germany, what of us? How are we going to pay for our own upkeep? And – hunger hurts – we haven't yet received any fats, no food, no vegetables for 5 weeks, the potatoes will run out tomorrow. For 7 weeks it's been raining continuously. The grain is rotting in the fields. I can't tell you how terribly depressing everything is. No word from Dorothee. Are they still alive? Where could they be? They say at the end of the month the Hirsch is going to become a “Russian settlement”, that all of us would have to leave our apartments and we would only be allowed to take hand luggage with us. May God help us! They say it is better to be bombed out than have a flat in which Russians have been squatting. On Sunday one of our majors brought a German girl back with him.<sup>186</sup> These are bitter pills. Yesterday vehicle after vehicle,

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<sup>183</sup> A florist and greengrocer. In 1935 the shop was at Altkleinzschachwitz 1. (*Adreßbuch für Dresden und Vororte Blasewitz, Borsberg, Boxdorf, Briesnitz, Coschütz, Dobritz, Dölzchen, Gartenstadt Hellerau, Gohlis, Gostritz, Heidenau*, 1935. Deutsche National Bibliothek; Leipzig, Deutschland; Publisher: Güntzsche Stifftg.; Bestand: 1935; Signatur: ZC 2382)

<sup>184</sup> An open area on the northern outskirts of Dresden. It was used for military exercises during the National Socialist regime.

<sup>185</sup> Alfred Wachendorf had a well-known pastry shop and café at Plattleite 68 in the Weisser Hirsch district.

<sup>186</sup> The sheer numbers of Soviet troops in occupied Germany and the relatively informal manner in which many of them were housed meant that they initially consorted freely with the local population. In mid 1945, therefore, the Soviet military authorities made fraternization a punishable offence. The policy had varying degrees of success, not least because it was in their relationships with civilians, particularly with women,

gigantic lorries, drove through here. These poor people came from Upper Silesia, from Hindenburg.<sup>187</sup> The Poles are clearing out their territories.<sup>188</sup> They were told there was land for settlements on the Dresden heath. But with one million people Saxony is already overpopulated. Now they have to go on into an uncertain future, hungry and with the rain pouring down. These are moments in which you can hardly go on. – I am continually running around to find a room for poor Aunt Ilse and Erika, but to no avail. PGs are beyond consideration; they are being put into barracks. Child, I am barely able to carry on. Father is so miserable, he is so hungry. What we've got, he gets. Nothing is better at keeping us alive than [thinking about] your things, and about everything that we have been safeguarding for you and Dut through all these years. If only we could see you both just one more time -

25 / 8 / 45

My dear child, what is going to become of Germany? On Thursday, last week a mass grave was uncovered on the Wilden Mann,<sup>189</sup> near the SS barracks: 60 German men, their hands crossed and bound with wire, each man tied to the next with wire, the usual shot to the back of the neck. – They were beasts. - 50 large trucks full of people from Hindenburg in Upper Silesia were parked up in the Bautzner Strasse, under Russian and Polish guard. The Poles are deporting all the Germans from their newly acquired territories. These poor people were told: off to Saxony, Dresden has got settlements and land on the heath. They're having to move on because there isn't even a piece of bread for them here. With a million people Saxony is overpopulated!<sup>190</sup> At the Neustädter railway station two trains with German soldiers have arrived, with prisoners from Moscow and Stalingrad.<sup>191</sup> They were only allowed to leave the train in German uniform, so they stripped the dead and wounded of their uniforms. The train from Moscow was sitting there for days, and they

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that Soviet troops attempted to create the semblance of a normal life: "For the troops however there was a great attraction in returning to something like a domestic everyday life, and a "family" satisfied the need to feel at home after such a long period of privation and hardship. Relationships with German women, and with children as well, meant at least a partial revival of civilian life." (Satjukow, 47. My translation.)

<sup>187</sup> Today, the city of Zabrze in Poland. It is around 400 km southeast of Dresden.

<sup>188</sup> A reference to the forced expulsion of ethnic Germans from what would become Polish territory. For a further discussion of this topic, see the introduction to this journal.

<sup>189</sup> Am Wilden Mann is a suburb in the northwest of Dresden in the Pieschen district.

<sup>190</sup> The huge numbers of refugees and displaced persons wandering about post-war Germany could simply not be provided with adequate shelter in a country ravaged by years of war. They would often be temporarily accommodated in camps before being hastily transferred to another locality with little regard for planning, an approach that elicited little sympathy from established residents: "Because the first refugees arrived in Saxony and elsewhere in a relatively disorganised fashion, there were problems in allocating them to the various local authorities. Frequently, displaced peoples would be sent from the camps to towns without the authorities being informed, and when they arrived they would encounter hostility and incomprehension from the locals." (Tischner, Christian. *Die Aufnahme und Integration von Flüchtlingen und Vertriebenen nach 1945 - unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des heutigen Bundeslands Sachsen-Anhalt*. Norderstedt: GRIN, 2004. 5.)

<sup>191</sup> Charlotte must be recounting a rumour here. Even if there had been the accommodation and food available in Dresden to provide for returning Prisoners of War, the Allied Powers – without exception – delayed the repatriation of captured German soldiers, often because they needed their manpower for their own essential reconstruction work. For many of those in Soviet captivity, such as those who surrendered at Moscow and Stalingrad, it would be several years before they saw their homes again – if, indeed, they were lucky enough to survive the conditions in the POW camps. The US released its first prisoners in 1946 and the last prisoners of the Soviets returned in 1955. However, as Arthur L. Smith writes, even as late as 1960 there were 110 000 individuals who had entered Soviet captivity and who could not be accounted for. (Smith, Arthur L. *Heimkehr aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg: Die Entlassung der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen*, Stuttgart: Oldenbourg Wissenschafts-verlag, 2010. 151)

were roaring with hunger. And all their misery: no arms, no legs, hollow-cheeked, dread in their eyes, dirty and in rags. And all this wretchedness because of the ideas of a madman and his criminal clique. The book will soon be at an end. Perhaps we will have to end things as well! Father is only holding up because of his heartfelt desire to see you happy and content once more. Can you feel how we long to see you again? There has been no word from Dorothee. Are they still alive? We are really worried about the 4 of them. Elisabeth's letters to Ernst remain unanswered. And here: hunger, hunger, hunger -

31 / 8 / 45

A tram worker said recently about the hoarders: Whoever lives to see 1946 – it's their own fault. Child, I don't think we'll see it. This terrible hunger makes us so tired, we're so cold, and these constant headaches, this back pain. If we could only sleep for one night. On the 24 / 8 we got two female captains to billet. Every night they were carrying on until 12 o'clock. On the 2 [sentence unfinished]

9 / 9 / 45

My dear child, I don't remember what I wanted to write in the above entry anymore. We had very full days. The two female captains, who were very nice and agreeable, were replacing 3 male officers. The one less nice and severe female captain went about stealing in Chemnitz<sup>192</sup> as if she wanted to open a store: knickers, pullovers, sets of underwear, at least 20 pairs of stockings. Then we had 3 male officers again and on Friday a young couple, he is Turkish, she's Russian, very nice and agreeable people. Last night she suffered a severe gallstone attack, we had to get the doctor at half past two and now she's in bed and very weak. He is travelling on to Gera,<sup>193</sup> both are engineers, she will stay with us for 8 days. That'll be nice: No gas, no electricity, for the poor thing's every meal we'll have to run over to the Russian kitchen, which is now in another house. I am cooking at the moment. At 11 o'clock at night and 6 o'clock in the morning when there's something to cook. The young Russian woman, from St Petersburg, is very refined and nice, she speaks fluent German and seems to be in a difficult marriage. The little baby is dead, the Caesarean section didn't help. He [the husband] is irascible and cruel. One has to love her. Imagine: her sister lives in Stalino.<sup>194</sup> The SS occupied the city and their house. The little two-year old girl had whooping cough. That annoyed them and they demanded harshly: Quiet, we want to sleep. Then she had a severe attack. One of the SS men grabbed the child by the feet and threw her out the window. She fell to the ground and her little head was crushed.<sup>195</sup> – Do we not deserve all we have to endure twice and three times over! There's been a gruesome murder on the heath. Inge Pflugbeil, the daughter of the head of the Neustädter Gymnasium went to search for mushrooms, together with two of her friends. She lost her way and 2 days later she was found murdered, raped and with her tongue

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<sup>192</sup> A city 80 kilometres to the southwest of Dresden. Charlotte's paternal uncle, Moritz Adolf Beutler, had been a prominent lawyer, businessman and city councillor in Chemnitz.

<sup>193</sup> A town 130 kilometres to the west of Dresden.

<sup>194</sup> Today, the city of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine.

<sup>195</sup> Klemperer relates a similar atrocity which he heard third hand in Dresden on 15 January, 1945: "Lewinsky had heard from an Aryan source what we have now heard in the same words from so many different people, and which can therefore not be an invention: that in Poland the Germans have carried out the most dreadful murders of Jews. A soldier had told how small children had been taken by the legs and their heads smashed against the wall of a house." (Klemperer, 822) As Atina Grossman notes, this appalling image is something of a war-trope and "has a long lineage not limited to memories of World War II." Grossmann, Atina. "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers." *October* 72 (1995): 43-63. 51.

bitten off.<sup>196</sup> Her friends have not been found yet. The beautiful, peaceful heath has become sinister. The female gardener at the cemetery was raped in the mortuary. Today the Heydens arrived from Berlin, it took them 2 hours from Zehlendorf to the railway station, and 17 hours to Dresden.<sup>197</sup> They said it was terrible. Gangs attacked the train during the night, women were raped, suitcases stolen. They arrived looking like tramps, very tired and dirty. There was news about Ernst – thank God. Pastor Heyden was there.<sup>198</sup> The house is severely damaged, bombed etc., plundered by the SS and by our own countrymen. The Höfgens next door, the Communists, looked after everything splendidly. Ernst is said to be in Koblenz, perhaps as a prisoner? We don't know.

19 / 9 / 45

My dear, first, so I don't forget – the building materials Dresden needs in order to repair houses which are halfway intact and ensure that they are liveable for the winter. 360 000 square metres of glass, of which 160 000 might be delivered. Large windows will have to be partly bricked up. About 2 million roof tiles will be required for the most urgent needs. The total volume of timber required will be 30 000 cubic meters, 10 000 of which might be obtained. Nails are not to be had. They will have to be recycled from the rubble, the same as door locks, window-fittings etc. There are not enough tradespeople. There is to be a search done of party members who seem to be shirking their duties. 600 flats are to be repaired, 150 of them urgently. It is a great feat but also just a drop in the bucket -

11 / 10 / 45

My dear, I haven't opened your book for almost 4 weeks. Should I describe all our misery? Not a pfennig of father's pension since March, no coal, hunger and freezing cold. Father is not well. He's lost 16 pounds again since May, his weight, fully clothed, is 96 pounds.<sup>199</sup> He's had 3 falls in a short space of time, the doctor said: total malnourishment, bloodlessness in the brain. The last time, 8 days ago, he was badly hurt, his eye was bleeding so severely that it had to be dressed at the first-aid station. You can imagine how shocked I was. And there's the worry when he comes home half an hour later than expected. I fell badly on my knee recently, there is actually a hole in it and it hurts so much, but the doctor and pharmacist cost money and we only have 150 marks left! Now we really are living from the work I do with my hands. I'm having to sell one of my beautiful blankets after another. Soon the beloved Meissen will have to go. Today we were

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<sup>196</sup> Inge-Maria Pflugbeil (28/12/1920 – 26/8/1945). Pflugbeil, an interpreter by profession, resided at 42 Veilchenweg in the Loschwitz district of Dresden. Her parents were Karl Emil Pflugbeil (1881 – 1942) and Elfriede Pflugbeil née Schmieder (1895 - ?). According to the death certificate, the cause of death was strangulation ("Erwürgung"). (Stadtarchiv der Landeshauptstadt Dresden; Dresden, Deutschland; 6.4.25 Sterberegister/Sterbefallanzeigen)

<sup>197</sup> Prior to the war, the Berlin-Dresden service operated from the Anhalter Bahnhof, about 14 km from the Berlin suburb of Zehlendorf. Under peacetime conditions, the express train service from Berlin to Dresden would have taken around 100 minutes.

<sup>198</sup> This may have been Hellmuth Heyden (1893 – 1972), theologian and church historian.

<sup>199</sup> Even in the early stages of the war, it had been demonstrated that a diet which kept strictly to the ration allowances would lead to weight loss and ill health. Over four weeks in January-February 1942 – that is, before an enforced 25% reduction in rations came into effect – a doctoral candidate in physiology at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität in Berlin conducted an experiment on himself by only consuming his allocations. He lost 3.5% of his body weight. Even the Security Service of the SS reported in 1943 that "intellectual workers" (teachers, officials etc) were averaging a weight loss of 15kg and there were widespread complaints of fatigue and lack of concentration. (Buchheim, 321-322)

inoculated against typhus.<sup>200</sup> That spectre is slowly creeping up to the Hirsch. Life goes on. But what is the point of living? The flat is freezing. We have no toilet soap, no laundry soap. We eat potatoes, for breakfast, lunch and dinner and we know already that they won't last until the 1/11. What then, when they are all used up? We go to bed at 9 o'clock in the evening, because the hunger is too much. But even in bed we can't get warm anymore.

31 / 10 / 45

My dear, another month has passed. Will it finally, after all this time, bring some news from you? It would be so good for Father, it would be one less worry. Our pension has not been paid since March. I'm slowly going to have to start to sell this and that - first of all things you won't be so interested in. We don't want to owe rent or anything else. Who knows whether we will survive this winter and we want everything to be simple and uncomplicated for you. We are clearing things out: the cellar, the loft, the bookcase. When Grandma died I found 18 empty Eau de Cologne bottles. – How unfortunate that we were not able to keep your precious silverware – everything is gone, both my things and your things.<sup>201</sup> – It is very lively at our place! Our Turk has gone, it was too cold for him. But we think he didn't like the fact that his wife always sought out our company while he was away. And in a way we could understand that. The new major gives us the feeling that we have Ernst billeted with us. Sometimes there are two radios on, and he plays the banjo. All the doors are open, all the lights are on, but he is a nice fellow. The driver makes a lot of mess and noise but he, too, is a nice chap. We will have to write off our blue furniture. They must have more fat on the outside than we have on the inside. The whole room seems so strange to us. The living room, kitchen and the little room are still the real thing. The big house in Langenberg seems like a fairy tale to me now. Child, our worries are endless. There's no coal, and it's 5 degrees outside. One gets quite apathetic. And then there is the hunger – for supper this evening we have thin soup, 2 raw grated potatoes, and 1 piece of bread each because the new bread ration comes into force from 1 / 11. The soup is lukewarm, the tea is cold, we have neither gas nor electricity. My white thread, the darning-yarn, is all used up. You once said: "I can't imagine Mother not doing some needlework." Mother now works from 6.30 in the morning until night and goes to bed at 8.30. Aunt Ilse has finally managed to find a room. The Morgensterns are threatened with eviction from their flat and with being housed in a camp. There is no word either from Uncle Fritz or from Jochen. Jochen's little daughter Elke turned one on Sunday. A sweet thing, but she seems to be developing problems with her hip like Grete Funke. They are dependent on welfare, no money for a medical opinion. Erika has to shovel rubble on König Johann Strasse for three months before she'll be allowed to study again. She is getting so old, so pale and thin, so spent. The poor thing. Uncle Fritz will be homeless should he return. How in God's name could he join the SS? We are very relieved that all 4 Schnabels are alive. After 8 months we received a short postcard from Dorothee – how good that felt. I had written a long, 12 page letter but it was Father's wish that I tear it up again. He was quite right, they would scarcely be interested in hearing what we have had to endure thus far and how difficult it is for us now. They don't seem to have either

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<sup>200</sup> Typhus is a classic disease of war and it was a major problem in 1945-1946 as shown by the cases reported in Mecklenburg in Germany's northeast. There were 199 cases in December 1945 but 609 in January 1946 – a 300% increase. (Slaveski, Filip. *Soviet Occupation of Germany : Hunger, Mass Violence and the Struggle for Peace, 1945–1947*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 101.)

<sup>201</sup> C.f. entry for 11 – 13 June. Charlotte's intended tactic of claiming that her daughter's silverware was foreign owned had clearly not worked.

financial or material problems. Thank God. If you could only get some news from Dorothee via the Red Cross.<sup>202</sup> Child, just to get some news from you after 5 years -

15 / 11 / 45

My dear child, it is simply incredible to get some news from you both.<sup>203</sup> Thank God you are both alive and healthy, that you are doing well and have work. Dear Aunt Ottilie wrote to us on 30 Oct. that Constantin had heard it all from an acquaintance. You asked how the Iserlohnners, the Schnabels and the children were, how Dr. Wurms was. You didn't ask how we were. That was hard to take, but at least we know that you are alive. That worry has been taken from us. Here things look miserable. Father is very seriously ill. On the 10 / 11 he suffered a dizzy spell, had a bad fall, and was brought home covered in blood. Now he has blood poisoning in his right hand. He is feverish, stays in bed and feels very down. What's going to happen? No coal, nothing to eat. Why haven't we left all that behind us? -

30 / 11 / 45

Child, Father is not well. He is deteriorating in a frightening way, he's running a temperature, and the finger will probably have to be amputated. I myself am suffering again from an inflammation of the gall bladder, cholestasis, and bowel obstruction because of the lack of fat. Also I have very awful hands, red, swollen and covered in pustules – the doctor says it is oedema due to malnutrition. It is terribly painful when doing housework, when washing and using cold water. And the nights are excruciating. I wish a doctor would put us both in hospital and there everything would quickly come to an end. Our days consist of starving and freezing. Today is the end of the month and we still haven't received a single gram of food. Cooking on the toast grill is horrible, the food is never tender, always half cold. Child, only our worries about both of you kept us alive. Now we know that both of you are doing well – oh, if only we could depart this life. Dorothee doesn't bother with us at all. But we are used to that. Monetary pressures are becoming serious. Yesterday, for the first time, I sold things for 100 M to allow us to keep living. In time, all sort of things will have to go. You will miss them, but it can't be helped. In 4 weeks it will be Christmas.

4 / 12 / 45

My dear, you are so far away and don't know how seriously ill Father is. Today we had an appointment with the surgeon at the hospital in Rochwitz<sup>204</sup> where the Möllersche Sanatorium has been transferred. Straight away I had doubts whether Father would be able to cope with the strain. All went well until the suspension railway<sup>205</sup> stopped in Rochwitz. There, father's complexion changed. He suffered an angina attack and fell,

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<sup>202</sup> After the war, the International Committee of the Red Cross acted as a conduit through which people displaced by war – such as former concentration camp inmates – could contact their families.

<sup>203</sup> International postal communication for Displaced Persons had begun tentatively in the American zone of occupation in Germany in November 1945, but some neighbouring countries, such as The Netherlands, had begun services as early as June 1945. (Wagner, Richard L. *The Allied Military Government Postal Service in Germany, 1945 - 1949*. Masters. Emporia State, 1977. 30) Both Marianne Angermann and Franz Bielschowsky had contacts in Holland and that may be how their news was able to travel the relatively short distance across the border to Marianne's relatives in Iserlohn.

<sup>204</sup> A suburb of Dresden situated above Loschwitz on the right bank of the Elbe.

<sup>205</sup> The suspension railway connects the district of Loschwitz with the more elevated Oberloschwitz (Weißer Hirsch) where the city's health resorts were once concentrated. Considered one of the oldest such systems in the world, it entered service in 1901 and suffered only minimal damage in the Second World War.



hitting the back of his head on the stones. And we still had to walk a quarter of an hour. It was terrible. Poor Father, with his hand in a sling. Me with the suitcase, a bag and my left hand bandaged. How miserable and alone we were. Nothing could be done with the finger, Father was too exhausted. The doctor said he would not survive an anaesthetic in his present condition. He got a nice room together with 4 other gentlemen. Above all, it was marvellously warm. And everyone spoke very highly of the food. Tomorrow I'll see how Father is. I am in a terrible state of unrest. This empty flat, this unreal silence, the billeting of strangers, it's awful. How fortunate that both of you are married. A lonely woman is something wretched. How often did Father say: I wish I could see Franz and Marianne just once more. Will this be granted to him? He lay so miserable and exhausted in his bed. – How hurt he was that Dorothee hasn't bothered with us at all. We haven't seen her for 4 years. Every now and then a few brief lines, no word since April. In October and yesterday we got a few typed words on a postcard. What terrible things might the Schnabels have experienced in the last months, what gruesome things have we suffered – but there's not a word of it. Leni, Sister Elisabeth, Frau Funke, the Iserlohners – they write 10 pages and more – Dorothee writes 2 post cards. Father cannot get over it. – It was heart-breaking today at admission when I had to say that we were totally destitute and had to ask that welfare takes over the cost. I would never have thought that possible. How we thought of Franz, when the surgeon said: first we'll have to consult the internal specialist. How good could Father have it – Child, is there any point in living still? But then again, if I had to give up Father now, I couldn't bear it. Life is terribly hard in Germany, but now dying is even harder. Child, perhaps you can sense my sorrows and my grief. If only you were here -

9 / 12 / 45

My dear, Father's condition is very, very serious. Along with his severe circulatory problems he's also got acute jaundice. They've x-rayed his gallbladder and his liver. We are still waiting for the result. Child, he is lying in his bed so very miserable and tired, he doesn't eat, doesn't sleep and reading is quite out of the question. Dear child, why am I so solitary and lonely? What are the next few days going to bring? I don't know what I'll do in this world without father. We have borne everything together, joy and misery. Today he said so terribly sadly: now I don't believe anymore that I am going to see Moni again, and that was my only wish. Child, why are you not here -

New Year's Eve 1945

My dear child, I'm writing in your book for the last time in the old year. What a terrible year lies behind us. What is the future going to bring? I have just been to see Father. He was lying there so listlessly, and he is so cold. But everyone is good to him, and he feels he is doing better, he feels much lighter – the nurses are so very kind and good. The ward sister said: we will ask God that he's soon able to drift off quietly. Child, life is hard, but the last bit of it is by far the most difficult part. - And so alone – all our acquaintances are full of sympathy, but strangers are not really able to help. If only I had you here for just one hour – And not a word from Dorothee. I just can't understand it. A woman I know got 7 Christmas parcels from her daughter in Wiesbaden.<sup>206</sup> I don't want that, just a letter once in a while. Father's always asking – and that makes me so terribly sad. You will soon

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<sup>206</sup> A city in the state of Hesse which was then in the US zone of occupation.

get a little parcel and a sad letter through Herr Sonntag via Sweden.<sup>207</sup> You should always remember, child, that you were Father's pride, that he was always grateful for your love, that he greatly esteemed Franz and that his only wish was to be together with you two once again. – On Christmas Eve I was completely alone. As I sat at my gruel, thickened with a raw, grated potato, I said to myself: When you used to buy mayonnaise in jars, Russian salad, tinned ham, when you ordered a pastry from Bomberg's with vegetable filling to go with tongue, in fish aspic – did you ever think there would be people sitting down to gruel who would much rather eat all those other things? It serves us right! What will you both be doing at New Year, what will the Schnabels be doing? You are in my thoughts and I pray to God that He keeps you both healthy and allows you to return home to Spain. I don't dare pray to see you again. Child, how fearful I am of the next few days -

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<sup>207</sup> Direct communication between Dresden in the Soviet zone of occupation and Sheffield in the UK would have been impossible at this point, but since Sweden had been neutral in the war, a well-placed intermediary may have been able to pass messages along.