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Marianne Angermann and the first days of the Nationalist rebellion

The first journal in the Bielschowsky papers (published by Otago German Studies in 2020) records the letters Marianne Angermann wrote to her parents in Dresden from January to July 1936. In this correspondence she often makes reference to the deteriorating political situation in Madrid, though she retains confidence that the Republican government would eventually establish order. Unfortunately her optimism was misplaced. The Popular Front coalition that had assumed power in February could simply not meet the country's pent-up demands for economic and social reform, and nor could it placate its infuriated opponents in the Spanish establishment. On 17 July 1936 Nationalist rebels in the army launched a coup attempt and the tragedy of the Spanish Civil War began.

In mid-July 1936 Marianne Angermann was in the Spanish capital, at the epicentre of events, but her concerns were of a more personal and immediate nature. A week earlier she had contracted a severe middle ear infection, a condition that eventually required surgery followed by a prolonged period of convalescence. This illness prevented her from corresponding with her parents in Dresden who were understandably worried at the lack of news from her (see the July 1936 letters in Journal 1). They would, however, have been reassured to know that Marianne's excellent connections to the local medical fraternity, through her work at Madrid University's Institute of Medical Research, meant that she was able to receive treatment at the private clinic of Antonio García Tapia, Spain's leading ear, nose and throat surgeon.

In the first letter written to her parents after the operation, on 8 August, Marianne was clearly at pains to allay their anxieties, both about her physical health and about political events in Madrid. She would have been well aware that her parents' view of Spanish events could only have been shaped by the Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, the German international news service whose editorial line was set by the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment. On Friday, 7 August 1936 this agency set out a long list of those Spanish territories which were now under rebel control, and reported on a number of other incidents relating to the war. Fear of air raids had necessitated a blackout in Madrid from 10 pm and food was running short in the city, the agency reported. Refugees arriving in France were said to have claimed that the actions of the "Marxists" – Nazi shorthand for the Republicans – were of "an unprecedented brutality", and captured Nationalist soldiers were being "continuously shot".[1] From the perspective of the Angermanns in Germany, therefore, there appeared to be every reason to be concerned.

The evacuation of the 'Spanish-Germans'

Perhaps the most alarming piece of news, for the Angermanns, related to the evacuation of Germans from Madrid. The Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro reported in some detail on the numbers of Germans who were fleeing on ships – either naval vessels or chartered cruise ships – provided by the government:

[1] *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro* 7 August 1936, Abend- und Nachtausgabe. No. 1029. https://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/kalender/auswahl/date/1936-8-7/27058621/ Accessed 4 January 2023

> On 4/8 48 Germans left Madrid for Valencia from Madrid and 100 for Alicante on 5/8. The latter group were shipped out on the steamer Njassa on 6/8. On 7/8 another 120 were expected by train and 100 by airplane from Madrid, also for the same ship. The commander of the Admiral Scheer had requested that the embassy send additional refugees to Alicante […].[2]

Naturally, the Nachrichtenbüro highlighted the aid the National Socialist state was providing to its citizens overseas, particularly through Party organisations such as the recreational organisation Kraft durch Freude (Strength through joy), which was planning to accommodate "refugees" in holiday resorts in Germany after transporting them home on one of their own leased craft:

> The NS association 'Kraft durch Freude' will devote itself to Germans exiled from Spain with particular loyalty and care to help them better cope with their awful fate. That is why large areas in Eastern Bavarian, the Black Forest and Southern Bavaria have been prepared by the NS association to receive an expected several thousand German refugees.[3]

In an indication of her own political sympathies, Marianne downplayed the idea that Madrid was in turmoil; on 8 August she wrote: "The gobierno [government] keeps rigidly to order, and we have everything we need." One need not have been a supporter of the Nationalist rebels nor the National Socialist press to know that this bold statement did not capture the full picture of life in Madrid in the summer of 1936, not least because much of the executive power in the Republican zone was no longer with the gobierno, the central government, as Marianne claimed. This was because the militias, and the trade union and anarchist groups with which they were associated, had begun to make their own decisions independently of the central authorities and were in de facto control of the streets.

José Estellés Salarich, who would later become chief of Medical Services for the Republicans' Army of the Centre,[4] vividly described the first chaotic days of the war as he experienced them in Madrid. Although he could observe shelling from his top-floor apartment and he witnessed the destruction of an observation balloon at the nearby Cuatro Vientos aerodrome, he nevertheless decided to proceed to work as usual (he was Secretary General of the Health Directorship and was the only employee to make it to the office that day). His commute turned out to involve a real danger to life and limb. While travelling by tram, he and his fellow passengers – who were few in number – had to take cover on the floor whenever they passed any buildings where shooting was going on. The trip home at the end of the day, he wrote, proved even more daunting:

> Returning home was even more difficult and dangerous and I was only miraculously saved, thanks to a member of the FETE [Teachers' Union], from the very real and awful threats of some supposed militiamen at whose mercy I found

[2] ibid.
[3] ibid.
[4] Estellés Salarich also played a minor, though crucial, role in the life of Franz Bielschowsky; it is his signature that appears three times on Franz's safe conduct pass at the end of the Civil War. This critical document was first issued to Franz on 14 October 1938 and then renewed twice on 15 and 30 November of that year. Hocken Collections, MS-1493/015.

> myself. They were almost certainly fascists in disguise, they were not at all interested in my being a leader in the UGT [Communist Trade Union], and my papers, which were perfectly in order, meant nothing.[5]

Even to a high-ranking Republican official in loyalist Madrid, therefore, the violence of late July and early August could seem entirely random. Certainly this must have been how it was perceived by the city's German residents who, like many of their Spanish neighbours, felt compelled to barricade their windows with sandbags due to the wild shooting on the streets. Due to their perceived closeness to the rebellious Nationalists, however, the German community in Madrid could also often draw the very specific attentions of Republican militias. German businesses and shops were searched and sometimes plundered, and the German school in Madrid was taken over as a barracks by a militia unit.[6] According to Pastor Mohr of the city's Lutheran church, between sixty and seventy Germans received death threats in their apartments, and many women whose husbands had been arrested were in a state of desperation because for several days they had no news of their whereabouts.[7]

We are reliant, however, for these reports on sources such as the National Socialist press, correspondence from German diplomats in Madrid, and Church publications, all of which were more or less hostile to the interests of the Spanish Republican government. As Jörg van Norden points out, the language of reports from Spain printed in Lutheran publications, for example, had little to distinguish it from the virulent phrases of the Nazi press. The verger of the church in Barcelona, for example, wrote that the chaos in Spain had been caused by "the Red mob, anarchists, syndicalists, convicts released from prison, Jews, Bolshevists and the worst sort of rabble."[8]

Contrary to this hysterical view of loyalist Spain, was the conciliatory response of the Republican government which went to no small effort to mollify the German embassy and to ensure the welfare of Spain's German community. Germans who had been arrested were released,[9] confiscated property was restored, and the Madrid police called on militias to "treat all foreigners politely and respectfully", forbidding any shooting in streets in which Germans or other foreigners lived.[10] Security at the German embassy was increased from two to eighteen policemen[11] and Republican censors in Madrid were instructed not to allow the publication of any anti-German sentiment.[12]

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[5] Salarich, José Estellés. "La sanidad del ejército republicano del centro." In: *Los médicos y la medicina en la guerra civil española*. Madrid: Monografías Beecham, 1986, 39 - 59. Here, 40 – 41.

[6] van Norden, Jörg. *„Heim ins Neue Deutschland Adolf Hitlers". Die Evakuierung der Spaniendeutschen während des spanischen Bürgerkriegs.* Forschungen zu Spanien. Eds. Bernecker, Prof. Dr. Walther L., Dr. Francisco López-Casero and Prof. Dr. Peter Waldmann. Vol. 20. Saarbrücken: Verlag für Entwicklungspolitik Saarbrücken, 1998, 35.

[7] ibid, 34-35.

[8] *Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*, 22 December 1936, 33. Quoted in van Norden, op. cit., 37.

[9] The *Völkischer Beobachter,* Nazi Germany's main national daily, reported that, due to the intervention of the German embassy, 27 of 29 detained Germans were released. *Völkischer Beobachter*, Norddeutsche Ausgabe. 26 / 7 / 1936. Quoted in van Norden, op. cit., 43, FN83.

[10] van Norden, op. cit., 43.

[11] Reports from embassy counsellor Karl Schwendemann 23 / 7 / 1936 and 20 / 9 / 1936 to the German Foreign Office. Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes R 102983. Quoted in van Norden, op. cit., 43.

[12] Report from envoy Hans Herrmann Völckers 19 / 8 / 1936 to the German Foreign Office. Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes R 102983. Quoted in van Norden, op. cit., 44.

Most of the Germans resident in Spain in 1936 were evacuated on a variety of merchant ships and passenger liners which were chartered at short notice. Demand for berths outstripped supply in the first days of evacuation,[13] but by the end of August the large vessels arriving in Barcelona were departing well below capacity because Germans were showing less interest in leaving the country: the 720 berth *Oceana* entered Barcelona harbour on 18 September but a lack of interest led the German Consul General to exert pressure on his countrymen by claiming that it was their last chance to leave Spain. When this craft eventually arrived in in Genoa on 16 October there were only 50 Germans among the 250 passengers.[14]

As the summer holidays had begun on 28 June that year, many expatriate Germans were on holiday on the Spanish coast or in Germany itself when the army rebelled on 17 July; it was only those who had to work or could not afford to travel who were still in the main centres of Madrid and Barcelona. Those who did not wish to leave, writes van Norden, therefore had pressing reasons for their decision.[15] The first Germans arrived at the embassy seeking help on 21 July and the next day a call was put out for all German subjects to seek refuge with their official representatives. Women were housed in the embassy building itself, mothers with children in the neighbouring church, and the old and sick in the parsonage, while men camped on the lawn in front of the embassy.[16] By 26 July around 700 people were being accommodated and provided for in this way – around half of those remaining in Madrid.[17]

Once they had fled Republican Spain the only way German businessmen could have had their property restored to them was through a Nationalist victory. It is for this reason that German authorities kept an accurate tally of those they classified as Spanish-German refugees, and who were temporarily accommodated in the Kraft durch Freude transit camps in 1936; the figures of those who fled Spain as a consequence of the war – the precise number was 13 096 – would then be used in future negotiations for compensation with Franco.[18] To determine the extent of these losses, the Overseas Branch, or Auslandsorganisation (AO), of the Nazi Party set up a Relief Committee for Spanish-Germans (Hilfsausschuss für Spanien-Deutsche) which investigated some four thousand claims for damages by German businesses in the summer of 1937.[19] These were not immediately pursued, however, as German financial bureaucrats advised that it would be

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[13] On the *Fulda*, for example, there were 100 passengers but only 25 cabins. (Van Norden, 47)

[14] van Norden, op. cit., 48 – 49. Spanish sympathisers with the Nationalist rebels also sought refuge at the German embassy at Paseo de la Castellana 4 and 6. Javier Cervera estimates that 65 Spaniards were offered protection by German diplomats before the embassy closed on 3 November 1936. (*Madrid en guerra: La ciudad clandestina, 1936-1939. Historia y geografía*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998. 370).

[15] ibid, 40. The category of "pressing reasons" would also include convalescence from major surgery, as was the case for Marianne Angermann.

[16] ibid, 41.

[17] On 8 August an article describing scenes at the German embassy appeared in *Juventud.* It reproduced the wording of the call that went out to German nationals requesting that they make themselves known to embassy staff: "After having received unfavourable news, the Germany embassy advises all German subjects to place themselves under its protection." See Marianne's letter of 14 August 1936. According to Jörg van Norden (41), the embassy had broadcast this message on 22 July.

[18] Viñas, op. cit., 233.

[19] German Jews were to be specifically excluded from any compensation agreements struck with Franco because, it was absurdly suggested, it was they who had caused the war in the first place. (Whealey, Robert. *Hitler and Spain: The Nazi Role in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989. 92.)

better to wait until the outcome of the war had been determined; the preferential contracts for reconstruction they expected would be offered to German firms by a victorious Franco were likely to be vastly more lucrative than a series of petty claims made by individual companies.[20]

While Marianne insisted in her letter that the militias treated her with respect, this was not a uniform experience for all Germans, many of whom were regarded – with some justification, as we shall see – as rebel sympathisers because of the political and, increasingly, material support provided by Germany for the Nationalist cause.[21] The German school and the offices of the Nazi trade union organisation, the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF), were ransacked in Barcelona, and German citizens were often arrested and their property confiscated by militias on the suspicion that they were rebel collaborators. The German embassy claimed that it was often exiled German agitators – invariably referred to as "Communists" or "Jews" – who were the chief movers of these events. In the most serious incident, on 23 - 24 July 1936, four DAF functionaries were found murdered on the outskirts of Barcelona.[22] Despite the best efforts of the regional government of Catalonia the perpetrators were never discovered: fragmentation of power within the Republican zone meant that central authority simply did not extend far enough to conduct an effective investigation.[23]

The German expatriate community in Spain

What was the nature of the German expatriate community in Spain? What were the politics of the 'Spanish-Germans'? Were they uniformly sympathetic to the Nationalists in Spain as many assumed? An association of German expatriates in Spain, the Deutscher Hilfsverein, had been established in the late nineteenth century already, and its numbers were swelled by the influx of Germans who arrived after the First World War,[24] a conflict in which Spain had played no part. In 1932, two years before Franz Bielschowsky arrived in Spain, it is estimated that there were some 15 000 Germans living in the country; the two biggest cities, Barcelona and Madrid, had around 7 000 German residents each, with the rest spread over a number of Spanish provinces, particularly Vizcaya, Seville, Granada and Málaga, while there were perhaps 400 in both the Canaries and the Balearic Islands.[25]

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[20] According to Jörg van Norden (op. cit., 38-39), the financial losses suffered by Germans in Spain actually turned out to be much less than the Auslandorganisation's first estimates: 45 million Reichsmarks rather than 110 million. Interestingly, he writes that deposits in the Deutsche Überseeische Bank – of which Marianne's landlord, Wilhelm Ullmann, was the director – were left untouched by the Republicans. Robert Whealey quotes somewhat different figures compiled by the AO: assuming 100% losses, compensation claims would have been 160 million RM, though 70 million of this would have been for unpaid inventories delivered in 1935 – 1936. (Whealey, op. cit., 91-92.)

[21] In her letter of 14 August 1936 Marianne claimed that Germans who had not been overtly political while in Spain had nothing to fear from the country's legitimate government nor from the militias: "Almost all of them [i.e. expat Germans] could have stayed here." The comment seems to imply that the widespread flight of Germans from Madrid was an implicit admission that they had indeed been politically active or, at least, that their sympathies lay with the Nationalists.

[22] In all, seven members of the German community in Spain were killed in the first days of the war according to the National Socialist press. (*Völkischer Beobachter*, Norddeutsche Ausgabe. 8 / 8 / 1936; Deutsches Archiv August 1936, 679 ff. Quoted in van Norden, op. cit., 36.)

[23] Morente, Francisco. "On Hostile Soil: Spanish Republican Diplomats in Berlin at the Onset of the Spanish Civil War." *Contemporary European History*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2017, 49–67. Here, 52-53.

[24] van Norden, op. cit., 25.

[25] Viñas, Ángel. *Hitler y el estallido de la guerra civil. Antecedentes y consecuencias.* Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2001, 232 – 233.

Numerically, native Germans constituted the third largest foreign group in Spain after the Portuguese and the French, but were second only to the latter in terms of their economic importance.[26] According to Ángel Viñas, most German working men were in business in the import or export trade (75% and 15% respectively), with the remainder employed in industry.[27]

A relatively tight-knit and homogeneous group, largely preoccupied by business and family matters, the German community in Spain tended to be more conservative and inclined to political forms of nostalgia than their compatriots in the homeland. Indeed, statistics on voting patterns in the Reichstag elections of March 1933 seem to confirm the thesis that most Germans resident in Spain were natural allies of the rebels rather than of the Republican government. Of the 760 votes cast by Germans in international waters off the coast of Barcelona (a measure necessary to satisfy German electoral law), 65.1% were for the National Socialists and 17% for the ultra-conservative DNVP (the party of Konrad Angermann): a total of just over 82% for parties of the far-right. In Germany proper, these figures were only 44.5% and 8%.[28]

Not only were German expatriates in Spain more likely to vote for the National Socialists, they also showed considerable enthusiasm for joining Nazi organisations, even though relatively few went so far as to become members of the Party; a sample of documents relating to 229 Spanish-Germans shows that 24% belonged to a National Socialist organisation such as the League of German Girls, the German Labour Front or the Party itself.[29] Viñas calculates that just over 700 German residents were fully fledged members of the Nazi Party by the time war broke out in July 1936 – about 4.7% of the expatriate community.[30] While this figure appears relatively insignificant, most of these members occupied key positions in the fields of education, culture and business and so were able to wield a disproportionate influence in the lives of their fellow Germans.[31]

The work of mobilising Germans abroad and instilling in them the National Socialist idea of a community based on 'race consciousness' was carried out by the Nazi Party's Auslandsorganisation. Germans living outside the Reich were considered to constitute their own special region (Gau) and it was the AO, in its penetration and management of local contacts and established expat organisations, that acted to administer the objectives of the National Socialist government at home.[32] In the administrative structure of the Nazi state there was frequently tension between Party organisations, such as the AO, and state institutions, such as embassies and the foreign service, that had existed long before Hitler

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[26] Robert Whealey (4) writes that the Germans may indeed have been the most important expatriate group in Spain, "because they formed the largest group of employed aliens."

[27] Viñas, op.cit., 232. More detailed vocational information provided by Germans evacuated to various locations in late 1936 supports this general picture: 68% of the men taken to Nagold in the Black Forest were businessmen, while the figures for those at Bad Honnef (near Bonn) and in the Rhineland were 78% and 51% respectively. (van Norden, op. cit., 27)

[28] ibid, 28.

[29] ibid, 29.

[30] Of all German expatriate national communities, that of Spain therefore had the eighth highest membership of Nazi organisations. Viñas, op. cit., 195.

[31] ibid, 198.

[32] In Australasia, the Auslandsorganisation worked through an organisation called Bund des Deutschtums in Australien und Neuseeland (League of Germans in Australia and New Zealand). See: Turner-Graham, Emily. *«Never forget that you are a German» Die Brücke, «Deutschtum» and National Socialism in Interwar Australia*, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang, 2011.

became Chancellor in 1933.[33] Local leaders of the AO (in 1936 in Spain these were, successively, Walter Zuchristian, Friedhelm Burbach and Hans Hellermann[34]) would often regard themselves as equivalent in status to the ambassador as Germany's sovereign representative. According to Ángel Viñas, however, the situation in Spain was almost unique in displaying a remarkable degree of cooperation between the AO and the civil servants at the embassy who were not Party appointees.[35] This harmonisation between two ostensibly competing arms of the state clearly indicates the extent to which the German diplomatic corps in Spain, for all that it might occasionally try to assert its independence out of a sense of professional pride, was imbued with an ultraconservative ideology and so able to place itself at the service of the National Socialist mission.

Naturally, right-wing Germans did not dominate entirely and there were those of a contrary persuasion, particularly in the years after the Nazis' accession to power when many of their political opponents were forced to flee Germany. It is thought that as many as 7 000 Germans could have been accounted refugees of this sort in Spain in 1937[36] – including, of course, Franz Bielschowsky. From the point of view of the Nazi state, these were individuals who could work to turn Spanish public opinion against it, and the German embassy used every opportunity to persuade the Spanish authorities to limit their political activities, a task at which they achieved some success in the period 1933-35 when right-wing parties were in power.[37] The embassy's hostility to leftist Germans in Spain and their willingness to collaborate closely with the AO and the local German elite who sympathised with the Spanish right, clearly gave Marianne good reason to be cautious in her dealings with diplomatic staff.

Marianne's German landlords in Madrid: the Ullmann family

Marianne Angermann's first landlords in Madrid, the Ullmanns, were paragons of the Spanish-German community and this necessarily raises questions as to their politics and where they stood with respect to the second Spanish Republic. As discussed in Journal 1, the family patriarch, Wilhelm Ullmann, was the director of the Deutsche Überseeische Bank, a major financial institution that was originally set up to deal with financial transactions between German and South American business interests. Wilhelm's father, Ernst Ullmann, was a Jewish businessman from Berlin who had married a Protestant woman, and they had raised their son in her faith.[38]

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[33] A state governed by a range of institutions which compete against one another in the same or closely related jurisdictions is referred to by historians as a polycracy. The German term, Polykratie, was first used to describe the Nazi state in 1942 by Franz Leopold Neumann in his work *Behemoth. Struktur und Praxis des Nationalsozialismus 1933-1944*, Söllner, Alfons und Michael Wildt (eds), Hamburg 2018 (English first edition 1942/44, German first edition 1977), 71.

[34] Hausmann, Franz-Rutger. *Ernst-Wilhelm Bohle: Gauleiter im Dienst von Partei und Staat*. Zeitgeschichtliche Forschungen. Vol. 38. Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 2009, 103.

[35] Viñas, op. cit., 191. In 1934, writes Viñas (193), only four of the twenty-two staffers at the German embassy were members of the Nazi Party – though this number later increased.

[36] Werner Röder, „Die Emigration aus dem nationalsozialistischen Deutschland", in: *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland*, ed. Klaus J. ade, München 1992, 342. Quoted in van Norden, op. cit., 33.

[37] van Norden, op. cit., 33.

[38] In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, assimilationist tendencies predominated in Germany and many German Jews did not see a contradiction between their ancestry and their personal endorsement of German nationalist politics. All this clearly changed with the rise to power of the National Socialists. The Nuremberg Race Laws of September 1935 (*Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre/Law for the protection of German blood and German honour* and the *Reichsbürgergesetz/Reich Citizenship Law)*, set out an elaborate hierarchy of political rights based on one's genealogy. Under these

It appears that Wilhelm Ullmann was also a cultured man, and that he played a leading role amongst expatriate Germans in Spain. It was in the Ullmann household that the novelist Thomas Mann (later, a Nobel laureate) stayed from 30 April to 9 May 1923 when he and his wife were on a tour of Spain.[39] During this time Mann was received by the Infanta Isabel (aunt of the then reigning King Alfonso XIII), an audience that was likely to have been facilitated through Ullmann's professional contacts, and, according to a report in the *Kölnische Zeitung* on 23 May 1923, a number of social functions were held which displayed the breadth of influence of Mann's hosts: "Relaxed social gatherings in the German embassy, at the Germania Club, and at the home of the Ullmanns, where the travellers were being accommodated, provided an opportunity for members of the German colony to get to know these interesting visitors."[40]

Ullmann's network of contacts could also serve other, less refined German interests, however. Although Spain had been neutral in the First World War, Ullmann had acted as an intermediary between the Spanish and German armed forces, and the banking group of which he was a member, Kocherthaler[41] – Ullmann – Lewin, was involved in conducting secret deals between the two.[42] In 1915, Wilhelm Ullmann was a key contact for Wilhelm Canaris, then German naval envoy in Madrid,[43] whose brief was to organise a spy network to track Allied shipping, and to organise the resupply of German submarines. Through Ullmann, Canaris met the owner of the Cádiz and El Ferrol shipyards, Horacio Echevarrieta, a friend of Alfonso XIII. In 1916 these two were able to arrange for spare parts to be sent secretly to Spain so that German submarines could be repaired in Spanish shipyards.[44] Though Canaris was soon forced to depart Spain after British diplomatic pressure was brought to bear, he had been able to forge, with the help of Wilhelm Ulllmann, a crucial series of contacts with young and ambitious officers such as Luís Carrero Blanco[45] and Francisco Franco, that would allow the Nazis to provide assistance quickly to the rebel army during the Spanish Civil War.[46]

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laws, Wilhelm Ullmann's mixed parentage would have made him a so-called "Mischling ersten Grades" – that is, a person of mixed race of the first degree. After passage of the Race Laws, anyone with this background required official permission to marry a person with no Jewish ancestry.

[39] Mann, Thomas. *Briefe II 1914 - 1923. Große Kommentierte Frankfurter Ausgabe. Werke - Briefe - Tagebücher.* Vol. 22. Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 2004. 1035 – 1037.

[40] Quoted in Mann, 1037.

[41] The Kocherthalers were a German-Jewish family who had long been active in business circles in Spain; they were distantly related to both Albert Einstein and the famous German chemist, Fritz Haber. The Kocherthalers' interests were mainly in mining, railways and electric utilities. See: Tortella, Teresa. *A Guide to Sources of Information on Foreign Investment in Spain 1780-1914*. Amsterdam: International Institute of Social History, 2000. Web.

[42] Vom Bruch, Rüdiger, and Ute Gerhardt. *Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006. 54.

[43] Canaris would go on to become head of the Abwehr (German Military Intelligence) under the National Socialists. He was arrested on a charge of conspiracy in the July 1944 plot on Hitler's life and executed in April 1945. His widow was later granted Spanish asylum and a state pension by Franco. (Thomas, Hugh. *The Spanish Civil War*. London: Penguin, 1989, 341 fn 6)

[44] Wojak, Irmtrud and Susanne Meinl, ed. *Völkermord und Kriegsverbrechen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2004, 161.

[45] Born in 1904, Carrero Blanco was Franco's designated successor. In 1973 he was assassinated by Basque separatists.

[46] Presas i Puig, Albert. "Technoscientific synergies between Germany and Spain in the twentieth century. Continuity amid radical change." *Technology and Culture* 51.1 (January 2010): 80 - 98. Here, 86.

Wilhelm Ullmann also played a part in a highly unsavoury arms deal in the early 1920s that, ironically, involved Marianne Angermann's own field of academic expertise: chemistry. In the early twentieth century the last Spanish overseas possession was its protectorate in northern Morocco. There, however, in the Rif mountains, they faced the extremely effective resistance of the local Berber tribes under the leadership of Abd el-Krim, who had inflicted one of the greatest defeats on the Spanish army at the Battle of Annual in July 1921. Seeking a means to re-impose their authority in the Rif, the Spanish military were receptive to a proposal from the chemist, Hugo Stoltzenberg, that chemical weapons plants using German technology be built in Spain. It was Stoltzenberg who had been tasked with destroying stocks of German poison gas as required by the Treaty of Versailles, but, in concert with elements of the new professional army, the Reichswehr, he was able to conceal the extent of the German inventory and store it in his own warehouses. Since the provisions of the Versailles treaty explicitly forbade the German military from producing gas or exporting any technology relating to it, Stoltzenberg's activities in Spain were undertaken in his capacity as a private businessman. He was helped in these endeavours by a prominent financial institution with excellent local knowledge: the intermediary that set up the initial negotiations with the Spanish army was none other than the banking group Kocherthaler – Ullmann – Lewin.[47]

From 1921 – 1926 the Spanish employed poison gas in massive quantities in the Rif region, and eventually reasserted control with the help of French armed forces. The Reichswehr regarded the Rif War as a testing ground for the chemical weapons it was unable to produce at home – much as the Luftwaffe's Condor Legion would later be used during the Spanish Civil War to trial aerial bombing techniques on Republican civilian targets.

November 1936: The Nationalist attack on Madrid and the Battle for the University

Although, as we have said, Marianne tended to minimise the unrest and political violence which beset Madrid in her letters home, this was surely because she wished to calm the anxiety her parents must have naturally felt for a child living in an unfamiliar country during turbulent times. For many people living during the 1930s a certain wilful blindness to the "gathering storm" of war also functioned as a psychological defence and enabled the continuation of everyday life. No doubt Marianne also sought to defend all that she had achieved in her move to Madrid: having been denied a satisfying career for so long (and, perhaps, also a satisfactory relationship), it is understandable that she would want to downplay any political factors that might have spelled an end to her ambitions.

If Marianne did cling to the idea that her work at the new Institute could not be disrupted by violence it was an illusion that was rudely shattered by the Nationalist uprising on 17 July. Although their attempts to secure the major centres of Madrid and Barcelona were stymied by a hasty coalition of popular militias and loyalist soldiers, the Nationalist rebels

[47] ibid, 85 – 86. In an interesting historical coincidence exposed by the Hocken Collection documents, we learn that one of the members of this banking triumvirate, Ernst Josef Kocherthaler (Madrid 1894 - ?), was an indirect patron of the Bielschowskys. A booklet published to mark the opening of the Institute of Medical Research in 1935 notes that Kocherthaler had been one of its most significant donors. His gift of 1 000 pesetas towards the institute's establishment was equivalent to one month's salary for a section head such as Franz Bielschowsky. *Asociación Protectora de la Clínica del Profesor Carlos Jiménez Díaz*. Hocken Collections, MS1493/021.

did manage to gain control of important bases in the south of the country. From these strongpoints they began a methodical advance on Madrid whose fall would be a mortal blow to the Republican government. Progress towards the capture of the capital was not always straightforward – Marianne mentions in her letter of 8 August, for example, the fierce resistance put up by Republican forces in the Sierra de Guadarrama northwest of Madrid that forced the Nationalists to re-route their attack and try to enter the city from the south. Nevertheless, by November 1936 rebel armies under the command of General Mola had reached the outskirts of the city, and began preparations for an assault whose initial target would be the Ciudad Universitaria itself.

That the university campus would end up on the frontline of a ferocious ideological struggle had seemed an outlandish prospect just a few months earlier. In his memoirs, the Spanish-Argentinian actor and writer, Fernando Fernán-Gómez, who was resident in Madrid as a teenager at the time, captured this sense of a world about to be turned upside down at the university campus:

> In the spring of '36 my friend and classmate Arturo Fernández […] persuaded me that we ought to take a walk on Sunday mornings through the Ciudad Universitaria, which was under construction. I had just finished reading a war novel called *Tank Number 13* and we entertained ourselves by imagining what a battle would look like in the places we happened to find ourselves in: where the trenches would be, where the artillery would be fired from, where the tanks would attack […] But we knew that was impossible. If there were a war in Spain the battles would take place near the French or Portuguese borders; or in the south of Andalucia if the tables were turned and it was the Moors who arrived instead of the Spanish landing in Morocco. But before any of those invading armies reached the outskirts of Madrid, the war would have finished. The Ciudad Universitaria was an unlikely battlefield. That was in the spring of '36; in the spring of '37 my neighbour Manolo would be fighting there.[48]

If Marianne had been able to resume her work at the Institute after recovering from her serious ear infection,[49] therefore, it would have been for a brief time only. In the face of the Nationalist advance most of the university faculty shifted to Valencia on the orders of the Ministry of Public Education[50] and by early November the campus had been turned into a killing field for both sides.

The battle for the university campus represented the first time that the Nationalists suffered a major setback. The Republicans were, by and large, poorly trained and equipped and had been able to offer little serious opposition to an enemy which had most of the pre-war regular army at its disposal. Moreover, most of the fighting had been conducted in relatively open country and this naturally favoured the disciplined formations and more mobile and mechanised units of the Nationalists. The attack on Madrid, however, shortened the lines of communication for the Republicans and presented them with an opportunity to exploit their local knowledge of the urban

[48] Fernán-Gómez, F. *El tiempo amarillo*, 1990. Cited in: Regueral, 39.
[49] One wonders to what extent her illness was brought on, or at least exacerbated, by the stressful living conditions in Madrid at the time.
[50] Cortada, James W. *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939.* Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1982. 466.

environment. Noting the losses suffered by his forces and the increase in confidence of his Republican enemies, one of the Nationalist commanders at the Madrid front, Barrón, wrote tersely in his diary: "The war has taken on a different character".[51]

After their arrival on the fringes of Madrid on 7 November the Nationalists spent the next week probing the city's defences on its western fringes. Their strategy called for an attack through the Casa de Campo, a former royal hunting ground then (as now) a public park situated just to the west of the university campus, the Ciudad Universitaria. Over the next week the Nationalists made slow progress through these lightly wooded and rolling grounds, eventually arriving at the Manzanares River on 14 November. On 15 November rebel troops forded the river under heavy fire and advanced up the hill to the campus proper, eventually occupying the sports stadium and Faculty of Architecture. Fighting was bitter in the extreme, and involved Republican units whose names would later become legendary: the foreign volunteers of the International Brigades had arrived in Madrid to great acclaim on 8 November, while the anarchist soldiers of the Durruti Column were transferred to the city from the Aragon front four days later.[52] Both played significant roles in the defence of the University City, particularly in locations that would have been so familiar to Marianne and Franz:

> Now, on the heights overlooking Madrid, there developed the cruel, bloody struggle for the wreckage of the once beautiful university, as the Moors of Varela and the foreign communists and Spanish Republicans fought for each mound of masonry and each lecture hall, and back and forth in the modern laboratories of the Medical College.[53]

In rather swashbuckling prose, Robert Garland Colodny describes the ferocity of the conflict on the campus, as it see-sawed back and forth between the International Brigades and the Nationalists' Moroccan troops who had been persuaded that the godless Republicans wished to outlaw Allah:

> The International battalions and the Moroccans and Foreign Legion fought each other with a desperate fury in the university buildings. They fought as though the outcome of the entire campaign in Spain depended upon which side occupied a building, a hall, a room. They fought at close range with knife, with bayonet, with grenade. All the cunning of African veterans was pitted against the skill of men who had learned street fighting during Leningrad's Red October; in street riots on the Place de l'Etoile, in Clichy. Germans of the Edgar Andre and Thaelmann Battalions, who had fought Noske and Hitler in streets of Berlin and Hamburg, ambushed Berbers under the busts of Aristotle and Spinoza in the Hall of Letters, and were ambushed in turn in the dark halls of the Clinical Hospital.[54]

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[51] González-Regueral, Fernando Calvo. *La Guerra Civil en la Ciudad Universitaria*. Madrid: La Librería, 2014. 42.

[52] The famous leader of the eponymous Durruti Column, Buenaventura Durruti, would be killed in the battle on 19 November.

[53] Robert Garland Colodny, *The Struggle for Madrid: The Central Epic of the Spanish Conflict (1936 - 1937)*. New York: Paine-Whitman, 1958. 77.

[54] Colodny, 79. In one incident involving the Faculty of Medicine that seems to sum up the horrors of close-quarters fighting on the university campus, a unit of Moroccan troops was isolated on an upper floor that housed a number of laboratory animals. Without provisions and suffering from severe hunger, these men

Although there were a few minor Nationalist gains within the campus over the next few days, the battle lines between the two sides eventually consolidated and would remain static for the next three years, leaving the Nationalists with a fragile salient that jutted awkwardly into the northwest of Madrid. The Faculty of Medicine, which housed Jiménez-Díaz's Institute of Medical Research, would remain in Republican hands for the duration of the conflict; indeed, according to Fernando Calvo González-Regueral, it would become "[…] the central point of resistance to the Nationalist salient at the University."[55] Despite its exposed position, the Faculty of Medicine was not completely destroyed as so many other buildings on campus were.[56] Reconstructed in the Franco era, the building is still pock-marked with bullet holes and other impact marks from projectiles.

A barricade in central Madrid at about no. 60 Calle de San Vicente Ferrer close to the corner with Calle de San Bernardo. Image: Archivo Histórico del Partido Comunista de España.

dispatched the caged creatures and consumed them. It quickly transpired that their meals had been inoculated with a number of unpleasant diseases. (Thomas, 470)

[55] González-Regueral, op. cit., 169.

[56] Though in his memoirs, Jiménez-Díaz describes the building as having been on the front line and destroyed ("destrozado"). (Jiménez-Díaz, 52 & 54.)

The Madrid front near the University City seen from the Nationalist side, 19 May 1938. This view shows a temporary bridge and parapets over the Manazares river. Image: Biblioteca Digital Hispánica / Biblioteca Nacional de España. GC-CAJA/61/16/12r/1

Republican militiamen in a laboratory of the Faculty of Medicine, University City, Madrid. November – December 1936. The photo is by the famous war correspondent, Robert Capa. Image: Biblioteca Digital Hispánica / Biblioteca Nacional de España. GC-CAJA 59/18/2/1

Militiamen take a break from the fighting in a laboratory of the Faculty of Medicine, University City, Madrid. Probably late 1936. Image: Biblioteca Digital Hispánica / Biblioteca Nacional de España. GC-CAJA 59/18/1.

War damage at the University City, Madrid, in August 1937. Image: Biblioteca Digital Hispánica / Biblioteca Nacional de España. GC-CAJA 59/16/32/1.

Impact marks from small arms fire, Faculty of Medicine, Complutense University of Madrid. June 2019. Photo: Cecilia Novero

Doctors for the Cause: The Bielschowskys during the Spanish Civil War

By 18 October 1936 Marianne Angermann had recovered from her illness sufficiently to be able to return to work at the university. Her work was proceeding slowly, she wrote, because "too many people are missing - they're all busy in hospitals – to have the same routine as there used to be." On 8 November she wrote that she could hear artillery being fired, a sound which announced the proximity of Nationalist forces and heralded their main attack on the capital just a week later. As we have seen, it was that attack, and the subsequent formation of a violently contested front-line on the university campus, which brought the work of Carlos Jiménez Díaz's medical research team to an abrupt end.

This turn of events left Marianne and Franz with radically reduced options. A return to Germany was clearly unthinkable for Franz and scarcely any more attractive for Marianne; her decision to stay in Spain rather than be evacuated by the ships of the German navy or Kraft durch Freude would almost certainly have aroused the suspicions of the authorities at home. Moreover, the deteriorating state of international relations hardly offered favourable circumstances for seeking and securing a university post in a third country, a task that would have been difficult enough for a Jew and a woman under ideal conditions in 1936.[57] In any case, it seems that both scientists felt a genuine affection for Spain, a country that had provided a safe haven and a rewarding work environment for them, even if – particularly in Marianne's case – this had been for a short time only. Once their research work had been rendered impossible, both Marianne and Franz seem to have quickly decided to place their medical skills at the disposal of the Republican cause.

As Marianne had noted, it was a decision that by November had animated many of her colleagues who were already volunteering for the Republican medical services. Work of this nature was not in short supply throughout Spain, in both the Nationalist and Republican zones. As Sebastian Browne points out, despite the ideological gulf that separated both sides "the provision of medical care [...] of the wounded in both the Republican and Insurgent Zones throughout the Spain of the Civil War was notable for its similarities rather than for its differences".[58] On the Republican side, hospitals of all types sprang up almost overnight in a fevered atmosphere in which political parties, unions and the politically well-intentioned attempted to outcompete each other to prove their Republican credentials. Furthermore, each militia unit insisted on setting up its own medical service in the rear. The result was, according to Estellés Salarich, head of the Technical General Secretariat for the Ministry of Health from 1933 to 1936, a sprawling, informal network of medical facilities with a capacity that outstripped requirements in what had become Madrid's static battlefield:

[57] It appears, however, that the couple's friends and relations had made extraordinary efforts on their behalf and had found an academic position for Franz in Honduras. To the mortification of Marianne's mother, Charlotte, the couple turned the post down and decided to remain in Madrid. See Charlotte's journal entries for October 1938.

[58] Browne, Sebastian. *Medicine and conflict. The Spanish Civil War and its traumatic legacy*. Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2019. 60. The main difference between the two sides, writes Bernabéu Mestre, lay in the desire of the radical Left, especially the Anarchists, " to challenge the traditional hierarchical structure of medicine by making it free, or at least affordable, for the whole of the population [...]" Bernabéu Mestre, J. 'La utopía reformada de la Segunda República: la labor de Marcelino Pascua al frente de la Dirección General de Sanidad, 1931- 1933, *Revista española de salud pública*, No. 74 (2000), 1 – 13. Here, 3-4.

> After a while there were a lot of hospitals. Some old ones more or less reorganised, and other new ones. Too many hospitals. These institutions were unnecessary in Madrid. Later, we had to close quite a few of them as being redundant in a zone of the front that had stabilised relatively quickly.[59]

The Bielschowskys' workplace: Hospital No. 6

One of the new hospitals that was deemed absolutely necessary was Military Hospital No. 6 located in what is now the Avenida de Burgos (then, the Carretera de Chamartín) in the northern suburb of Chamartín de la Rosa. This facility was established in a Catholic institution, the Convento de las Madres Reparadoras (also known as the Noviciado María Reparadora) which had only been completed in 1926.[60] At the start of the war it was common for convents and other church buildings to be appropriated by anti-ecclesiastical militias and converted into medical facilities – though such initiatives were haphazard and few of them lasted.[61]

Documents in the Hocken Collections indicate that Franz was employed as a physician, and Marianne as medical laboratory chemist, during the war. (It is worth mentioning, in passing, that Franz Bielschowsky also acted as Medical Advisor to the Dutch Legation in Madrid, a position which would later stand him in good stead when he sought a character reference for entering Great Britain in 1939.[62]) Their identity papers – crucial for ensuring personal security during the conflict – list what appear to be four separate workplaces but were, in fact, a single facility. These were: the "Aïda Lafuente" Hospital, the "Campesino" Hospital, Military Hospital (or Clinic) No. 6 and the Hospital Medico Popular. According to the Madrid historian, Alfonso del Barrio,[63] during the Civil War there were two hospitals on the Carretera de Chamartín: Hospital No. 11, known as "Antonio Coll", and Hospital No. 6 – which was also known as "Aïda Lafuente"[64] and "Hospital Medico Popular". Both these latter names appear on the identity card of Marianne Angermann from December 1936, while "Hospital Núm 6, Carretera de Chamartín" is used in an attestation for Franz Bielschowsky signed in 1938 by Aurelio de Castro, the hospital director and the couple's former Institute colleague. Del Barrio notes that historical sources occasionally confuse Hospitals No's 6 and 11, and the two are sometimes mistaken for Hospital No. 14 which was located in calle de la Puebla in the very centre of the city. It is clear however that "Aïda Lafuente", "Hospital No. 6" and "Hospital Medico Popular" referred to a single hospital.[65] At another stage in the war the

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[59] Estellés Salarich, 41.

[60] Designed by the architect Luis Bellido it was built from 1920 to 1926. After being neglected for some years, the convent was demolished in the 1980s and the land sold. Only the church remained and it is now, in a peculiar historical coincidence, the home of the German-speaking Catholic congregation of Madrid.

[61] Barona, Josep L, and Enrique Perdiguero-Gil. "Health and the war. Changing schemes and health conditions during the Spanish Civil War." *Dynamis* 28 (2008): 103-26. Here, 112. Military healthcare facilities in the Republican zone included hospitales de sangre (frontline hospitals), hospitales carabineros (hospitals for military police) as well as hospitals for separate army divisions. (Barona & Perdiguera-Gil, 109)

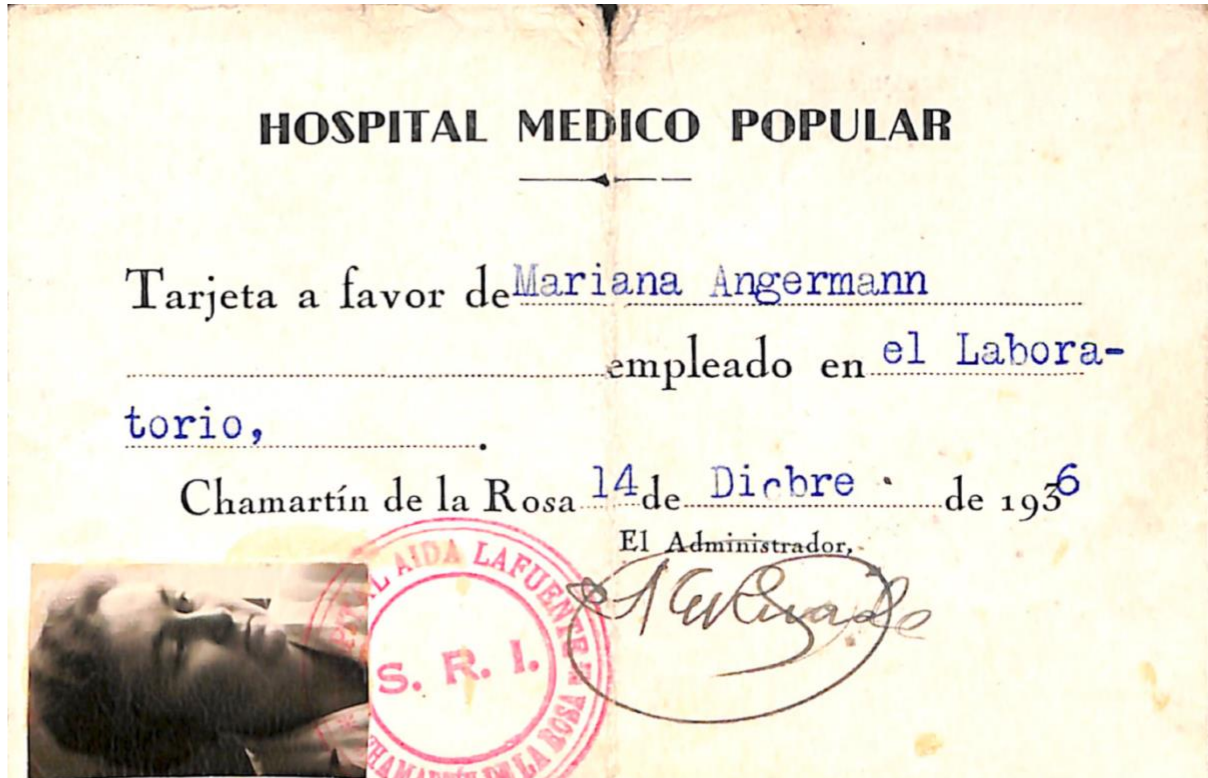
[62] See letter from the British consulate, Hocken Library.

[63] Much of our information on Hospital No. 6 was provided by Alfonso del Barrio, to whom we are greatly indebted.

[64] Aïda Lafuente (or de la Fuente) Penaos was a nineteen year old Republican martyr killed in Asturias during the (Socialist) October uprising of 1934.

[65] In support of this thesis is the fact that Franz Bielschowsky explicitly used the singular when referring to his wartime workplace in his letter of application for the position of director of the cancer research

clinic was also called "Campesino"[66] when it was exclusively used by the 46th Division: Marianne's identity card for September 1937 bears that name. As Estellés Salarich points out, it was not unusual for Republican hospitals to be constantly changing their functions depending on what was immediately required for the war effort,[67] and such reconfigurations must have also been accompanied by a name change.



HOSPITAL MEDICO POPULAR

Tarjeta a favor de Mariana Angermann
empleado en el Labora-
torio,
Chamartín de la Rosa 14 de Dicbre · de 1936
El Administrador,

S. R. I.

Marianne Angermann's identity card from December 1936. The hospital she worked at has two names here: Hospital Medico Popular and (in the stamp) Hospital Aïda Lafuente. Hocken Collections MS-1493/001

laboratory in Dunedin: "I […] worked as a captain in a military hospital in Madrid". Hocken Collections, MS-1493/017.

[66] "El Campesino" was the nom de guerre of Valentín González González (1904-1983), leader of the 46th Division.

[67] Estellés-Salarich, op. cit., 48.

46 DIVISION

HOSPITAL DIVISIONARIO «Campesino»

Carretera Chamartín.-MADRID

TARJETA DE IDENTIDAD

Apellidos ANGERMANN Nombre MARIANA

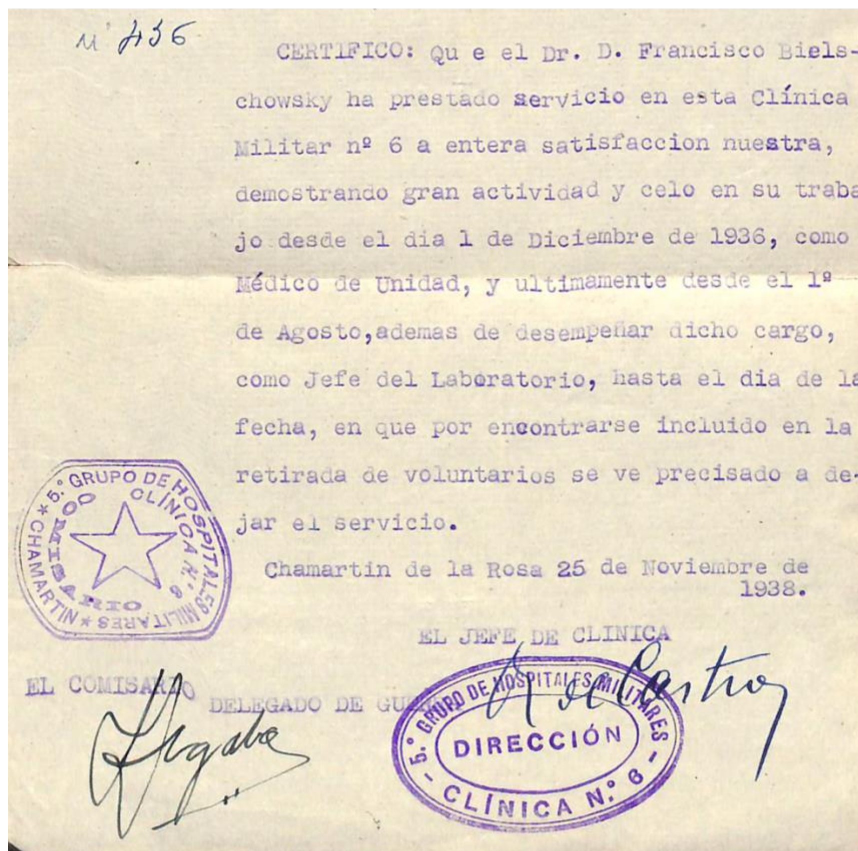
Misión que desempeña: QUIMICA Laboratorio Domicilio ORFILA 8.

Madrid 9 de setiembre de 1937

V.º B.º
El Mayor Jefe de Sanidad

El Director,

Marianne Angermann's identity card from September 1937. Her employer is the "Campesino" Hospital on the Carretera Chamartín. Hocken Collections MS-1493/001



n 436

CERTIFICO: Que el Dr. D. Francisco Bielschowsky ha prestado servicio en esta Clínica Militar nº 6 a entera satisfaccion nuestra, demostrando gran actividad y celo en su trabajo desde el dia 1 de Diciembre de 1936, como Médico de Unidad, y ultimamente desde el 1º de Agosto, ademas de desempeñar dicho cargo, como Jefe del Laboratorio, hasta el dia de la fecha, en que por encontrarse incluido en la retirada de voluntarios se ve precisado a dejar el servicio.

Chamartin de la Rosa 25 de Noviembre de 1938.

EL JEFE DE CLINICA

EL COMISARIO DELEGADO DE GU[ERRA]

5.º GRUPO DE HOSPITALES MILITARES – DIRECCIÓN – CLÍNICA Nº 6

A letter providing proof of employment for Franz Bielschowsky at Military Clinic No. 6 from 1 December 1936 to 25 November 1938. Hocken Collections MS-1493/015

Franz and Marianne's presence at Military Hospital No. 6 is easily explained, since many of their research colleagues from the Institute who were physicians had relocated there in late 1936. The hospital's first director was Dr Amador Pereira Redondo (1904-1960) who, in 1937, went on to become Chief Medical Officer of the Tank Brigade.[68] For a brief time, Carlos Jiménez Díaz himself became the medical director of the hospital (probably immediately after Pereira Redondo) at the instigation of his former pupil, Dr Luís Aransay Álvaro,[69] assistant to the director of Republican military intelligence, and he was joined by his colleagues Felipe Morán, Aurelio de Castro, Pedro de la Barreda Espinosa – and, of course, Franz Bielschowsky and Marianne Angermann. De Castro would later go on to become the hospital's medical director in 1937 and it is his signature that was appended to Franz Bielschowsky's papers when the latter was released from Republican service in November 1938. Even the future Nobel laureate and close colleague of Franz Bielschowsky, Severo Ochoa, was briefly employed at Hospital No. 6 before he left Spain to take up research positions elsewhere.[70]

Military Hospital No. 6 was established at the initiative of the local Communist radio station (Radio Comunista de Chamartín de la Rosa), and its first executive director was the station head and militia chief, Luis Quesada Betebón (or Betegón).[71] For a radio station director to become the manager of a hospital is certainly unusual, but when medical facilities were being established on the Republican side in the early phase of the war, it was felt that a lack of professional expertise could often be compensated for by a staunch political commitment. As Estellés Salarich writes, hospitals were often under the command of non-medical personnel who were "ideologically educated […] but who improvised in the new fields they took charge of."[72]

Ground-breaking work in psychiatry was carried out at Aïda Lafuente Hospital / Military Hospital No. 6 during the war. Gregorio Bermann, an Argentinian Jewish psychiatrist and philosopher who already had a well-established international reputation, organised approaches to care for those suffering from combat trauma within the hospital's neuropsychiatric service. There, he collected the clinical records of more than 400 patients, describing symptoms similar to those reported in World War I.[73] It is difficult to

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[68] Letter from Alfonso del Barrio, 21 June 2021.

[69] 1905 – 1978. Aransay Álvaro later went into exile in Mexico. (Archivo General de la Nación de México. Secretaría de Gobernación de México. Registro Nacional de Extranjeros en México. http://pares.mcu.es/MovimientosMigratorios/detalle.form?nid=5586 Accessed 17 June 2023.)

[70] Severo Ochoa went first to Germany (!) in September 1936, and then the United Kingdom before eventually settling in the United States in 1940. Curiously, it was the prominent Republican politician, Juan Negrín, a physiologist and former colleague of Ochoa, who enabled him to take up this post in Germany. (Conde-López, Manuel, "Médicos exiliados (1492 – 1939)." In: *Los médicos y la medicina en la guerra civil española*. Monografías Beecham. Madrid 1986. 311 – 334. Here, 330.) Negrín would go on to become the last prime minister to serve under the Second Republic.

[71] Quesada's path would cross tragically with that of Marianne's former boss, Professor Carlos Jiménez Díaz, after the war, when the latter had become an influential figure in the Francoist establishment. At the conclusion of hostilities in 1939, Luis Quesada – along with tens of thousands of others – was arrested and sentenced to death. His plea to Carlos Jiménez Díaz to intercede on his behalf was refused and he was executed. Interestingly, Quesada's daughter, María Luisa Quesada González (nom de guerre: 'Natasha'), was also a militant supporter of the Republican cause with a link to Military Hospital No. 6. During the war, she had arrested a man by the name of Emilio Copano Nieves after arriving at Nieves' house along with two armed militiamen in a car marked Servicio Médico de Chamartín (Chamartín Medical Service). (Letter from Alfonso del Barrio, 24 June 2021)

[72] Estellés Salarich, op. cit., 42.

[73] Olga Villasante, "'War neurosis' during the Spanish Civil War (1936 – 1939)." *History of Psychiatry*

believe that there would not have been any scholarly exchange between Bermann and Medical Officer Franz Bielschowsky, especially since Franz was so familiar with the neuropathological work of his father, Max.[74] Though she was not a doctor herself, Marianne's duties in the hospital laboratory would certainly have brought her into close contact with traumatic battle injuries and, later, as the supply situation worsened, with the range of diseases that always arise under conditions of poverty and poor hygiene. After Franz and Marianne had established themselves as researchers in Sheffield during the Second World War it was these experiences that served to guide her work on the biochemical agents of shock. (The quality of Marianne's standing as a scientist is evident from the fact that she was the co-author of papers on the subject along with Professor HN Green, Franz's superior at the University of Sheffield and an expert in the consequences of physical trauma.[75] This, despite the fact that Marianne held no formal academic post at Sheffield.)

The Convento de las Madres Reparadores, which housed Military Hospital No. 6, is in the background of this photo from 1949. Today, the area is densely built-up.[76] Image: Manuel Urech.

21(4), 2010. 424–435. Bermann's research was later published as *Las neurosis en la guerra* (1941).

[74] Similarly, one cannot entirely discount the possibility of an encounter between the Bielschowskys and the New Zealand physician Dr Douglas Jolly, one of the outstanding medical figures of the Civil War. A native of Cromwell and alumnus of the Otago Medical School, he arrived in Spain in November 1936 and quickly established a reputation as a highly competent and courageous field surgeon as well as an organiser of great drive and initiative. Jolly developed a system of battlefield medical care known as the Three Point Forward System which he set out in detail in a 1940 monograph, *Field Surgery in Total War*. This publication would become a standard text for Allied medics in World War Two and influence the development of the mobile hospitals used by American forces in Korea and Vietnam. (See: Derby, Mark, and David Lowe. "Douglas Waddell Jolly (1904–1983) – New Zealand Pioneer of Modern Battlefield Surgery." *Journal of Medical Biography*. August (2018): 1 - 8.)

[75] See for example: Bielschowsky, M., and H. Green 'Organic and Inorganic Pyrophosphates as Shock-Inducing Agents'. *Nature* 153, 524–525 (1944).

[76] See, for example, the image of the German Parish Church of Santa María (Parroquia de Santa María de habla Alemana) at http://www.jmphotographia.es/cap-45-conociendo-mi-ciudad-castilla-chamartin Accessed 23 May 2023.

Military hospital in Madrid. Image: José F. Aguayo. Biblioteca Digital Hispánica / Biblioteca Nacional de España. (GC-CAJA 58/8/2r/1)

Wounded man in a Republican hospital. Image: Archivo Histórico del Partido Comunista de España / Historical Archive of the Spanish Communist Party.

Republican militiamen bearing a stretcher as they return from their forward positions, Madrid. Image: Biblioteca Digital Hispánica / Biblioteca Nacional de España. José F. Aguayo. (GC-CAJA 58/8/17/2)

Organising and funding Republican medical care

Improvisation in personnel was also necessary in the Republican medical services in view of the significant numbers of medical staff in the military who chose to commit to the Nationalists,[77] and the fact that many civilian physicians found themselves at the outbreak of hostilities in rebel territory that slowly but inexorably grew during the course of the war.[78] On the Republican side, this personnel deficit burdened those less qualified colleagues who remained with much greater responsibilities. As Director of Medical Services for the Army of the Centre, Estellés Salarich likened his management of this process to that of an opera director whose star performers become unavailable one by one and who is then forced to rely on the solidarity of the anonymous members of the chorus: "[…] the director has no other choice but to say to the chorus: "Chorus, step forward and sing the aria!"[79] At the end of 1936, Republican forces could muster 600

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[77] Nicholas Coni. *Medicine and Warfare: Spain, 1936 - 1939.* Routledge, 2008. 23.

[78] While Coni acknowledges that army Medical Officers were certainly more likely to be supporters of the rebels, he points out that there is little reason to believe that the medical profession was any less diverse in its political opinions than Spanish society as a whole. Of the 47 members of the Cortes (Spanish parliament) who were qualified medical professionals at the outbreak of war, 35 were on the left-wing and 12 on the right. ibid, 12.

[79] ibid, 42. The shortage of qualified medical personnel became even more acute after the war when around one thousand Spanish Republican physicians left the country (Conde-López, Manuel, "Médicos exiliados (1492 – 1939)." In: *Los médicos y la medicina en la Guerra Civil Española.* Monografias Beecham. Madrid 1986. 311 – 334. Here, 314.)

military physicians; they were tending patients in 25 000 hospital beds at 70 dedicated military facilities; 6 000 of these beds were in Madrid.

But it was not only staff with military medical training that the Republicans lacked – there was a serious shortage of supplies and, in particular, vehicles for evacuating the wounded. Only 60 ambulances were available along with a small number of vans.[80] While the Nationalists could count on the material support of their fascist allies, Germany and Italy, who eagerly supplied weapons despite the commitments they had made on the international Non-Intervention Committee,[81] the Republicans could only rely on the support of distant Mexico, a capricious Soviet Union, and the goodwill of supporters in Latin America and the West.

Amongst the latter was a small group in Dunedin, the Spanish Medical Aid Committee, which collected donations in order to provide an ambulance for the Republicans. This vehicle was depicted in a photo taken on the streets of Spain in the *Evening Star* of 20 September 1938, with the origins of its donors emblazoned along the sides as "Dunedine, New Zeeland" [sic].[82]

The ambulance donated by the Spanish Medical Aid Committee, Dunedin. According to the caption accompanying the image, the vehicle was photographed on a Spanish street. *Evening Star*, Issue 23067, 20 September 1938. p. 7. © Allied Press Ltd. https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/ESD19380920.2.47.3

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[80] Barona and Perdiguero-Gil, 112.

[81] The French government called for an international declaration of non-intervention in the early days of the war when it became clear that Germany had been supplying the Nationalists with Junkers aircraft. The aim was to ensure a complete embargo on all weapons exports to the belligerents in Spain. A Non-Intervention Committee was consequently set up in London in September 1936, and a narrower Sub-Committee was formed from Spain's immediate neighbours as well as the major arms producers of Germany, France, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. As Julián Casanova observes, the initiative was "a complete 'farce' […] The Soviet Union, which had little faith in the agreement, decided in principle to observe it in order to keep on good terms with France and the United Kingdom. But Germany, Italy and Portugal systematically flouted the commitment and continued sending arms and munitions." *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 216

[82] *Evening Star,* Issue 23067, 20 September 1938, p. 7. https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/ESD19380920.2.47.3 (Accessed 31 January 2023)

The charitable work undertaken to ensure the delivery of this ambulance was not without controversy however. Some local people argued that the Aid Committee and its partner organisation, St John Ambulance, were favouring one side in the conflict. In August 1937 Councillor J.J. Nyhon of the Peninsula County Council opposed the annual request for a donation for St John Ambulance since, he argued, this money would be diverted for the relief of Spanish suffering only amongst the "loyalists or Communists". Eventually the Council relented and approved a grant of £3 3s "provided it [was] not expended for Spanish purposes."[83] Bishop Brodie, Roman Catholic bishop of Christchurch, also vehemently opposed any humanitarian intervention on the Republican side by St John Ambulance or the Red Cross on the grounds that "the Government of Spain [was] simply a disgrace to civilisation, and that it [had] been marching over democracy and the religious liberties of a nation."[84]

Other anti-Republican contributors to the letters pages of the Otago Daily Times used the time-honoured tactic of questioning the objectivity of the media. 'Avila' from Wellington, for example, claimed that press reports of the war derived from "Leftist" reporters who were based in "Spanish Bolshevist territories". To the mind of this correspondent, the bombing of Guernika in April 1937 and the massacre of prisoners and civilians in Badajoz by Nationalist troops in August 1936 were simply "inventions [...] two instances of propaganda designed to arouse hatred towards the Nationalists, but there has been a singular lack of information about the slaughterings [sic] committed by the monstrous morons and degenerate louts unleashed by the Bolshevist conspirators".[85] Given the occasional expressions of support in the current letters pages of the Otago Daily Times for another army invading a democracy – this time Russia in Ukraine – the dispassionate reader may be forgiven for thinking "plus ça change."

The precarious position of medical professionals during the War

Despite the obvious and urgent need for qualified medical personnel in Spain during the Civil War,[86] the physician's lot was a precarious one in both the Nationalist and Republican zones. On the Republican side a certain revolutionary fervour meant that doctors and medical staff in general were sometimes regarded as class enemies, since physicians tended to occupy a privileged position, while nurses were often also nuns and therefore representatives of a reactionary Church.[87] Suspicion was also levelled at doctors in the Nationalist zone because their education made them natural allies of intellectuals – notoriously always more likely to have sympathy for the Left.[88] Under the Republican regime physicians were often required to declare their loyalty to the regime, writes Coni, but medical personnel still had to be exceedingly careful to conduct themselves in such a way as to deflect any ideological suspicion:

[83] *Evening Star*, Issue 22726, 13 August 1937, p. 14 https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/ESD19370813.2.163 Accessed 1 February 2023
[84] *Otago Daily Times*, Issue 23053, 2 December 1936, p. 10 https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/ODT19361202.2.96 Accessed 1 February 2023
[85] Otago Daily Times, Issue 23615, 27 September 1938, p. 4 https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/ODT19380927.2.16.5 Accessed 1 February 2023
[86] See also Barona and Perdiguero-Gil, 112.
[87] Coni, 13. Barona and Perdiguero-Gil (107) note that this attitude was particularly marked amongst anarchist groups: "The anarchists had traditionally resisted what they called bourgeois medicine. At the First National Health Congress (Valencia, 1937) of the CNT-AIT, the anarchist Union, a proposal was made to suppress professional medical colleges."
[88] ibid, 19.

> Even at an official level, both doctors and nurses were held in some suspicion. […] The doctor, it was stated, was a suspect person, who needed to be kept under surveillance, and in whom one could not have confidence. The political history of a doctor prior to his front-line service, his clientele, his friendships, all needed to be considered. His conduct during his military service was only a partial guarantee of his loyalty, and that should never be forgotten, even though it had to be accepted that his technical skills were essential.[89]

According to Nicholas Coni, fear and paranoia amongst the medical fraternity were much more widespread in Madrid than they were in Barcelona, at least at the start of the war. In the capital, those medics who had not gone over to the Nationalists eyed each other with great mistrust even to the extent of noting which newspapers their colleagues read in order to determine their political leanings. Such anxiety was not entirely unwarranted, as there were instances of doctors executed for being a "political enemy of the revolutionaries".[90] The situation in Madrid was initially so fraught that identifying armbands were issued to doctors in order to allow them to travel unimpeded, though the counterfeiting of these items then required their authenticity to be further guaranteed by marking them with an official seal.[91] The picture in the Nationalist zone was no less despairing, and indeed the death toll for the medical profession was similar in both zones. It is thought that 165 doctors were executed on the Nationalist side while another 103 either died in prison or were shot at the end of the war. The death toll in the Republican zone was slightly lower at 233.[92]

We cannot say whether Franz and Marianne were ever the objects of suspicion during the War due to their university education or their German nationality. In her letters home in 1936 Marianne insisted that she was being treated with great solicitude, though it is not difficult to image that she occasionally ran into an over-zealous militia member who saw in her only a German rather than a scientist with Republican commitments. Doubtless the couple were helped by their important roles in caring for the war wounded at Military Hospital No. 6, and most Spanish Republicans must surely have been astute enough to recognise that Franz, as a German Jew, could only have been implacably opposed to the Nationalists. Understandably, the couple were asked to state formally their anti-fascist stance and this can be seen, for example, in their identity papers from February 1938 where they declare that they are without diplomatic representation and are proven anti-fascists.[93]

Hospitals – and not just field hospitals or dressing stations - could be dangerous places for patients as well when they were in range of artillery (as was almost always the case for the field hospitals known as hospitales de sangre) or became targets in a bombing raid. During the Nationalist advance on Madrid in November 1936 the entire Carabanchel

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[89] ibid, 19.

[90] Specifically, this phrase refers to the neuropsychiatrist José María de Villaverde, chief of psychiatry at the Provincial Hospital of Madrid, who was shot after being condemned by a tribunal. De Villaverde's case was one of those recorded in the Nationalist weekly *Semana Médica Española* which dedicated a column to right-wing physicians who died in the conflict. Quoted in Coni, 16.

[91] Anonymous, 'Foreign Letters – Madrid', *Journal of the American Medical Association* (1939) 113: 698. Quoted in Coni, 14.

[92] Guerra, F. *Medicos españoles en el exilio.* Madrid: Fundacíon Ramón Rubial / Españoles en el mundo, 2002. 8. Quoted in Coni, 19.

[93] Hocken Collections, MS-1493/001 and MS-1493/015.

hospital in the south of the city, with over 1000 patients, was moved to a hotel in central Madrid. Bombs soon started to fall nearby and surgeons needed to shield the operating site to prevent broken glass and other material from falling into the open wounds of their patients. The Carabanchel hospital itself in the meantime was the scene of fierce fighting from 9 – 12 November before it finally fell to the Nationalists. In those cases where fighting raged in and around hospitals, the Nationalist side in particular paid little respect to the conventions of warfare once they had taken the building. At Tavera Hospital in Toledo in September 1936 Moroccan troops in the Nationalist army infiltrated the building and proceeded to slaughter the patients who had been left behind by retreating Republican forces: 200 wounded militiamen were killed with grenades and bayonets.[94]

Carlos Jiménez Díaz and the fate of the Institute of Medical Research

Marianne and Franz's patron, Carlos Jiménez-Díaz, found himself in a challenging situation at the outbreak of the war. Although he had a lower middle-class background – his father was a shopkeeper – he owed his extraordinary skills at research management at least partly to his ability to move easily in Spain's business and aristocratic circles, from which he had secured long-term funding for the Institute of Medical Research. Those skills were now somewhat at odds with the pronounced egalitarian spirit of the Republic in which even the great and the good were expected to pitch in. Estellés Salarich describes him somewhat archly as a man who was not able to lower his sights and adjust to more modest circumstances: Jiménez Díaz's connections had allowed him, for example, to acquire the very best medical equipment, and he was quickly able to furnish Hospital No. 6 with no fewer than three extremely rare electrocardiographs (whereas, Estellés Salarich implies, two could have been used better elsewhere). Estellés Salarich also implies that Jiménez Díaz misjudged the mood of the time in his personal attire. While the standard uniform of the militias was a pair of blue overalls, such as those worn by workmen, Jiménez-Díaz took to wearing an elegant pair of white overalls "like those worn by the heads and officers of the air force in the summer."[95]

Jiménez Díaz did not remain long at Chamartín's Hospital No. 6, nor, indeed, in Spain. Despite his sympathies for Republican ideals, he was more comfortable with the country's social elite and accustomed to financial success. Moreover, both he and his wife, Conchita Rábago, were practising Catholics in a part of the country that was hardening its anti-ecclesiastical attitudes. Conchita Rábago was generally less well-disposed than her husband to the Republic, and it has been suggested that she was the source of the couple's decision to leave Madrid,[96] for which they were provided with a one-month exit visa. According to Fernando Perez Peña, Jiménez Díaz left for Valencia in the autumn of 1936 after taking his leave of a select group of colleagues at Hospital No. 6 – a group that, however, does not appear to have included Franz Bielschowsky or Marianne Angermann.[97]

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[94] Beevor, Antony. *The Battle for Spain. The Spanish Civil War 1936 - 1939*. London: Phoenix, 2006. 137. The incident is also related by Geoffrey Cox. *Defence of Madrid. An Eyewitness Account from the Spanish Civil War*. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2006. 64.

[95] Estellés Salarich, op. cit., 54.

[96] Pérez Peña, Fernando. *Exilio y depuración política en la facultad de medicina de San Carlos: Sus profesores y la Guerra Civil.* Editorial Visión Libros, 2005 https://web.archive.org/web/20150923213712/http:/www.dermocosmos.com/espanol/libros/Exilio%20y%20depuracion%204.htm Accessed 21 January 2023

[97] The group was Arjona (Head of Immunology and Bacteriology at the Institute of Medical Research), Ales, Luis y Jesús and, probably, Díaz Rubio whom he requested take over the direction of the hospital. (Perez

Jiménez Díaz made for England, via Paris, where he delivered a talk on mortality in Addison's Disease at Middlesex Hospital. In one of the strange twists that crop up occasionally in Marianne Angermann's story, that invitation had come from a New Zealand-born doctor, Dr Izod Bennett, who was then the hospital's director. Jiménez Díaz then travelled on to Rome before returning to Paris where he briefly went into private practice in the Latin Quarter. According to Perez Peña, Jiménez Díaz may have intended to stay in France, but news of the Rábago family's misfortunes necessitated their return: Conchita Rábago's father and uncle had been amongst those executed by the Republicans at the massacre of Paracuellos de Jarama,[98] and her brother, Gregorio, was being held in an Alicante prison on suspicion of being a Falangist.[99]

Whatever political inclinations Jiménez Díaz may have had, when he elected to re-enter Spain on 8 March 1937[100] it was to the Nationalist zone that he returned. Since Jiménez Díaz had a high public profile and had initially dedicated his considerable skills to the Republican cause, the ease with which he was able to cross the border at Irun, and the speed with which his services were accepted by the Nationalists indicates that he must have recanted in some way on his Republican principles.[101] Nevertheless, Jímenez Díaz's personal security could still not be guaranteed and, although he and his family initially settled in San Sebastian (a city that had fallen to the Nationalists in September 1936), he was soon advised that he should not leave his house since "there were groups of Falangist and other youths who wanted to take justice into their own hands regarding someone they held to be a traitor and a coward."[102]

Perhaps in order to ensure his safety, Jiménez Díaz went to Pamplona where he met two high ranking Nationalist medics, one of whom was the psychiatrist and Falangist intellectual, Pedro Laín Entralgo (1908 – 2001). It was through Laín Entralgo that Jiménez Díaz was able to gain a personal audience with Franco in Salamanca on 22 July 1937 as the result of which it was decided that he should establish a hospital of internal medicine for the Nationalist army in San Sebastian.[103] When the Republic collapsed and Madrid was occupied by the Nationalists on 1 April 1939, Jiménez Díaz was one of the first to

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Peña, op. cit.) It is unlikely that the Bielschowskys ever met Jiménez Díaz again, but the latter was certainly aware of their subsequent career trajectories. In his 1965 memoir, *La historia de mi instituto* (39), Jiménez Díaz correctly describes Franz's position in cancer research in Dunedin.

[98] The Paracuellos massacre was a series of killings of right-wing civilians and soldiers carried out by Republican forces during the Siege of Madrid in November-December 1936. Paracuellos is a small town northeast of the capital. (See: Thomas, 463)

[99] Perez Peña, op. cit. 'Falangist' was the term used for a member of the Spanish fascist party, the Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (Spanish Falange of the Councils of the National Syndicalist Offensive).

[100] The Republican Ministry of Public Education had already stripped him of his professorial chair on 22 January 1937 for having abandoned his post. ibid.

[101] The conservative politician Pablo Garnica had written to Jiménez Díaz's brother, Mariano, to inform him that, although the physician's return would be "of immense propaganda value for Franco's regime", he would nevertheless have to "abjure some of his previous Republican ideas" since there were serious accusations against him that would have to be explained. ibid.

[102] ibid. Understandably, none of these claims are mentioned in Jiménez Díaz's own memoir, *Historia de mi instituto* (1965) where, nevertheless, his perspective is that of a Nationalist: he writes, for example, of the Francoist "liberation" of Asturias and Madrid (51 – 52). It was in San Sebastian that he was able to pick up the thread of his research again: "Some of us were finally able to meet in the Nationalist zone and, in a modest way, try to pursue part of our work in San Sebastian's Institute of Hygiene, whose director, Dr García Vélez, along with other colleagues, gave us a warm welcome and provided facilities." (51)

[103] Perez Peña, op. cit.

return to the city where he discovered that the precious library in his house in the Calle Velázquez had been confiscated.[104]

Jiménez Díaz was able to resume his directorship of the Institute of Medical Research after the war thanks to the patronage of Franco and other Nationalist leaders of the first rank. A brief description of his subsequent career will be provided in Journal 3.

The Bielschowskys' homes during the Civil War

During the war Franz and Marianne moved apartments within Madrid but they would not have been able to escape completely the devastation being visited upon the city from the air by Nationalist forces who switched tactics after it became apparent that the attack through the Ciudad Universitaria had failed. He would rather leave the city in ruins, Franco claimed to a correspondent from *The Times* of London, than leave it to the Marxists.[105]

Marianne first moved from calle Francisco de Rojas to an address just a 10 minute walk away in calle de Orfila 8. These were highly precarious locations. Alfonso del Barrio, writes that his father, grandfather and three uncles all lived at an address in the calle Cardenal Cisneros, just two blocks west of calle Francisco de Rojas, where they were frequently subjected to bombing.[106] According to maps of bomb sites in Madrid recently produced by the historians Enrique Bordes and Luis de Sobrón, serious damage was also inflicted on buildings in the calle de Orfila.[107] At some point in late 1937 or early 1938, however, Marianne and Franz shifted to the suburb of Chamartín on the northern outskirts of Madrid where they lived at calle de Poniente 20, in a house belonging to Germans who had left the country. Military Hospital No. 6, where both Marianne and Franz worked, was very close by on the Carretera de Chamartín (Avenida de Burgos), so it is likely that the move was occasioned by the need to be close by – important at a time when mechanical means of transport would have been limited. Greater distance from the bombing in the central city was probably only an unintended – if welcome – consequence.

With the introduction of Franco's bombing campaign – aided and abetted by the German military personnel and aircraft of the Condor Legion – the civilian population was also subjected to the horrors of frontline fighting. In a letter written to her mother ten years later, Marianne recalled the grief of bereaved mothers desperately searching for their children after a bombing raid – and she was fully aware of the disgraceful role her own country played in their distress:

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[104] Jiménez Díaz's account of his return to Madrid in his memoir is written in a spirit of pathos: "When Madrid was liberated [sic] and the war ended, a stocktake of our work was devastating […] a number of our former co-workers were missing, some of them forever; the Institute building had been in the front line of battle and was utterly destroyed. Only some of our materials and our library were able to be saved and, as well as all that, the spirit of each one of us, full of grief and cut off from our respective families, was confused and indecisive. Jiménez-Díaz, 52.

[105] Thomas, 471. Ultimately the siege of Madrid dragged on for almost the entire duration of the war. Despite the numbers of combatants involved on both sides – between 30 000 and 40 000 – Hugh Thomas (473) estimates that casualties on both sides amounted to around 10 000.

[106] Email from Alfonso del Barrio, 15 June 2023.

[107] Bordes, Enrique and Luis de Sobrón. *Madrid Bombardeado. Cartografía de la destrucción 1936-1939.* Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2021.

> I will never forget that bright morning in Madrid when terrified women ran from one hospital to another during the night, searching for their children. They begged me to tell them where they were, whether they were in our hospital. The evening before we had seen how German aeroplanes, Junkers, bombed their part of the city. They were testing things out on Spanish soil! – Hatred of the Germans? No, disgust was the best expression back then. (12 June 1946)

Madrid during the Civil War: the daily battle for food

Madrid suffered from the conditions that prevail in any city under siege; overwhelmed medical services, failing infrastructure, skills shortages, poor communications, and, especially, a shortage of food. In the case of Madrid, all these problems were exacerbated by an influx of refugees whose official daily ration provided for 112 g of foodstuffs daily.[108] Already with a pre-war population of around a million permanent residents, the conflicts in the south and west of the country in the second half of 1936 drove several hundred thousand terrified civilians into the city from the regions of Toledo and Extremadura.[109] Combined with a crippling loss of highly productive agricultural land to the Nationalist rebels,[110] this meant serious supply problems with the inevitable consequences of malnutrition. Though the calorific value of the diet for Madrid fluctuated, it was on a continuous downward trend from late 1936 onwards leading to a "progressive undernourishment of the whole population".[111] The recommended daily calorie intake for active adult males is 2 900 kcal and for females 2 150 kcal, but in Madrid in December 1938 this had fallen to 770 kcal per capita before levelling off at 852 kcal in February 1939.[112] Averages say little about how nutritional deficiencies are spread: one physician who logged his own diet recorded a calorie intake as low as 262 kcal per day by late January 1939[113]. Most of this food came in the form of bread, rice and a few beans or lentils but, although the diseases of undernourishment were common, there was no scurvy because the road to Valencia – a major citrus producing region – had been kept open.[114]

Statistics are one thing, the lived experience of malnutrition and constant hunger are quite another. What precisely would it have meant to Marianne and Franz to carry on work that was both intellectually and physically demanding under siege conditions and therefore in a state of continuous deprivation? In later letters to her mother from 1946, Marianne described in more detail just what this type of poverty looked like by describing her diet and her physical state:

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[108] Coni, 82.

[109] It is also true that many of the refugees who had flocked to Valencia and Barcelona were themselves Madrileños. It is estimated that some 14% of Spaniards were displaced by the end of that year. Barona and Perdiguero-Gil, 121

[110] The areas of Spain secured by the Nationalists in July 1936 map almost exactly onto those regions which annually yielded over 0.8 tonnes of grain per hectare. Coni, 82.

[111] Jiménez García; Francisco; Grande Covián, Francisco. "Sobre los trastornos carenciales observados en Madrid durante la Guerra. I. Los cuadros clínicos presentados con más frecuencia y su clasificación". *Revista Clínica Española*. 1940, 1, 313-318. Quoted in Barona and Perdiguero-Gil, 122.

[112] Coni, 84.

[113] Garcial del Real, F. "La alimentación en Madrid durante la guerra: enfermedades por carencia: enfermedad de Casal o pelagra." *Anales de la Real Academia de Medicina*. 1940. LVII. 94 – 129. Quoted in Coni, 84.

[114] Coni, 85.

> In Madrid during the war the rations were even smaller than yours [i.e. in Germany]![115] In order to preserve our strength we usually went straight to bed when we came home from the hospital. There was neither lighting, nor gas nor coal. In the hospital there was soup for lunch every day, a plate of hot water with three leaves of spinach, and afterwards a tiny herring or two little sardines (not sardines in oil) and in the evening they'd alternate between lentil, pea or bean soup. There was meat once a month. We got half the ration of bread you had![116]
>
> [] we had no coal in Madrid, no gas. Getting out of bed at 4 in the morning to turn on the cooking element in the freezing cold kitchen, upending a tin can over the saucepan and then all my dust-cloths over that to keep the heat in. The soup never really cooked properly but at least it was warm. In the evening the rest was warmed up over a little fire made of sticks, leaves and bits of the staircase. The electric light was even too weak to read by. The fat was provided by drops of stearin which fell into the soup from the candle![117]

Despite the hardships and sacrifices, Marianne looked back fondly on these times:
"What I went through! And yet I wouldn't have missed any of it, as difficult as it often was […]" (19. 11. 46) Marianne seems to have had a genuine feeling for a community forged in conditions of adversity, as it battled against a Nationalist enemy at the very gates of the city. It was this fervent commitment to the Republican cause – albeit only evident to the reader in Marianne's act of recall since very little she wrote has survived from the years of the Spanish Civil War itself – that must have inspired her mother to label the letter journals "Briefe einer Antifaschistin"/"Letters of an anti-fascist".

The end of the Spanish Civil War and the Bielschowskys' flight from Spain

The siege of Madrid meant that, prior to their final departure from the country, Marianne and Franz were almost certainly compelled to spend all their time in the city. There is, however, evidence in the Hocken archive that Marianne travelled to the provisional Republican capital of Valencia in 1938 with the intention of travelling on by sea to Barcelona. The safe conduct pass is dated 4 May which explains why sea travel was necessary: the Nationalists' Aragon Offensive (7 March – 19 April 1938) had isolated Catalonia and rendered the overland route from Valencia to Barcelona impossible. One can only speculate as to the reasons for Marianne's journey. Perhaps she was travelling to take urgent delivery of medical equipment destined for her hospital laboratory? By May 1938 medical services in the Republican zone would certainly have been very hard pressed. Franco had just rejected peace overtures from the Republicans, insisting instead on unconditional surrender. An all-out battle for survival had begun.

By the end of 1938, however, the Republican cause was all but extinguished and non-Spanish residents were taking steps to leave the country. The Hocken Collection provides evidence of some of the sort of paperwork that would have been required to ensure safety within and an expeditious exit from the Republican zone. Of primary importance was a safe-conduct pass for movement within an area that was being increasingly torn by

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[115] Shortages, according to some experts, were even worse than those experienced by Central Europe in the First World War. See: Grande Covián, Francisco. "L'alimentation et les troubles alimentaires pendant la Guerre Civile Espagnole". In: *Les Vitamines*. Bâle: Roche, 1944. Quoted in Barona and Perdiguero-Gil, 122.
[116] Letter of 2 November 1946 in Journal 3 (forthcoming).
[117] Letter of 19 November 1946 in Journal 3 (forthcoming).

internecine fighting as a Republican government increasingly under the influence of the Soviets began attacking its non-Communist rivals. Franz's safe-conduct pass is dated 14 October 1938; valid for two weeks at a time, it appears to have been last renewed on 30 November 1938. Franz also obtained testimonials from Military Hospital No. 6 in Chamartín de la Rosa which attest to his services (see above). A letter dated 25 November 1938 states that Franz has been compelled to leave the service of the hospital due to the general withdrawal of all (foreign) volunteers, while another letter of 6 December confirms that Franz and another German, a pharmacist by the name of Jorge Siekel [Georg Siegel?], are being released from their duties so that they might be evacuated. Both these letters bear the signature of the hospital director, de Castro. This was Aurelio de Castro who had been a valued colleague of Marianne and Franz at the Institute of Medical Research.

The chaotic conditions which reigned as the Republic collapsed at the end of 1938 and the start of 1939 can be read in the gaps in the archival record for Franz and Marianne. After de Castro's letter of 6 December 1938 the only papers relating to their stay in Spain are their Spanish passports which were issued on 20 February 1939 (Barcelona had fallen to the Nationalists on 26 January already and by 31 March the entire country would be in Franco's hands). It need hardly be stated that these were documents upon which their lives depended and they must have been obtained with great difficulty and resourcefulness. The Bielschowskys' situation was now critical. As officers in the Republican army's medical corps who had officially declared their anti-fascist beliefs they could expect retribution from the victorious Nationalists. And they could not have relied on the German diplomatic mission in Spain to provide assistance – it was in the Nationalist zone, and, in any case, the Bielschowskys were now stateless. The passage of the Nazis' Cancellation of Citizenship and Denaturalisation Act and its supplementary decree in July 1933, and of the Reich Citizenship Law of 1935 meant that Franz and Marianne had been effectively stripped of their status as German citizens.[118] The 1935 legislation reduced German Jews to mere "nationals" (Staatsangehörige rather than Reichsbürger), while the 1933 statutes had provided for the abrogation of citizenship for any Germans outside the Reich who refused to return when summoned or who "have conducted themselves such that German interests have been harmed and who have broken faith with the German people".[119]

It must have been this last clause that was invoked to strip Franz of his citizenship in 1938, since it is the date he gives in his application letter to the British Empire Cancer Campaign for having become stateless. The reality of their position is evident in the temporary passports provided by the Republican government: the booklets are stamped in capital letters with "Especial" while under the header of Nacionalidad (Nationality) there are the handwritten words "carecer de nacionalidad" – "no nationality" or "stateless". The bearer of the passport is further reminded of the precarity of their situation in the visas' section of the document which is headed: "The bearer is not protected by the government of Spain."

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[118] In his letter of application for the position of director of the cancer research laboratory in Dunedin, Franz states that he lost his German nationality in 1938. See Hocken Collections, MS-1493/017.

[119] Lester N. Salwin. "Uncertain nationality status of German refugees". *Minnesota Law Review*. Vol. 30, 1946. 373.

Valid for three months only the passports provide for a very specific itinerary – travel to the United Kingdom via France and return (!) to Spain – while the grounds for Marianne's travel are given as "reasons of health" (and for Franz's as "his wife's health"). Their ultimate goal was London where Franz's brother, Paul Bielschowsky (1905 – 1958), lived in Great Portland Street and was a company director in the garment trade.

The exact nature of the route indicates that their departure from Spain must have been preceded by some very careful preparation, and that they had been able to exploit a network of contacts both in Spain and in Britain (possibly, for example, with Hans Adolf Krebs in Cambridge who would later act as one of Franz's referees when he applied for the position at the University of Otago).

The dates on the passports and visas issued to the Bielschowskys show that their departure from Spain must have been an extraordinarily stressful undertaking given the extremely tight time-frames they were working to. Their passports were issued on 20 February 1939 while the transit visa for Belgium was dated 21 February and that for France, 23 February. One can imagine that obtaining these documents required interminable queuing and great anxiety; in the final days of the Republican government, European consular services in Madrid would have been besieged by large numbers of people – both Spaniards and foreigners – desperate to leave.

France presented a particular problem for the Bielschowskys. From the outbreak of the Civil War, thousands of Spaniards had fled across the border to France. Although France's own Popular Front coalition largely maintained a pro-refugee policy from 1936 - 1938, as the conflict dragged on the mood in France began to turn and a centre-right government elected in April 1938 almost immediately began to impose restrictions. It was made more difficult for Spanish, German and other refugees to obtain even temporary residence; almost overnight France's status changed from being "refugee receiver nation to one of transit".[120]

Nevertheless, the Bielschowskys were compelled to transit through France on their way to London since they had not been able to obtain the relevant paperwork to enter the UK from British authorities in Spain. Franz was issued with a letter of recommendation by the British Consulate in Madrid but would only obtain the final documents necessary to enter Britain from the embassy in Brussels.[121] According to the conditions of their transit visa for France, which was valid for 15 days only, they were not permitted to enter the

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[120] Maga, TImothy. "Closing the Door: The French Government and Refugee Policy, 1933-1939." *French Historical Studies* 12.3 (1982): 424 – 42. 435.

[121] The Republican seat of government was moved from Madrid to Valencia on 6 November 1936. The British embassy followed suit at the end of December and a temporary mission was opened in a former hotel on 3 January 1937. Consular services, as is evident from the letter of recommendation in the Hocken Collections, were still available in Madrid in February 1939, just prior to the conclusion of the war. Academic opinion has characterised the British Foreign Office as often sympathetic to Franco, though it may be that the situation was slightly more nuanced. Tom Buchanan claims, for example, that George Ogilvie-Forbes, the chargé d'affaires who effectively headed the embassy from July 1936 to February 1937, was scrupulously even-handed in his approach to the conflicting parties. "Edge of darkness: British 'front-line' diplomacy in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1937." *Contemporary European History* 12.3 (2003): 279-303.) Talk of pro-Nationalist sentiment in the British Foreign Office may have caused Marianne and Franz to channel their request for an entry visa through British representatives in Brussels. Be that as it may, communication links with London would have been much quicker and less problematic from the Belgian capital.

country directly ("[d']un port pouvant recevoir des Etrangers en provenance d'Espagne.") The only port of departure open to them was Valencia; from there it appears they were able to sail to Oran in Algeria (at that time, part of metropolitan France), which they reached on 3 March 1939. Their French transit visa indicates just how tight their schedule was: they were limited to just 15 days travel through the country.

The Bielschowskys arrived in Marseilles on 8 March before continuing their travels through France and into Belgium which they reached on 12 March. There, they stayed in Brussels to await news of their application for entry into the United Kingdom, having one month only in which to secure this document before their Belgian visa expired. On 23 March they finally received a letter from the British Passport Control Office in Brussels informing them that they had been granted leave to enter the UK for "a visit of six months, not for employment". From 24-25 March they were visited in Brussels by Marianne's parents, Konrad and Charlotte Angermann. This was the first time Marianne had seen here parents in over three years – and it would be the last time she saw her father alive.

Six months later Great Britain was at war with Germany and there was no question of a return to Spain.

The Bielschowskys and the situation of exiled scholars in Britain

Although Franz had received an offer from his former mentor, Siegfried Thannhauser, to join him at Tufts University in Boston, this opportunity was put paid to by the British declaration of war on Germany on 2 September 1939.[122] Instead, according to his letter of application for the directorship of the cancer research laboratory in Dunedin in 1947, Franz was able to secure a grant from the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL) in August 1939. This funding enabled him to work as a researcher under Professor H.N. Green at the University of Sheffield, focusing firstly on the action of sulphanilamides (an early antibiotic) and then on an independent strand of cancer research. The SPSL and its forerunner, the Academic Assistance Council (AAC)[123] were organisations dedicated to supporting refugee academics and from June 1933 to September 1939 they became "part an international effort to rescue scholars displaced by the Nazis from academic institutions in Europe."[124] Initially, the AAC/SPSL provided 12 month grants to scholars depending on merit and need but these efforts were later greatly expanded as it became apparent that there could only be growing demand for its services. By June 1939 – at around the time that Franz became a recipient of SPSL funds

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[122] Just prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, Franz Bielschowsky had been offered a position as Instructor at Tufts Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts. (Bonser, Georgina M., and R.A. Willis. "Franz David Bielschowsky. 5 January 1902–21 April 1965." *Journal of Pathology and Bacteriology*. 93.1 (January 1967): 357-64. Here, 358.) See also the remark made by Marianne Bielschowsky in her letter of 22 September 1947 in Journal 3 (forthcoming).

[123] The AAC had an important New Zealand connection: its first president was Sir Ernest Rutherford.

[124] Zimmerman, David. "The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning and the Politicization of British Science in the 1930s." *Minerva* 44.1 (2006): 25-45. 27. According to Shula Marks the AAC was instigated after a visit to Vienna by William Beveridge and an LSE colleague, Lionel Robbins. There, they learned of the Nazi dismissal of Jewish teachers from German universities following the law of 7 April which outlawed the employment of Jewish civil servants "[…] Horrified by the stories he heard, Beveridge determined to establish a rescue operation for displaced scholars." Marks, Shula, Paul Weindling, and Laura Wintour, eds. *In Defence of Learning. The Plight, Persecution and Placement of Academic Refugees 1933 - 1980s.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 3.

– £100 000 had been donated to the Society, and by the outbreak of war at least 900 scholars had been given aid.[125]

Persuading universities to free up resources to accommodate refugee academics was not always an easy matter and the SPSL often found itself having to combat casual anti-Semitism even amongst vice-chancellors. Oddly, given the later generosity of the university in providing for Hans Adolf Krebs and Franz Bielschowsky, this was also the case with Sheffield University when it was first approached by the Society for support in 1933. Its then vice-chancellor replied as follows:

> The funds at our disposal are very small indeed and that there is a very strong feeling that our own students - many of whose parents are unemployed - have the first claim upon them.
> The opinion has also been strongly expressed that, as there are many rich men of the Jewish religion whose individual incomes are larger than the whole income of the University, it would be appropriate that they be asked to support the teachers in the first instance. At the same time we are very far from being unsympathetic towards the condition of these unfortunate persons, and it is only our poverty and not our will which suggests difficulties.[126]

The Bielschowskys' departure from Spain in early 1939 coincided with the second wave of Jewish emigration from Germany when a generation of older, established medical professionals, who had previously been spared the worst of the anti-Semitic outrages, was coming to the unwelcome attention of the National Socialists.[127] Great Britain was the most popular destination for this group: 22% of medically qualified emigrés settled there with a mere 3% travelling further afield to Canada, Australia and New Zealand.[128] Between 1934 and 1938, German doctors were required to confirm their qualifications in the United Kingdom by sitting British medical exams after an enforced wait of 12 months. After pressure from professional bodies such as the British Medical Association, who were concerned that incomers were competing with locally trained physicians, this stand-down period was increased to three years.[129]

The prospects for Franz practising as a physician in Great Britain were therefore slim indeed and, while the position with Professor Green at Sheffield must have seemed like a lifeline, it only postponed uncertainty rather than removed it entirely. The SPSL had limited funds at its disposal so that Franz would have been under still greater pressure than his British colleagues to produce relevant, high quality research: only by doing so could he hope eventually to be appointed to a permanent position and secure the right to residency.

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[125] ibid, 30.
[126] SPSL 51. Replies from Vice-Chancellors. Quoted in Zimmerman, 34.
[127] Schwarz, Viola Angelika. *Walter Edwin Griesbach (1888 - 1968) Leben und Werk*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999. 45 – 46.
[128] Horst Möller. „Wissenschaft in der Emigration – Quantitative und geographische Aspekte." *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 7 (1984), 1 – 9. Here, 5. Quoted in Schwarz, 46.
[129] ibid, 47. It was not just doctors who jealously defended their privileges against their refugee colleagues. University academics could also be deeply suspicious of immigrant scholars: "Refugee academics constantly faced the suspicion of those who felt threatened by their potential competition, and anti-semitism, while not as powerfully expressed as in North America, was a pervasive undercurrent in British society and was evident in government and even in academic circles." Marks et al., 6.

Despite the fact that she was eminently well qualified and had been a researcher at the Institute of Medical Research, Marianne's academic credentials do not seem to have been financially acknowledged by the SPSL. While it was not unknown for women refugee scholars to secure a position in their adopted country, to do so required even an more heroic effort than that expended by their male counterparts. As Shula Marks has observed, there was often no question of them having their qualifications or academic achievements recognised by the authorities when applying for entry to the UK: "The story of the handful of women refugee scholars is […] a remarkable one of endurance and dedication, not least because […] often the only way they could obtain work permits and thus gain entry to Britain was as domestic servants."[130] It seems that Marianne was certainly capable of this endurance and dedication because at some point around 1943 she gained a funded research position. When he wrote his application letter for the position at Otago in 1947, Franz Bielschowsky included a section on his wife's achievements in which he stated that she had been working for the past four years as a biochemist for the British Medical Research Council.[131]

Communication between Madrid and Dresden 1936-39

In the final months of 1936 mail contact between Marianne and her parents had been unpredictable. As late as October of that year letters were still reaching their destinations, but Marianne seemed to know that communication could no longer be maintained when she wrote to bid her parents farewell on 8 November 1936. (The battle for the university campus was about to begin and the Republican government, fearing that the Nationalists would quickly take Madrid, had relocated the government to Valencia on 6 November.) The last letter the Angermanns received directly from their daughter reached them on 18 January 1937. It had been sent from Marseilles ten days earlier and was probably posted in France by a friend or acquaintance who had fled Spain. In this final missive Marianne declared that she would not write to her parents directly anymore; correspondence between Republican Spain and Fascist Germany would almost certainly have placed both parties at some risk. Instead, she informed her parents, communication would be through family friends who lived in the Netherlands and could pass on information without attracting undue attention. Both Charlotte and Marianne were obviously aware that their correspondence was subject to the censor's gaze. Indeed, at the very beginning of Journal 2, Charlotte seems to address the future reader in order to explain, in part, the abridged nature of the correspondence: "What follows is not an exact record of Marianne's letters. The originals are in storage. They contain much that is personal, and some of them are very short because they have been through two censors."

Censorship of mail 1936 - 1945

Surveillance of internal mail in Germany under the National Socialists tended to be a police or Gestapo matter and focused on those correspondents who were already suspected of 'political unreliability'. Such mail was intended to be read without drawing the attention of the recipient.[132] The more limited volumes of international mail were systematically monitored through a number of Inspection Centres for Mail from Abroad

[130] Marks et al., 15.
[131] Hocken Collections, MS- 1493/017
[132] Hartig, Christine. *Briefe als Zugang zu einer Alltagsgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus*. Hamburg: Universität Hamburg / Hamburg Open Online University, 2017. Web. https://ns-alltagsgeschichten.blogs.unihamburg.de/wp-content/uploads/themen/Briefe-als-Quelle/page.pdf Accessed 2 February 2023

or Auslandsbriefprüfstellen (ABP), each of which was responsible for inspecting mail for particular countries only. Administratively, the ABPs were part of military intelligence but each of them worked in close collaboration with a parallel Gestapo office which was responsible for inspecting printed matter – and which would pursue an investigation into any 'suspicious' individuals. International post which had been inspected would be clearly marked with the stamp of the ABP responsible. Censorship of correspondence between Germany and Spain was handled by the ABP in Munich.[133]

In the Republican zone of Spain, censorship of international post was largely in the hands of organisations directly attached to central government, whereas domestic mail was controlled by the militias or the parties that constituted the Popular Front. Though the Republican government recognised that many people wished to send mail abroad so that it could be redirected to family members in the Nationalist zone, it considered there was a significant risk that some of this correspondence might have an effect prejudicial to the military and political aims of the Republic. For that reason, a decree was issued on 15 August 1936 which provided for censorship of all international mail to or from Spain to be enforced by the military authorities with the cooperation of the postal service.[134] Initially, these censorship offices were based in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Irún – though the latter functioned only for 15 days before the city was taken by Nationalist troops. A lack of clarity surrounding the regional jurisdiction of each Republican office meant that it was possible for some post to escape the attention of the censor completely, while other items could be inspected several times. Later in the war, Republican censorship services were concentrated completely in Barcelona.[135]

The second half of Journal 2: diary entries

Once hostilities broke out between Britain and Germany in September 1939, however, even the ad hoc communication between Marianne and her parents through the Netherlands became impossible. For the next six years of the Second World War all contact between Charlotte Angermann and her daughter was broken off. To compensate, Charlotte switched to a type of diary entry in the journal in which the imagined addressees are her daughter and son-in-law in Britain. Charlotte's experiences on the home-front are therefore given to the reader as an address to Marianne that always goes unanswered.

The Angermann and Beutler families: Class, conservatism – and National Socialism

Marianne's parents, Charlotte[136] and Konrad Angermann, were both born into prominent, professional Saxon families in the late nineteenth century when Germany as a unified sovereign state had only just emerged as a consequence of Prussian victory in the war against France in 1870 – 1871. The new country promptly experienced a brief economic boom stimulated by French reparations payments. Although this was followed

[133] Landsmann, Horst, *Die Zensur von Zivilpost in Deutschland im 2. Weltkrieg. Ein Katalog der im 2. Weltkrieg von den Auslandsbriefprüfstellen und anderen Zensurstellen in Deutschland und den besetzten Gebieten auf Zivilpost verwendeten Zensurvermerke*. Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2008/2019. 1

[134] Order of 15 August 1936, *Gaceta de Madrid*, No. 231 (18 August 1936), p. 1327. Quoted in García Sánchez, Jesús. "La censura postal en la Europa del siglo XX." Doctoral thesis. Universidad de Salamanca, 2009. 556 – 557.

[135] ibid, 558 ff.

[136] Her full name was Clara Clementine Charlotte Angermann (née Beutler).

by a long period of economic stagnation, the national mood in the country was nevertheless marked by an aggressive sense of self-confidence: German science and technology were world leaders, German industrial production was starting to overtake that of Great Britain,[137] the country had secured colonial possessions in the Pacific and Africa, and it was building a fleet of warships that would soon contest Britain's hegemony on the high seas.

The middle class caste of civil servants, lawyers and teachers that composed the Angermann and Beutler families played a crucial role in consolidating and energising Germany's new-found sense of national destiny – though they never lost a sense of their more particular regional identity as Saxons. The entries Charlotte Angermann wrote from 1939 on therefore need to be understood in a context in which long established traditions of Saxon identity and upper middle class privilege were folded into and enhanced by the new German Imperialism.[138] Defeat in World War One frustrated and thereby concentrated these national feelings, leading them in the direction of fascism. We have already explored in Journal 1 how these right-wing political tendencies played out in Marianne Angermann's immediate family: her father, Konrad Angermann, was a supporter of the German National People's Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei - DNVP), a hard-right party whose policy differences with Hitler's National Socialists were relatively insignificant and which dissolved itself under pressure from the Nazis in mid-1933.

The historical record shows that during the Second World War, other members of the wider Angermann-Beutler family clearly sympathised with the Nazis' neo-colonial wars of aggression and the ideological beliefs that underpinned them. Marianne's maternal uncle, Friedrich (Fritz) Beutler, for example, held the rank of Colonel in the SS with responsibilities for auditing and logistics. This work would have involved inspecting and accounting for property expropriated by the SS, an organisation charged with seizing the assets of Jews and other 'enemies' of National Socialism and transferring them to the state. Another relative, a first cousin of Marianne's father, Edgar Ludwig Theodor Angermann, was a logistics officer on the Eastern Front who, in 1941, drafted orders which required the confiscation of foodstuffs in occupied territories: the orders were issued in full knowledge that they would lead to mass starvation in the civilian population.[139]

In her entry of 31 October 1945 Charlotte expressed horror that her brother, Friedrich, could have joined the SS, and in 1946 she recorded the political positions of her relatives and their fates with pithy observations such as "Schlimmer Nazi" ("Dreadful Nazi") or, more positively, "Anti-fascist!". But, as was the case with so many Germans, Charlotte's awareness of the nature of the National Socialist regime arrived slowly and was fostered by personal experiences of wartime deprivation rather than coming from a deeply felt, ethical commitment to the victims of political repression. This is perhaps hardly surprising given the limitations of Charlotte's upbringing. Although both her daughters

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[137] See Ritschl, Albrecht. "The Anglo-German Industrial Productivity Puzzle, 1895–1935: A Restatement and a Possible Resolution." *The Journal of Economic History* 68.2 (2008): 535-65.

[138] In her journal entries it is clear, for example, that Charlotte Angermann was very proud of the family's upper middle class status and its connections to the aristocracy: one uncle had been the Lord Mayor of Dresden and another, the Saxon court physician.

[139] For more detailed information, see the annotated family tree at the conclusion of the journal.

obtained doctorates at a time when it was still relatively rare for women to pursue university study, and some of her female relatives pursued independent careers,[140] this was not an opportunity to Charlotte. Her life seems to have conformed to the expectations of Wilhelmine society which were no different than they were for members of the middle classes elsewhere in Western Europe: that women should be dutiful wives and loving mothers.

Perhaps partly in compensation, Charlotte seems to have taken considerable pride in her elevated social position and the connections it afforded her. This is apparent from the annotations she made in a cookbook given to her daughter, Marianne, which is held in the Hocken Collections. The flyleaf explains that the publication was put together as a fundraiser for a hospital for disabled children established by Konrad Angermann's uncle, Richard Klemm (1847 – 1938),[141] the personal doctor of the Princess Johann Georg of Saxony[142] and a man, she writes, who was "dearly loved by us". This compilation of recipes donated by local female worthies and edited by the Princess herself, has had the names of numerous contributors – aristocrats and the wives of important officials – underscored in ink. At the top of the titlepage Charlotte has written in a note to her daughter, Marianne: "I personally knew everyone whose names are underlined."[143]

The Angermanns and the question of German collective responsibility

To the extent that Charlotte's political opinions are voiced in the entries in this journal – the titlepage of the journal indicates that the text has been censored to remove any reference to personal matters – they indicate somewhat equivocal feelings at the outbreak of war: pride in the German military but foreboding at what is to come,[144] a sympathy for the plight of the German fighting man, and a horror at the devastation that was wrought by the Allies' area bombing campaign from 1942 onwards.[145] Although the sentiments she expressed and the language they were couched in are entirely orthodox, it must be said that at no point did Charlotte indulge in Nazi rhetoric or otherwise indicate that she had been influenced by a racialised ideology.[146] Indeed, because Marianne's adopted home town of Sheffield in England was being bombed by the Luftwaffe in the first years of the war, Charlotte was able to appreciate that there was a symmetry to the suffering, at least where civilian bombing was concerned. Later, though, as the Allied bombing campaign reached a crescendo, Charlotte expressed her outrage in terms

[140] Marianne Angermann's sister, Helene Dorothea Schnabel, also had a doctorate: in law. See the introduction to Journal 1 for a discussion of women in higher education in Germany. Konrad Angermann had two female first cousins who were independent businesswomen: Anna Angermann was a successful artist, while Armgard Angermann ran her own embroidery workshop.

[141] For further information see the family tree at the end of the journal entries for 1946.

[142] Court protocol required that a wife take her husband's first names after the female title. Presumably the person referred to here was Princess Maria Isabella of Württemberg (1871 – 1904). She married Prince Johann Georg, brother to the last King of Saxony, in 1894.

[143] Hocken Collections, MS-1493/031.

[144] C.f. the entry for 23 August 1940: "Our Wehrmacht has something impressive about it in its freshness, determination, its excellent equipment. […] On 4 September [1939] came the declaration of war on England and France. We didn't believe it right to the last! Now there was war again and the horrors of the World War had still not healed."

[145] These last two sentiments are combined in the entry of 26 September 1943 when Charlotte writes: "Our soldiers have been in the field now for 5 years. And there is no end in sight. They are performing superhuman deeds, as are the poor people living in the areas of the terror raids."

[146] There is a possibility that the purging of the journals of any personal matters might also have extended to personal political opinions.

derived more directly from Nazi propaganda: the bombing attacks which had affected friends and family in the Rhineland where the Angermanns had previously lived were, for example, unjustifiable “terror raids” (entry for 26 September 1943).

It is only when the war was finally over in May 1945 that Charlotte’s criticisms of the National Socialist regime took on a more unvarnished form when she wrote: “How terrible that the people have to pay for the guilt of Hitler and his mob!” (11 May 1945) or “[…] this wretched Nazi government that brought such unparalleled misery upon us.” (19 May 1945)[147] It is difficult to know whether these opinions represented a venting of honestly held feelings that could not have been previously committed to paper because of the risk of discovery, or whether they were an example of someone adapting to the political conditions of the Soviet occupation of eastern Germany and the advantage of positioning oneself as an anti-fascist. This positioning begins early in the journal with the entry of the Russians into Dresden on 8 May 1945, the day of the German capitulation. On that occasion, Charlotte wrote approvingly of the behaviour of the Soviet occupying forces, particularly compared with her experience of their French counterparts in the Rhineland at the end of World War One: “ “The Russians enter houses, make themselves at home, quietly, disciplined, not contemptuously and brutally as was the case with the French occupation.” A few lines later she draws an unfavourable comparison with her fellow Hirsch residents who wander about the streets, herd-like: “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. […] they move about outside as if it were a holiday. The Russians must be disgusted by that.”

Though Charlotte eventually starts to see the ugly side of the occupation – the widespread rape of local women and girls, the constant hunger and lack of fuel for heating – this does not incline her to feelings of nostalgia for National Socialism. From the moment of German defeat, she seems to work her way slowly towards an acknowledgement that German suffering is a consequence of collective guilt. When the occupying forces confiscate privately owned radios on 11 May, for example, she writes: “Serves us right. We did all these things first.” Nevertheless, although she accepts expropriations of private property as a form of rough justice, she still lays the responsibility for Germany’s fate at the door of the Nazi leadership rather than the population at large: “These terrible sins will now have to be atoned for by those had nothing whatsoever to do with them.” (11 May)

This question of the extent of guilt and collective responsibility for the survivors of the Second World War would become the key debate in German moral and political life in the first decades after the country’s defeat. In the first phase of the occupation in the West, avowals of personal innocence were given short shrift: Allied troops, for example, would compel Germans to tour local concentrations camps such as those at Buchenwald in Thuringia and Nammering in Bavaria where they would view piles of unburied or exhumed corpses. Films shot at the same locations were given public screenings and posters featuring photos of atrocities were displayed prominently in German towns with slogans which explicitly aimed to create a sense of collective responsibility (“These are your disgraceful deeds!”).

[147] Similarly, on 9 May she wrote of her disgust at the selfishness and corruption of the Nazi elite: “That bunch provided themselves with everything.”

The assumption of a national guilt also informed the Allies' policy of denazification in the immediate postwar period which attempted to remove or prevent former Nazis from holding positions of authority or to withhold their access to essential services. Denazification procedures, however, were inconsistently applied, especially in the Western zones of occupation, and were soon side-lined in the interests of a Cold War strategy that insisted on exploiting the bureaucratic, commercial, scientific and military expertise offered by former Party members.[148]

The German philosopher Karl Jaspers advanced a more thoughtful approach to the question of German war guilt in a series of lectures he delivered at the University of Heidelberg in the winter semester of 1945-1946. Jaspers proposed four categories of guilt: criminal, political, moral and metaphysical. Criminal guilt applied to all who had committed crimes in support of National Socialist aims; such crimes were to be punished by tribunals set up by the Allies and by a reformed German judicial system. All German citizens resident in the country during the Nazi era, on the other hand, bore a political guilt since they had allowed the Nazis to accede to and maintain power. Moral guilt, on the other hand, was a matter for the personal conscience and related to the subjective consequences of criminally liable acts or acts which had not been prosecuted in the courts. Metaphysical guilt was a broader category and referred to the guilt of all those who are alive when they contemplate the absence of the dead.[149]

Given their age and their status as pensioners, Charlotte and Konrad would have had little trouble in proving their political innocence to the Soviet forces of occupation. (In the terms used in the US zone of occupation they would doubtless have been considered "entlastet" or "exonerated".) In Jaspers' terms, they – along with the rest of the adult population – would certainly have had a share of the nation's political guilt. More fraught is the question of moral guilt which can only be produced by an individual's reckoning the balance of their own conscience. It is difficult for readers of the journals held in the Hocken Collections to pronounce this guilt – but they can be sensitive to the texture of their language, the views they express, and, in particular, to the things that are either skirted or excluded altogether.

Antisemitism in Dresden

Clearly, the Nazis' political programme was explicitly ethnonationalist and required the exercise of violence to achieve it – and, in this, it closely paralleled the platform of the Deutsch-Nationale Volkspartei of which Konrad had been an adherent while mayor of Langenberg in the Rhineland.[150] The ruthlessness of the Nazis' antisemitic policies would have been evident to Charlotte through the restrictions imposed in her own neighbourhood of the Weißer Hirsch in Dresden. This exclusive spa resort on the heights of the right bank of the Elbe attracted an elite clientele from industry and the arts – including, in the 1920s, the Jewish writer Franz Kafka. In 1938, in order to align with Gauleiter Martin Mutschmann's drive to "aryanise" the city, local authorities in the

[148] For a general history of denazification in Germany, see: Taylor, Frederick. *Exorcising Hitler: The occupation and denazification of Germany*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011.

[149] Jaspers, Karl, and E. B. Ashton. *The Question of German Guilt*. Fordham University Press, 1965. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt13wzz9w. Accessed 7 November 2022.

[150] For more on Konrad Angermann's political and professional history, see Journal 1.

Weißer Hirsch, at their own initiative, deemed the resort off limits to all Jewish guests.[151] To someone as concerned as Charlotte with purchasing the right products from the right stores, anti-semitism in retail would also have been highly visible: the 91 Jewish businesses that still remained in the city that year were required to signal their owner's 'ethnic' identity with appropriate signage in their windows. On the 9 and 10 November 1938 many of these businesses, as well as the city's main place of worship, the Semper synagogue (which had been enlarged as recently as 1935), were destroyed in the Kristallnacht, a Nazi-inspired pogrom. The bill for the synagogue's complete demolition was subsequently presented to the local Jewish community.[152]

As early as 1937, municipal authorities had evicted all Jewish tenants from city-owned housing, and in early 1939 they were forced to live in one of the city's 32 Judenhäuser (Jew Houses).[153] From 20 January 1942 the process began of deporting Dresden's remaining 1200 Jews, of whom only 174 remained in mid-February 1945: many of this group were killed in the bombing raids of February that year while others, including the scholar and diarist Victor Klemperer, some of whose observations are recorded as footnotes in the journal entries here, were able to use the ensuing chaos to effect their escape.[154]

Charlotte Angermann would also have known of the effects of Nazi racism through close family connections. She would have known, obviously, that her (then prospective) son-in-law, Franz Bielschowsky, and his father, Max, had both been dismissed from their university positions and forced into exile because they were Jews. Yet the precise causes of the Bielschowsky family's predicament are never addressed, either directly or indirectly, in Charlotte's journal entries. For example, Charlotte expressed occasional concern for the well-being of Franz's maternal grandmother, Bertha Schlesinger (née Guttentag), and regretted that she was unable to do anything for this older woman who lived in Breslau (today's Wroclaw in Poland). On 12 February 1941 she wrote: "I'm constantly thinking of the old grandmother, of her awful loneliness. How I hope that she has passed on."

The reasons why Charlotte felt impotent to help are never made clear, though they are less likely to do with the practicalities of travel (Wroclaw/Breslau, a major city since medieval times, is only 260 km directly east of Dresden) than with the simple fact that Bertha Schlesinger was Jewish, a fact never mentioned in Charlotte's writings. It is unclear from the brief journal entries whether Charlotte ever contemplated intervening on Frau Schlesinger's behalf, though on balance it seems unlikely. Eventually, the dreadful circumstances in which Bertha Schlesinger was forced to live became untenable, and she took her own life on 15 May 1941. She was an 85 year old widow. None of her immediate family remained in Germany.[155]

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[151] Ulbricht, Gunda. "Dresdner Juden im Nationalsozialismus." *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden*. Ed. Starke, Holger. Dresden: Stadt Dresden, 2006. 488-94. Here, 491.
[152] ibid, 492.
[153] ibid, 493.
[154] ibid, 494. Had he not escaped, Klemperer's fate would almost certainly have been sealed. It is thought that around 7 000 Jews from Dresden and environs were murdered in the Holocaust.
[155] See footnote to entry for 12 February 1941.

The brutality of the Nazis towards non-Germans would also have been visible to Dresden citizens through the presence of forced labourers in the city. For much of the war, Dresden was beyond the range of Allied bombers and this inaccessibility made it an increasingly desirable location for armaments factories once established industrial centres such as the Ruhr in the West came under heavy attack. Since there was a serious shortage of manpower in the wartime economy, labour shortfalls were made up by using forced labourers provided by prisoner of war and concentration camps. In the case of Dresden, this workforce was largely drawn from the Flossenbürg concentration camp in northern Bavaria which eventually established ten sub-camps in the metropolitan area of Dresden and employed around 5 000 prisoners. In all there were 781 industrial enterprises in the Dresden region in which 30 000 foreign workers were employed.[156]

Though none of these industries were located in the genteel western districts of the town such as Weißer Hirsch, it would have been difficult, as a citizen of the town, not to have been aware of several tens of thousands of foreign workers pressed into the service of the German war machine. That Charlotte had certainly registered their presence may perhaps be inferred in her description of an encounter that occurred on 9 May 1945, the day after the German capitulation, when Soviet troops had already entered the city. On that day her husband, Konrad, was stopped by a Czech cemetery worker and told that he would have to return the following day to help dig graves. The nationality of the grave-digger does not seem to merit her attention – the focus of Charlotte's account is instead on the crimes she now understood to have been committed by members of the Party and the SS whose corpses required burial.

The origins of mass aerial bombardment in the Spanish Civil War

The long period of time over which Journal 2 was written produced a number of historical intersections in the lives of Charlotte and her daughter, Marianne. The most obvious of these were the material privations of their respective wartime experiences, particularly hunger, and their helplessness in the face of bombardment from the air. Marianne had been exposed to bombing several years before Germany suffered its first air raids, because Madrid was already the target of Nationalist air forces from 1936 onwards. An additional historical peculiarity in the case of Marianne is that her persecutors – the men who bombed the Spanish capital from 1936 to 1939 – included her own countrymen. These were the German pilots and advisors of the so-called Condor Legion, a bomber and fighter force provided by Hitler to ensure a rebel victory – and to experiment with strategic bombing tactics and technology for the wider European war he was then planning.[157]

Prior to the formation of the Condor Legion, though, German military aircraft had been crucial in consolidating the Nationalist position precisely when it was at its most vulnerable in the early days of the uprising. Although there had been misgivings in the

[156] Widera, Thomas. "Krieg, Zerstörung und Besetzung von Dresden." *Geschichte der Stadt Dresden*. Ed. Starke, Holger. Vol. 3. Stuttgart: Theiss, 2006. 497 - 528. Here, 505. Prisoners in the Flossenbürg sub-camps were mainly employed in the manufacture of munitions. See the website of the Flossenbürg Memorial Foundation (Bavarian Memorials Foundation): https://www.gedenkstaetteflossenbuerg.de/de/geschichte/aussenlager Accessed 18 July 2022

[157] The Condor Legion numbered around 6 000 servicemen during any one troop rotation. It was accountable only to its German commander, a condition that Hitler himself had imposed. Laureau, Patrick. *Condor. The Luftwaffe in Spain*. Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2000. 21.

German foreign, economics and war ministries about becoming entangled in a Spanish civil conflict for fear of provoking hostility abroad,[158] Hitler decided to support the uprising after representations were made to him on 25 July 1936 at Bayreuth, where he was attending the Wagner festival.[159] One of his first and most significant interventions was to place twenty Junkers 52 transport planes at Franco's disposal and these arrived at Nationalist army bases in Morocco on 29 July 1936, a mere twelve days after the coup was launched. It was these German aircraft that enabled the crack units of the Army of Africa under Franco's command to be airlifted to rebel-held areas in the south of Spain and thus avoid the Straits of Gibraltar, which were patrolled by the loyalist Spanish navy. Soon after, in early November 1936, a force of 100 aircraft, together with land-based support units, left Germany for Seville as part of Exercise "Rügen Winter". These elements would form the core of the Condor Legion, allied to Franco but under German command. Today, the Condor Legion is most notorious for its obliterating three hour attack in April 1937 on Guernika, the cultural capital of the Basques, whose agony was famously captured in Picasso's eponymous mural. The Guernika raid is sometimes thought to mark the first time a strategy of total war – in which the devastating attacks on the non-military population and civilian infrastructure became acceptable military aims – was employed in the twentieth century.[160]

The Condor Legion had, however, already begun to develop similar tactics in its raids on Madrid in late 1936. The first Nationalist attacks on the capital occurred on 27 and 28 August and were carried out by forces based at the aerodrome at Salamanca. This was the first time, claims Moreno, that "civilian populations were bombarded in a modern and systematic way."[161] Valuable lessons were learned during these bombing operations which would be dramatically scaled up during World War Two, first by German then Allied forces. It was discovered, for example, that maximum damage could be inflicted by launching three successive attacks in which first high, then medium explosives were deployed to open up buildings and expose combustible material before a final raid dropped incendiaries and anti-personnel devices to start fires and kill firefighters.

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[158] Thomas, 1989. 345. One of the most enthusiastic supporters of German intervention in the conflict was Wilhelm Canaris, Wilhelm Ulmann's old acquaintance and future head of German military intelligence. (341)

[159] The delegation that met Hitler was composed of three expatriate Germans: Adolf P. Langenheim, a mining engineer who had spent most of his life in Morocco; Johannes E. F. Bernhardt, a former army officer who managed a small trading company that supplied the Spanish military; and Wolfgang Kraneck who headed the legal department of the Nazi Party's Auslandsorganiation (AO). Viñas, Angel, and Carlos Collado Seidel. "Franco's Request to the Third Reich for Military Assistance." *Contemporary European History* 11.2 (2002): pp. 191-210. Here, p. 191.

[160] Patterson, Ian. *Guernica and total war*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 2007. 2.

[161] Moreno-Aurioles, José Manuel, and Daniel García Amodía. "Los primeros bombardeos „modernos" sobre una gran ciudad." *Asedio. Historia de Madrid en la Guerra Civil (1936-1939)*. Ed. Bravo, G. Gómez. Madrid: Ediciones Complutense. pp. 205-31. Here, p. 217. Moreno and Garcia (206) point out that the first use of aerial bombing in peninsular Spain occurred on 18 August 1936 when Republican planes attacked the Montaña barracks in Madrid. Nationalist bases in Ceuta and Melilla on the North African coast had already been bombed in the first days of the uprising. German aircraft raided Madrid for the first time on 29 August 1936 using Junkers 52 planes. Since these were the same aircraft that were still flying scheduled Lufthansa services to Spain and thus conveying Germans out of the country, the German embassy requested that no Junkers be used if civilian air traffic was in operation. (Thomas, 373)

Marianne and Franz would certainly have experienced these raids – for example, that of 30 November 1936, which killed 244 civilians and wounded 875[162] – but their effects were not recorded in Journal 2 since no letters from Republican Spain were then able to reach the Angermanns in Germany.[163] This gap in the record may conceal personally traumatic events since, as noted above, Marianne and Franz lived in central city districts which were the targets of Nationalist air-raids and they may have been made homeless. In a map of Civil War bomb sites,[164] the building on Plaza de las Cortes 3 into which Marianne had moved as a boarder in late 1936 is shown as having sustained a direct hit. Another address in the central city occupied by Franz and Marianne and which was indicated as their residence on their identification papers from 1937 – Calle de Orfila 8 – was not itself struck, but nearby buildings were damaged. The couple's final address at Calle de Poniente 20 in the northern district of Chamartín would have been safer since that area was well away from the central areas that bore the brunt of Nationalist bombers.[165]

The German Blitz of Sheffield

The Bielschowskys hurried departure from Republican Spain in March 1939 brought them only a brief reprieve from the horrors of aerial bombardment. German air attacks on Britain began only a few short months after that country's declaration of war on 2 September 1939. In late 1940, after their failure to achieve air superiority in the Battle of Britain, the German air force had begun to target industrial and other urban centres in Britain in order to bring about a collapse in military production and morale. By this time, as we have seen, Franz and Marianne had found employment at the University of Sheffield, a city famous for its steelworks and armaments factories.

The Bielschowskys' appointment to these academic positions must have been made prior to the outbreak of the war, because Charlotte appears to have been aware that Marianne

[162] Patterson, 50.
[163] In any case, during the period when Marianne was still able to write home, she tended to make light of the threat from the air, presumably in order to reassure her parents. See, for example, the letter of 1 September 1936.
[164] Bordes, Enrique and Luis de Sobrón, 2021. Plaza de las Cortes 3 today occupies a corner site between the Congress of Deputies and the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum.
[165] The well-to-do central suburb of Salamanca was largely unaffected by Nationalist bombing and this has led some (e.g. Thomas, 2013) to conclude that the area was spared because high-ranking rebel officers and their supporters owned apartments there. Moreno and García argue instead that the suburb suffered only light damage because most of it had been included in a "neutral zone" that Nationalists had declared for strategic and propaganda purposes. From early November, leaflets had been dropped on the city encouraging civilians to seek refuge in this roughly triangular zone that was bounded on its eastern side by the calle Velázquez from the Paseo de Ronda to the calle de Goya, in the south by calles Goya and Génova, and in the east by calle Zurbano. (Of all Marianne's Madrid addresses only that at calle de Orfila fell within this "safe" area.) As Moreno and García point out, this zone was far too small to accommodate the city's civilian population. The real aim of designating such a refuge, they argue, was pragmatic and strategic – by protecting the diplomatic quarter, Nationalists would avoid offending potential partners in the international community – but also psychological: if the Republican government accepted that there was such a thing as a safe zone in the city (the International Red Cross indeed required that such zones be created) they would be forced to acknowledge the rebels as legitimate belligerents and accept that they had a right to bomb other areas of Madrid. Although the Nationalists claimed they would also refrain from bombing sensitive locations such as hospitals outside the zone, their tactics in the advance on Madrid gave Republicans no reason to trust such assurances. Moreno and García (212 – 215) argue that from July to August 1936 Franco's Army of Africa had been employing the "tactics of colonial conquest and total war" and that these included the bombing of hospitals where enemy soldiers were convalescing.

and Franz were living in Sheffield. In her diary in December 1940 she expressed great concern for Franz and Marianne when she heard of heavy raids flown by German bombers on the town in mid-December 1940. The weather in the first two weeks of that month had grounded German aircraft but on 12 December the city was attacked by a force of around 300 bombers which wreaked havoc. The worst casualties occurred when the seven storey Marples Hotel in the city centre took a direct hit. Only seven people were pulled from the ruins alive. Three nights later, on 15 December, German bombers returned to rain incendiaries and high explosives over the town. In all, 750 civilians were either killed or went missing with 3 000 homes and shops destroyed and around the same number seriously damaged.[166] Shortages of accommodation were still in evidence as late as 1948, when Marianne and Franz were preparing for their move to New Zealand. On 2 February of that year, Marianne observed in a letter to her mother that queues of would-be tenants would quickly form outside a house in Sheffield as soon as a removal van was spotted, even though such properties were invariably "long since rented out".

The Allied Area Bombing Campaign over Germany

As fearsome as German air-raids on Britain were, however, they paled in comparison with the ferocious campaign waged by Allied air forces on Axis-occupied Europe which yielded the utter destruction of cities such as Berlin, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Stuttgart – and Charlotte's home of Dresden. In the First World War, both sides had experienced attacks on their urban centres by slow moving, cumbersome bombers or airships, but these produced relatively few casualties: it is estimated that 1 413 civilians fell victim to German air-raids on Britain in the First World War, for example.[167] This picture changed radically in the Second World War. In the latter stages of that conflict the Allies were able to mount raids on Germany that saw fleets of up to 1000 Allied bombers, densely packed with high explosives and incendiaries, stream over Germany in columns 10 miles wide and over 100 miles long.[168] The consequences for German cities and their inhabitants were catastrophic. It is thought that as many as half a million German civilians lost their lives as the result of the Allied strategic bombing offensive – indeed, the air war killed more German civilians than British and American military casualties combined.[169]

Some of the most destructive raids of the war are named in the journal from 1941 onwards in response to the news Charlotte receives from friends and family, particularly those living in Berlin or close to the industrial towns of the Ruhr in the west of the country. One particularly harrowing case was the raid on the Ruhr town of Wuppertal-Barmen on the night of 30 – 31 May 1943 which killed 3 500 people. Charlotte's entry from 6 June 1943 records an acquaintance of the family walking the 15 kilometres from Wuppertal to Langenberg barefoot in order to escape the destruction. The massive raids launched on Berlin by the RAF in November 1943 in an attempt to deliver a knock-out blow by incinerating the German capital (dubbed the "Battle of Berlin") had even more

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[166] Gardner, Juliet. *The Blitz. The British under attack*. London: HarperCollins, 2010. 213-214.

[167] https://history.blog.gov.uk/2015/01/19/air-raid-casualties-in-the-first-world-war/ Accessed 8 August 2022

[168] Military historians emphasise, however, that such raids had very modest and ineffectual beginnings: "Although the British had begun bombing German cities in the spring of 1940, the results were mixed. Bombs made little dent in German industrial production, and the costs in downed planes and flight crews were extremely high." Moeller, Robert G. "On the History of Man-Made Destruction: Loss, Death, Memory, and Germany in the Bombing War." *History Workshop Journal* Spring.61 (2006): 103-34. Here, 107.

[169] Overy, R.J. *The Air War 1939 - 1945*. London: Europa Publications, 1980. 208.

personal consequences, since Charlotte's other daughter and son-in-law, Dorothea and Ernst Schnabel, had their home in the suburb of Lichterfelde. Their house was badly damaged on 26 March 1943 (see the entry of 25 April) at which time it was also pressed into service as a temporary field hospital for casualties of the bombing. On 22 November 1943 (see entry of 26 November) Charlotte records the severe damage inflicted on Ernst Schnabel's factory in Köpenick (Schnabel was involved in the war-critical aviation industry), while the final destruction of what remained of the Lichterfelde house occurred on 24 December 1943 (see entry for New Year's Day 1944).

Dresden: the Reich Air-Raid Shelter

By January 1945 when the war was entering its final and most bloody phase, virtually every major German urban centre had been subjected to the devastation of aerial bombardment. Until late in the war, however, Dresden seemed to have been miraculously spared. By the end of 1940 only three high explosive bombs had landed close to the city, in the suburb of Bühlau. There were no fatalities and one of the devices failed to detonate. In 1941 and 1942 there were a total of eleven air raid warnings.[170] As the war progressed, attacks crept ever closer to Dresden and air-raid sirens sounded much more frequently: in 1943 there were 52 air raid alerts and almost triple this number – 151 – in 1944.[171] But the sirens rarely announced an actual attack, and in an attempt to rationalise their good fortune the inhabitants of Dresden put forward several explanations: the Allies did not wish to destroy the unique beauty of the city's baroque architecture; many English women of the middle classes had a special connection to the town because they had gone to boarding schools there; and – the most tenacious rumour of all – Churchill's aunt was said to live in the Weißer Hirsch district where Charlotte and Konrad Angermann resided.[172]

Such was the sense of invulnerability in Dresden that the city came to be called the Reichsluftschutzkeller – the Reich air-raid shelter. This sense of complacency would ultimately contribute to the city's downfall because it meant that basic defensive preparations were either neglected or only half-heartedly carried out:

> At this time, in Dresden almost no special precautions had been taken in case of air raids. Citizens were encouraged to keep buckets of sand and water at hand to deal with fires. Cellars and basements were fitted out, by the obedient or the careful, with emergency supplies and gas-proof doors. […] Many public buildings had cellars or stores converted into shelters, though rarely were the kinds of modifications and additions undertaken that would have provided real protection.[173]

When it became evident in the course of 1943 that major public works were required to provide adequate shelters there were no longer the materials or labour available as they had been ear-marked for other, more pressing military purposes. Any pretence that the Nazi state would endeavour to protect the people of Dresden was eventually cast aside in September 1944 when the National Socialist People's Welfare headquarters informed authorities in Dresden that "there were no longer financial or human resources to spare

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[170] Taylor, Frederick. *Dresden: Tuesday, 13 February 1945*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004. 135.
[171] ibid, 143.
[172] Widera, 502.
[173] Taylor, 136.

for the protection of the civilian population. Everything was to go into the war effort; civilians would have to fend for themselves."[174]

The first serious attack did not occur until 7 October 1944, when over 200 people died during a daylight raid by American aircraft. This was followed by a second serious attack on 16 January that claimed 334 victims. Yet, at this time, even these levels of violence and destruction seemed relatively minor affairs compared with what other German cities had endured.

The February 1945 air-raids on Dresden

By February 1945 the Soviet army was only 100 kilometres from Dresden, and advancing daily. Nevertheless, in common with people everywhere in war-time, the city's residents did their best to retain a sense of normality, including an insistence on marking seasonal festivals. Mid-February is the time of Carnival (Fasching) – that is, the period leading up to Lent – and, although rationing was severe, efforts were made to allow at least the children a chance to celebrate and escape momentarily their oppressive daily routine. The painter Otto Griebel (1895 – 1972) described how on Shrove Tuesday – which fell on 13 February in 1945 – the children in his household dug out masks from an old wardrobe and "wandered in a noisy procession through the streets, a privilege of youth that they won't be denied even in a time of war."[175] The young car mechanic Rolf Becker (b. 1929) was out walking his dog that night, trying to recover after a long and demanding day imposed by the total war economy; the city was generally very quiet, he noted: "There wasn't much to see of Carnival, just a few children frolicking about in the dark".[176]

Juxtaposed with these scenes of children's revelry were those of immense despair amongst the many refugees in the city. The rapid collapse of German military resistance in the East and the fear of Soviet reprisals triggered a wave of refugees from Pomerania, Silesia and East Prussia. As Dresden was a major transport hub on the east-west lines of communication, the city's population was swelled by civilians from Germany's eastern territories, all of whom were in a more or less desperate state. Many were reduced to sleeping in the open, particularly at the railway stations where they hoped to catch a train to the West. Though some accounts have put the numbers of refugees in Dresden in mid-February at a million, this seems highly unlikely; more reputable sources have estimated the figure at around 200 000.[177]

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[174] ibid, 147. The notoriously fanatical Saxon Gauleiter, Martin Mutschmann did, however, manage to have a generous personal bunker built in the grounds of his own villa on the Comeniusstraße by local SS engineers. (Taylor, 138)

[175] Kempowski, Walter. *Das Echolot. Fuga Furiosa. Ein kollektives Tagebuch. Winter 1945*. Vol. IV. 6. bis 15. Februar 1945. München: Albrecht Knaus, 1999. 710.

[176] ibid, 723.

[177] The number of refugees present in Dresden in mid-February 1945 has been the subject of much controversy. As we will see, those interested in proposing a moral relativism between the atrocities of Nazi Germany and the devastation of the Allies' area bombing campaign – particularly the raid on Dresden – have often sought to inflate the potential number of fatalities by claiming that the refugee population was half a million or more. (Neutzner, Matthias. *Die Bergung, Registratur und Bestattung der Dresdner Luftkriegstoten. Bericht zum Teilprojekt I „Statistisch-geographische Analyse" der Historikerkommission zu den Luftangriffen auf Dresden zwischen dem 13. und 15. Februar 1945*. Dresden: Landeshauptstadt Dresden, 2010. p. 21).

Götz Bergander, author of a scrupulously researched history of the bombings (*Dresden im Luftkrieg. Vorgeschichte – Zerstörung – Folgen.* Flechsig: Würzburg, 1998) and himself a first-hand witness to the events, rejects such a figure since, he maintains, this would have required every single Dresden family to

The vulnerability of the city's inhabitants, both permanent and temporary, was greatly heightened by the incompetence of the National Socialist authorities at both national and regional levels. They had utterly failed to provide large-scale air raid shelters, or adequate defensive systems such as searchlights, communications networks, and anti-aircraft guns. Once the Allies finally chose to attack, therefore, Dresden, Germany's Baroque jewel, could only expect complete immolation.

That moment finally came on the night of 13 February 1945. At 9.51 pm the air raid sirens sounded, and ten minutes later a pathfinder squadron of RAF Mosquitos dropped the multi-coloured, phosphorus fuelled marker flares – called "Christbäume" (Christmas trees) by the Germans – which served as target indicators for the main bomber force. The first wave of attackers passed rapidly over the city; between 10.13 pm and 10.28 pm over 880 tons of bombs fell on the centre of the town, a mixture of 57 percent high explosives and 43 percent incendiaries by weight.[178]

The task of the high explosives was to blow open roofs, windows and doors and thus expose the interiors of buildings to fire. Many of these devices were massive air mines weighing several thousand pounds which drifted down by parachute and exploded above ground. In order to ensure accuracy, incendiaries were housed in canisters which blew open at a thousand feet to guarantee concentration within a confined area. These fire-starters were either filled with highly combustible metal oxides (thermite) in thin magnesium casings or with a mixture of volatile rubber and benzol which ignited and was sprayed over a wide area on impact. After four years of warfare, the Allies' aerial bombing tactics had been perfected to a fine art and Dresden quickly became an inferno. And yet worse was still to come.

A second wave of bombers in a stream over 120 miles long arrived shortly after 1 am – almost without warning as only the air raid sirens at the fringes of the city were now working. For the crews of these fresh aircraft the burning city could be viewed from as far as 70 miles away. Flare marking was now deemed pointless and aircraft were instructed to aim simply for the middle of the fires. This concerted attack lasted for over half an hour (from 1.21 am to 1.45 am) and dropped around 1537 tons of bombs.[179]

These combined night attacks by the RAF blasted open buildings and ignited fires on such a scale that the city quickly became enveloped in a massive firestorm, a phenomenon in which a vast conflagration generates hurricane-force winds by sucking in air from surrounding areas. The force of this superheated draught was sufficient to uproot trees,

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have billeted several refugees. He believes it more likely that the maximum number was two hundred thousand and that most were accommodated well away from the city centre. Bergander quoted in Taylor, 230-232.

The Dresden Commission of Historians (Dresdner Historikerkommission) thinks likewise. It is impossible, they wrote, to specify the precise number of refugees who were in Dresden since there is no relevant archival data from either the authorities who were responsible for the transport and welfare of the refugees. Nevertheless, on the basis of the war-time restrictions that applied to non-residents and the lack of accommodation available in the city, the Commission estimated a figure of between several tens of thousands and a maximum of 200 000. *Abschlussbericht der Historikerkommission zu den Luftangriffen auf Dresden zwischen dem 13. und 15. Februar 1945*. Ed. Neutzner, Matthias, Nicole Schönherr, Alexander von Plato und Helmut Schnatz. Dresden: Landeshauptstadt Dresden, 2010. 60.

[178] Taylor, 257.

[179] ibid, 276 – 279.

bring asphalt to the boil[180] and hurl people helplessly into the flames. Even those citizens who had sought refuge in their basements were not safe; in its insatiable demand for oxygen, the firestorm also drew air from below ground, while the heat conducted down from street level produced tremendous temperatures and caused any coal stored there for home heating to burn.[181] The reservoirs built in the city centre late in 1944 to provide water for fire-fighters drew thousands of desperate people, many of them already on fire, but these pools often proved to be death traps themselves as they provided no refuge from the poisoned air, and the ambient heat caused the smaller water tanks to boil.[182]

Though official advice had been for people to stay in the cellars of their apartment buildings or houses, it was often better to take one's chances in the inferno at street level. For Hans Schröter, the decision to leave his shelter brought personal survival but at an awful cost. He, his wife and their son were sheltering in the cellar of their apartment building on the Marienstrasse on the edge of the Old Town. After the second raid had ended they escaped along the emergency subterranean exits that had been punched through the partition walls of the adjoining basements, and ascended to the street which was already engulfed in flames:

> As I emerged, I saw my wife and son standing by the security post on the parterre of No. 42. They looked so helpless, but since I had an elderly aunt from Liegnitz staying and I wanted to get her out, I said to my wife, I'll be back in two minutes. When we got back after this time, however, my loved ones had disappeared. I checked every shelter and basement on the street. Nowhere were they to be seen, everything wreathed in flame, no entry possible. Unable to find my family, I summoned my last instincts for survival, got as far as the Bismarck Memorial. I stood for an hour by the little building there, until its roof also began to burn. I walked thirty metres along the Ringstrasse and stayed there until it got light.

Schröter then returned the next day to his home in order to continue his search for his family:

> The sight that greeted my eyes was appalling … Everywhere charred corpses. I quickly headed home, hoping to find my loved ones alive, but unfortunately this was not so. They lay on the street in front of No. 38 as peacefully as if they were asleep. What I went through at that point you can easily imagine. Now I had to find out if my parents-in-law or other friends could be rescued from our basement alive. For this I summoned two men from the Wehrmacht … As we opened up the emergency exit from No. 38, the heat that came out was so intense that we could not go down there. So we had to remove the boot-scraper from the entrance of No. 40 so that we could get into the bathroom, and from there into the basement of No. 40 and 42. The basement of No. 42 was full of bodies. I counted about fifty.[183]

Even after this apocalypse, Dresden's agony continued. At 8 am on 14 February 431 B-17s of the United States Army Air Force began taking off from their bases in England to

[180] ibid, 292.
[181] ibid, 287.
[182] ibid, 294-5.
[183] Letter from Hans Schröter to Frau Ganze, August 5 1945, reproduced in Reichert (ed.) *Verbrannt bis zur Unkenntlichkeit*, p. 50 ff. Quoted in Taylor, 293-4.

begin the more than five hour flight to Dresden. Some of this group became separated from the main fleet and bombed Prague by mistake, but the main force of 311 machines was still able to find its prescribed target and bombing began shortly after midday. As the city was still burning the American pilots concentrated on those areas that were not obscured by smoke – the areas to the west and south of the Old Town and the Friedrichstadt marshalling yards. The USAAF attack lasted 13 minutes and dropped around two thirds of the weight of explosives that the first British wave had the previous night. The damage inflicted on the city from this daylight raid was not as catastrophic as that mounted by the RAF mainly due to the fact that there was little left to wreck and burn.[184]

A final raid by 210 Flying Fortresses of the USAAF was carried out in the morning of 15 February. The primary target of these aircraft was an industrial facility at Böhlen, just south of Leipzig, but local cloud cover there meant they quickly switched to their secondary target, Dresden. Technical problems with radar and human error in dropping marker flares meant that this group bombed rather haphazardly. The mixed results from this operation were exemplified by the fate of the prison on the Münchnerplatz; it took a direct hit which killed thirty inmates but a number of political prisoners, including Czech dissidents and others on death row, were able to escape. The prison's guillotine in the main yard was also destroyed.[185]

In the thirty-seven hour period from the night of 13 February to midday on the 15 February, a combined force of 1300 bombers had dropped 2400 tons of high explosive bombs and 1500 tons of incendiaries on the town[186] – the equivalent of seven fully-laden freight trains. Bodies littered the city's streets, filled the basements of buildings that had collapsed into heaps of rubble, or lay in fragments over open areas such as the Great Garden. Then began the monumental task of gathering and, where possible, identifying and registering these remains before they were interred or cremated. This work went on for several weeks and was memorably described by the author Kurt Vonnegut in his semi-autobiographical novel *Slaughterhouse 5* (1969). An American POW in the city at the time of the raids, Vonnegut, along with other prisoners, was put to work recovering bodies from the ruins of the city's buildings – sites the narrator refers to as "corpse mines".[187] The number of bodies found quickly exceeded the capacity of the municipal authorities to bury them. To prevent the spread of disease, an open air crematorium was hastily constructed on the town's Altmarkt where, using the expertise of the SS, around seven thousand bodies were incinerated between February 21 and March 5.[188]

Firebombing and Allied strategy

The historiography of Dresden's destruction has long been a source of controversy. In the immediate aftermath the Nazis predictably used the raids in their propaganda to portray the Allies as "barbarians" intent on destroying European culture. More surprisingly,

[184] Taylor, 316 ff.
[185] Taylor, 341-342.
[186] *Abschlussbericht der Historikerkommission,* 16.
[187] Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five, or, The Children's Crusade: A Duty Dance with Death*. London: Triad Grafton, 1986. 142. There is a peculiar connection with New Zealand at this point in the novel. The protagonist, Billy, is set to work in these "corpse mines" with a Maori soldier captured at Tobruk who, forced to work at extracting decomposing bodies, dies of nausea.
[188] Taylor, 351.

voices critical of the attack began to be raised on the Allied side soon afterwards. No less a figure than Winston Churchill proposed the following month (March 1945) that aerial attacks on German cities should cease as he believed it was no longer clear that they served a rational military strategy.[189] In the case of Dresden, Allied justification for the raid was based on a number of factors: that the city was a transport hub and its destruction would impede the ability of the Germans to reinforce its eastern front; that there were indeed valuable war industries in Dresden and these needed to be incapacitated; that the devastation of the city would impress the Soviets when they finally arrived and act as a reminder of Western power in the face of an expected showdown with Communism.[190]

Others see these arguments as rationalisations for what had become by 1945 an unstoppable institutional dynamic: gigantic investments in training aircrew and support staff and the vast expenditure of financial and material resources over several years simply demanded that these weapons be used. In *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (1999),[191] his book on the air war over Germany, the novelist W.G. Sebald quotes from a 1952 interview with Brigadier Frederick L. Anderson of the US Eighth Army Air Force. When asked whether raising a white flag of surrender might have saved a German town from destruction in the final weeks of the war, Anderson pointed out that the bombs loaded into American planes had been very expensive to produce: "In practice, they couldn't have been dropped over mountains or open country after so much labour had gone into making them at home."[192]

On the British side, the momentum to bomb even when meaningful targets had long since been pulverised in 1945 was also the consequence of the decisions of a military caste that exercised unbridled power. Lord Zuckerman, the scientific director of the British Bombing Survey Unit, wrote in his autobiography: "We had a surfeit of air staffs, presided over by chiefs who were not called 'the air barons' for nothing. They ruled their commands like feudal lords, rarely changing their conventional views or their personal allegiances. What mattered was the ability to destroy."[193]

Counting the losses of the Dresden firebombing

In postwar Germany, discussions of the effects of the strategic bombing campaign – over four hundred thousand civilians killed, 40% of the urban housing stock destroyed, seven

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[189] Taylor, 375-76.

[190] This intention is explicitly stated in the records of RAF Bomber Command: "[Dresden] is particularly suited to direct that part of the front threatened by a breakthrough from [Soviet] Marshal Konev. With this attack it is intended to strike the enemy where he feels it most, behind a front already partly in collapse it is necessary to render the city useless for any further advances, and in addition to show the Russians when they march in what Bomber Command can do." RAF Bomber Command, Intelligence Narrative of Operations No. 1007. In: Kempowski, Walter. *Das Echolot. Fuga Furiosa. Ein kollektives Tagebuch. Winter 1945.* Vol. IV. 6. bis 15. Februar 1945. München: Albrecht Knaus, 1999. 717.

[191] *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (München: Hanser, 1999). English title: *On the natural history of destruction*. (New York: Random House, 2003).

[192] Kluge, Alexander. "Unheimlichkeit der Zeit". *Neue Geschichten. Hefte 1-18*. Frankfurt am Main, 1977. 79. Quoted in Sebald, 78 (German edition).

[193] *From Apes to Warlords* (Hamish Hamilton, 1978), 353. Quoted in Hastings, Max. *Bomber Command*, Quarto Publishing Group USA, 2013. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/otago/ detail.action?docID=3399919. 308.

million made homeless[194] - tended to be set to one side in favour of the more pressing obligation to honour the victims of the Holocaust or those who had suffered and died in the Nazi-initiated war of annihilation (Vernichtungskrieg) in the East. To assert that German civilians suffered too seemed a form of moral equivalence that diminished the absolute nature of the Holocaust and the unique debt that West German society, in particular, owed to history. The suggestion from historian Ernst Nolte in 1987, for example, that British raids on Hamburg and other cities during the war may have had genocidal motives, was castigated by philosopher Jürgen Habermas because it implied that Nolte had "balanced Auschwitz with Dresden."[195] The clash between Nolte and Habermas was part of the wider Historikerstreit (historians' dispute) in Germany in the late 1980s which pitted revisionist historians against scholars who regarded the scale and type of atrocities committed by the Nazis as historically unique. The bombing of Dresden loomed large in such debates both because it seemed to breach the logic of military necessity, and because there was always some uncertainty surrounding the actual number of its victims.

Such uncertainty can be clearly seen in the journal entry made by Charlotte on 14 April 1945 when she writes of 480 000 dead, or on 26 April when she revises the figure downwards to 300 000, a quarter of the city's population which she reckoned at 1.25 million. Such estimates can be seen as understandable responses to the trauma of the bombing, but uncertainties surrounding the mortality rates were open to political manipulation to suit arguments which did indeed, in the words of Habermas, "balance Auschwitz with Dresden", and therefore could have supported a resurgent German nationalism.

In an attempt to resolve this problem, in November 2004 the office of the Lord Mayor (Oberbürgermeister) of Dresden commissioned a group of historians (Historikerkommission) "to determine the current state of research on the number of deaths caused by the air raids on Dresden in February 1945".[196] The terms of the commission made it clear that historians were not to try to account for every single death but rather to arrive at a well-grounded approximation that would reduce the range of estimates circulating in public discourse.[197] In their final report presented in March 2010, the commission came to the conclusion that in the 48 hour period between 13 and 15 February 1945 "up to 25 000 people were killed"[198] – a figure which mirrors the estimate

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[194] Brakman, S., H. Garretsen, and M. Schramm. "The Strategic Bombing of German Cities During World War II and its Impact on City Growth." *Journal of economic geography* 4.2 (2004): 201-18. Here, 205. After the war, the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden produced somewhat different figures: 593,000 German civilians dead, and 3.37 million dwellings destroyed, including 600,000 in Berlin alone. (Hastings, 310)

[195] von Benda-Beckmann, Bas. *German Historians and the Bombing of German Cities: The Contested Air War*. Amsterdam University Press, 2015. 128. Nolte was drawing on a claim made by the notorious British historian, David Irving, who has been convicted of libel and has served a prison term in Austria for Holocaust denial.

[196] *Abschlussbericht*, 8.

[197] "It was obvious that it would be impossible to identify every individual with certainty. But the scale of deaths ought to be determinable - that is, with a fundamentally smaller range of fluctuation than is observable in current debates." ibid, 8.

[198] ibid, 67. Another of the commission's tasks was to determine whether there was any substance to the widely held belief that civilians in Dresden had been strafed by Allied fighter planes in the daylight hours of 13 – 15 February. Although the commission acknowledged that there were indeed people who insisted they had witnessed such events, nevertheless historians could find no evidence to support their

made by police and other National Socialist authorities only one month after the attacks but never made public at the time.[199]

The Weißer Hirsch district in the bombing raids

Although the raids were clearly terrifying for the Angermanns, Charlotte admits in her entry of 15 February that they were spared the worst because of their situation in the Weißer Hirsch on the northeastern fringe of the city. Prior to February 1945, Dresden's good fortune was, as mentioned above, often attributed to the belief that Winston Churchill's aunt also resided in that suburb. After the war, when the city was occupied by the Soviets and then became part of the Communist German Democratic Republic, another myth arose to explain why this well-to-do district had remained intact. According to Max Seydewitz, the Minister-President of Saxony from 1947 – 1952, this was because the Weißer Hirsch was home to a German-American double agent, Charles Nobel, who had provided the Allies with vital targeting information on Dresden from a secret radio transmitter at his home in the Villa San Remo on the Bergbahnstraße (a ten minute walk from the Angermanns' home). Seydewitz claimed that Nobel was also passing on information about the Soviets to Nazi authorities.[200] As Frederick Taylor points out, the story is patently absurd, but it served a useful propaganda purpose in the postwar period by fanning anti-Western sentiment: the Allies had unnecessarily destroyed one of Germany's most precious cities, yet somehow the homes of the privileged classes had been preserved. A far more likely explanation for the Weißer Hirsch being left unscathed is that the area was simply irrelevant to the Allied plan: located in a hilly area on the opposite (right) bank of the Elbe from the Old Town, it was composed of a large number of relatively lightly inhabited buildings that were often detached, and which were bordered by open country to the north. These were not the conditions under which one could create a firestorm that would maximise death and destruction.

The great population movements of 1945

In the early months of 1945 Charlotte commented a number of times (e.g. in her entry of 12 February) on the number of refugees from German territories to the East who passed through Dresden in their flight from the Red Army; we have already discussed the fact that a significant number of these refugees may have died during the firebombing raids of 13 – 15 February. The exodus of Germans from the East continued after the Nazi defeat. Of the 12 million Germans who abandoned their homes and headed West approximately 3 million were from Silesia, the region immediately to the east of Saxony.[201] This population transfer was historically unparalleled. Indeed, around 20 percent of the new West Germany – the Federal Republic of Germany, founded in 1949 – was made up of internal German refugees.

As mentioned earlier, this mass flight was initially undertaken out of fear of the advancing Soviet troops and the retributions that would be exacted by the previously oppressed and

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occurrence: there was not the least evidence for a "bloodbath" inflicted by Allied aircraft on citizens fleeing the city. *Abschlussbericht*, 80.

[199] ibid, 17.

[200] Charles Nobel's birthname was Karl Spanknöbel. He was an American-German businessman who had returned to live in his native Germany in 1938, at which time he took over a photographic business that had previously belonged to a Swiss-Jewish entrepreneur. See Taylor, F. 2004, 449 – 454.

[201] Demshuk, Andrew. *The Lost German East : Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945–1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 1.

now enraged Polish peoples.[202] However, these population movements were also the predictable consequence of the Allies' agreement at the Yalta Conference of February 1945 to cede large parts of what had formerly been majority German territory to Poland (in partial compensation for the Soviet Union incorporating significant areas in the east of prewar Poland into its own territory).

The post-war Polish government then proceeded to pursue a policy of expulsions and further emptied Silesia, East Brandenburg, Further Pomerania, and East Prussia of Germans in order to replace them with ethnic Poles, or Ukrainians from the southeast of the country – resettlements which were, themselves, not always voluntary. While Germans were trekking west in large numbers in 1945, the roads east were trod by Poles and Ukrainians who had been forced to labour in the Third Reich's agriculture or industry and who now attempted to make the long journey home.[203] In the chaos of the war's aftermath, these travellers were no respecters of exclusive neighbourhoods such as the Weißer Hirsch – as Charlotte and Konrad found on 10 May 1945, two days after the capitulation, when they were woken by a large group of Ukrainians who had camped outside their house and had set about repairing their broken cart.

Life under Russian occupation

The Soviet army finally entered Dresden on 8 May 1945, the day the German capitulation was signed in Karlshorst, Berlin. For the German residents of the Soviet occupation zone – the area that would become the German Democratic Republic in 1948 – many months, even years, of uncertainty and fear lay ahead as an army habituated to extreme violence adjusted only slowly to peacetime conditions. To complicate matters, the various branches of the Stalinist state – administration, security, military – competed aggressively against each other and their conflicts could sometimes take on the characteristics of a low-level, civil war.

What this must have felt like for the civilians of Germany's cities, as they began their transition from the familiar totalitarianism of the Nazis to the unfamiliar world of

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[202] At the immediate end of the war, there were also Germans who tried to return to their homes in the East, usually to check on their families. On 12 May, Charlotte writes in her journal of giving a drink to three boys who were trying to make their way back to Breslau. Norman Naimark notes that the situation for Germans in Breslau at this time was desperate due to Russian depredations and the Poles' understandable desire for revenge: "In a city like Breslau, the Germans' fear of the Russians was quickly replaced by fear of the Poles. In fact, it was almost too much for the Germans to survive the Russian attacks only to have the Poles persecute them once again. "The Germans in Breslau", wrote the city's antifascist group, "are steadily being driven into the ground [gehen langsam seelisch zu Grunde]."" *The Russians in Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945 - 1949*. Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard University Press, 1995. 75.

[203] Around 13.5 million non-German labourers were either recruited or forced to work within the territories of the Reich during the Second World War, at first in agriculture and, after 1942, in the armaments industry. Around 4.7 million came from the Soviet Union, 2.3 million from France and 1.9 million from Poland. (Urban, Thomas. *Zwangsarbeit bei Thyssen: "Stahlverein" und "Baron-Konzern" im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Familie, Unternehmen, Öffentlichkeit; Band 2.* Paderborn, Germany: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014. 9.) After the war, Belgian, French and Dutch workers were generally able to make their way back to their homes on their own initiative while Scandinavians were repatriated by the Red Cross. Most of the rest, however, were required to register as displaced persons in camps where they lived in primitive conditions while awaiting bureaucratic processing. (Thonfeld, Christoph. „"Ein Moment der Freude... und schmerzvoll": Heimkehr ehemaliger NS-Sklaven-und Zwangsarbeiter am Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs." *BIOS-Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung, Oral History und Lebensverlaufsanalysen* 20.2 (2007): 291-302. 294)

Stalinist tyranny, whose agents were heavily armed and spoke an unknown language, is conveyed in the diary of Victor Klemperer, the Jewish scholar from Dresden who had escaped the attention of the authorities – and thus almost certain death – in the confusion following the city's firebombing. On 23 June 1945 he wrote of a pervasive sense of uncertainty and radical instability:

> Every couple of minutes, every couple of lines, no matter where I start I end up with the same sentence: everything is uncertain, everything is in suspense, there is nothing solid under one's feet, in one's hands.[204]

Perhaps cushioned from such anxieties by her age, her social station and her previous experience of foreign occupation in the Rhineland under the French (see Journal 1), or perhaps simply because she wanted to see the Red Army as liberators from Nazism, Charlotte's first comments on the city's new masters were surprisingly positive: she remarks on 8 May, for example, on the soldiers' excellent equipment, robust appearance and well-tended horses. A visit to Dresden from the Soviet general Timoshenko, who is accommodated in the nearby Parkhotel, elicits favourable comments from Charlotte on 26 May; the cars in his entourage are "wonderful" and the officers in his retinue have a "straight military bearing". There is an implicit comparison of the victors with the uncouthness of the Nazis in her entry the next day after she reads the Soviet propaganda newssheet *Tagblatt für die deutsche Bevölkerung [Daily News for the German People]*; the speeches of the allied leaders are so much to be preferred, she writes, to the "common and vulgar tone" of Hitler which had "disgusted" her and Konrad. Not all of this admiration for the Soviets is generalised. Occasionally Charlotte and Konrad benefit from individual acts of generosity shown by Soviet soldiers. On 20 May, for example, they were able to dine on calf liver, a delicacy they had not eaten for years, because a friend, Frau Meissner, had been given the meat by the "Tartar driver" who was billeted with her.[205]

The Angermanns also experienced genuinely terrifying encounters, and they knew from second-hand reports that Soviet soldiers were capable of tremendous brutality. For many of those serving in the Red Army, the march into Germany had shown them extraordinary levels of prosperity compared with the privations of the USSR. Unable to comprehend why the Germans had attacked them when they clearly had so much at home already,[206] the Soviets set about 'expropriating' private property wherever they found it. Wristwatches were especially in demand, and Konrad had to forfeit his own in the first of what would be fourteen visits by soldiers in the two days following the surrender. On the last of these occasions (10 May), his life was threatened by an enraged soldier with a gun, and Charlotte had to explain their situation quickly to the only one of the looters able to speak some German. Moved by her distress, the would-be robbers transformed the

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[204] Klemperer, Victor. *The Lesser Evil: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1945-1959.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003. 11.

[205] The British military historian, Antony Beevor, notes that this kind of behaviour was fairly common and was an expression of a desire of soldiers for familiar, domestic comforts: "Soviet soldiers turned up with chunks of meat and told housewives to cook it for them in return for a share. Like all soldiers, they wanted 'to get their feet under a table' in a real kitchen in a real home. They always brought alcohol with them too. Everyone would drink solemnly to peace after eating, and then the soldiers would insist on a toast 'to the ladies'." Beevor, Antony. *The Fall of Berlin, 1945*. New York: Viking, 2002. 409.

[206] "[Soviet soldiers] were also furious to find a standard of living among peasant farmers far higher than anything that they had ever imagined. This provoked outrage at the idea that Germans, who had already been living so well, should have invaded the Soviet Union to loot and destroy." ibid, 34.

encounter into one of generosity rather than theft: they gifted her two and half pounds of the sausage they had just stolen from a neighbouring butcher.

Rationing and wartime privation in occupied Dresden

The one topic that pervades all three of the Angermann journals is food. While Marianne's early letters from Spain delight in descriptions of exotic items not found in Germany and of the relative cheapness and plenty of food which she is able to have prepared by a maid, the focus in Charlotte's journal entries from 1938 onwards is on rationing, the scarcity of staple foodstuffs and, later, the descent into hunger and even borderline starvation.[207]

Rationing was introduced in Germany in August 1939 and adults who were not self-sufficient – so-called Nicht-Selbstversorger, the majority of the population – were divided into four groups depending on their work type and calorific requirements. As Christoph Buchheim notes, because purchases made with ration cards were pooled by families, the greater weekly allocations for those doing heavy labour favoured the working class, whose households were more likely to include at least one such worker, rather than the traditionally better paid white-collar sector.[208]

The level of German rations fluctuated somewhat up until the end of 1943 depending on the quality of harvests, but meat and animal-derived fats declined constantly since it became more and more difficult to supply feed to livestock. A major cut in weekly allowances occurred in April 1942 when bread, meat and fats were reduced by a quarter. Bread became particularly problematic due to a bad harvest in 1940 which massively reduced grain reserves, and even potatoes – an unrestricted item until this point – were brought into the centralised rationing system. Buchheim draws an illuminating comparison with the United Kingdom in 1942 where bread, potatoes and even coffee were still freely available as late as June, and where the meat ration was between one third and two thirds higher than in Germany.[209]

Nevertheless, the diet of Germans in the Second World War never reached the starvation levels of the 1914-1918 conflict, mainly due to the Nazis' ability to exploit the resources of the occupied territories, both in terms of forced labour and the expropriation of foodstuffs.[210] Until 1944, writes Buchheim, the National Socialist regime was able to maintain the average per capita calorific intake of adults at 2800 kcal – only ten percent below the pre-war level, but this feat was almost entirely due to its ability to exploit the occupied territories, whose native populations were forced to make do with less and starved.[211] However, precisely because the Wehrmacht obtained much of its food in the territories it occupied, its irreversible retreat after 1943 had a serious effect on the domestic food supply in Germany; soldiers, who received far greater allocations than

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[207] The misery of Madrid's inhabitants during the siege of the Spanish Civil War and the appalling supply situation in that city is brought out clearly in an exchange of letters between Marianne and Charlotte in Journal 3 (forthcoming).

[208] Buchheim, Christoph. "Der Mythos vom Wohlleben. Der Lebensstandard der deutschen Zivilbevölkerung im Zweiten Weltkrieg." *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 58.3 (2010): 299 - 328. 307.

[209] ibid, 309.

[210] In 1945, agricultural production had only sunk by 15% compared to its prewar levels. In the First World War, production levels were catastrophically affected by the Allied blockade; output in 1917 was 40% lower than it had been in 1913. (ibid, 310.)

[211] ibid, 315.

even heavy labourers in industry, now had to be increasingly supplied from the Reich's farms and civilian consumers were required to make the corresponding sacrifices.[212]

The Angermanns were in a particularly unenviable position as they were not eligible for the supplementary rations that could be claimed by children or heavy labourers. The number of Germans without access to special rations was estimated at around thirteen million and, while statistics indicate that their daily calorie intake could still be maintained at 95% of its pre-war level in 1942/43, by then they were already consuming inadequate amounts of protein and fats.[213] On September 26 1943, Charlotte writes that they felt the autumnal cold all the more because they had already lost so much of their body fat. The situation would only get worse – as can be seen from the table below – and it would clearly have an effect on the health of the Angermanns. Given the weight loss Charlotte recorded for her husband in the postwar period – in October 1945 he weighed 96 pounds fully clothed, a loss of sixteen pounds in the five months from May – this level of malnutrition was almost certainly a major factor in his death on 1 January 1946.

Table 1: Rations for various groups of non-self-sufficient consumers per week (grams)[214]

	Normal consumer		
From:	Bread	Meat & meat products	Fats
28.8.39	Unrationed	700	340
25.9.39	2400	500	270
3.10.39	2400	500	269
20.11.39	2400	531	269
11.3.40	2400	500	269
29.7.40	2250	500	269
26.8.40	2250	500	269
2.6.41	2250	400	269
6.6.42	2000	300	206
19.10.42	2250	350	206
31.5.43	2325	250	219
20.9.43	2425	250	219
16.10.44	2225	250	219
5.2.45	1978	222	194
8.3.45	1755	222	167
9.4.45	1700	250	125

When the Soviets entered Dresden, then, they encountered a population that was inadequately fed. Although the victors themselves were in a fairly wretched state – Silke Satjukow writes that, in contrast to Charlotte's first assessment of Red Army soldiers, many Germans saw them as "exhausted, unwashed, badly equipped and oddly uniformed strangers, often in simple carts drawn by emaciated little horses"[215] – the Soviets were

[212] ibid, 311-312.
[213] Ibid, 321.
[214] This is an abridged and translated version of the table provided in Buchheim, 307.
[215] Satjukow, Silke. *Besatzer: >>Die Russen<< in Deutschland 1945-1994*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008. 51. Beevor (2002, 36) also notes the widespread malnourishment affecting the Soviets: "Red Army soldiers had never been well fed during the war. Most of the time they had been permanently hungry. If it had not

initially able to distribute a limited amount of food to the civilian population. In so doing they were able to create an impression – at least in the short term – that they were "'fatherly providers' who would share their last dried fish and their last potatoes with suffering Germans."[216]

The impression conveyed by Charlotte's journal entries is that Soviet generosity in the first days of the occupation amounted to including local people in the general pillaging typical of military conquest. On 10 May, for example, she wrote that there were desperate scenes at the renowned Parkhotel, located a block further west from their apartment, when soldiers threw open the doors to all and sundry. Locals engaged in the plunder as enthusiastically as the soldiers, much to Charlotte's horror: "I have never seen anything so undignified."

Aside from such informal acts of redistribution, Charlotte found relatively little evidence of Soviet charity in the first days after Dresden's occupation, though by the end of May she was beginning to become more optimistic. On the 27 May Charlotte wrote that the Soviets had now introduced their own rationing system and there seemed to be plenty of bread and potatoes available – though this was not enough to still their hunger.[217] On 31 May she wrote that housewives were now regarded as bona fide workers and were thus eligible for a higher allowance. The Angermanns' lot, however, then became considerably more difficult: by 30 June, Charlotte was drying out the chickens' stale bread in the oven for use as bread soup in the winter, and on 15 July she wrote that potatoes had run out, there was not enough bread and they had not tasted milk since April. By 10 October the Angermanns were reduced to dining on gruel, raw grated potatoes and a thin slice of bread.

The discrepancies Charlotte noted between their living standards and those of the occupying troops were widely observed as the occupation progressed. These differences had their origins in a change in Soviet policy, which directed the occupying forces to secure their supplies from German farms and food producers. Marshal Zhukov, the head of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (Russian acronym: SVAG), made it clear that he regarded this as standard practice for a victorious army:

> Occupation forces must be sustained at the expense of the vanquished country. Such is the law of war, such is the law of all post-war agreements. We are still feeding our occupation forces at the expense of our people, our country. This is wrong . . . We must release our people, our country, from the extra burdens that we have consigned her . . . Let the Germans feed us . . . and let every German understand clearly, that as a vanquished country, they are required to do so.[218]

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been for the huge shipments of American Spam and wheat, many of them would have been close to starvation."

[216] Satjukow, 51.

[217] Satukow (51-52) writes that such bread as was available at the time frequently contained one third fewer calories than the recommended minimum.

[218] The policy had been formulated in a directive to chiefs in the occupation administration from Marshal Zhukov in August 1945. Quoted in Slaveski, Filip. *Soviet Occupation of Germany : Hunger, Mass Violence and the Struggle for Peace, 1945–1947*, Cambridge University Press, 2013. p. 87.

In fact, the move was necessitated by forecasts of a very poor harvest in the Soviet Union's agricultural heartlands which was not of a sufficient magnitude to feed its own citizens, let alone those of an occupied enemy. In late summer 1945, however, Zhukov's order appeared to be hopelessly optimistic. Although the Soviet zone was a productive one – there were 85 acres of agricultural land per 100 inhabitants and 67 of these arable, while in the British zone these figures were 62 and 37 respectively[219] – capacity had been ravaged by the war: the sowing season had been disrupted by the final battles, farmers had fled westwards before the advancing Red Army, and the slave labourers who had kept food production afloat had been liberated, in many cases taking machinery and livestock with them. Furthermore, there was now a shortage of skilled labour and fuel for distribution.[220]

That the Soviets managed to stave off large scale starvation and provide better daily calorie averages than the British is, according to Filip Slaveski, a tribute to the superior policies of the Soviet administration, which ensured that the agricultural officials responsible for imposing and enforcing production quotas were drawn from Communist Party members, or at least those sympathetic to the objectives of Socialism. The British, he writes, lacked the military and police apparatus – and perhaps the ruthlessness – to instigate the radical reforms necessary to establish a monopoly of control and distribution in their zone. They were therefore compelled to rely on Nazi-era agricultural bureaucrats who consistently underestimated production and hoarded resources in their local fiefdoms, thus denying food to urban areas.

As grim as Charlotte's descriptions of her diet are in late 1945, she and Konrad were almost certainly better off than if they had remained in their previous home of Langenberg which was in the British zone of the Ruhr. There, the normal consumer had an entitlement of only 1040 calories per day in mid 1945 and the daily intake was still below 1671 per day as late as 1949.[221] Dresden, on the other hand, was considered a 'Red' city by the Soviets, and its size meant it was graded as a second-tier centre (one level below Berlin) on their four tier priority scale. In August 1945 the daily allowance for SVAG's lowest category of consumers, to which the Angermanns would have belonged as pensioners, was 1214.1 calories per day.[222] Hardly generous and effectively borderline starvation, but nevertheless 200 calories higher than the allocation they would have received in the British zone.

Although Dresden did not suffer from mass starvation, the rationing system continued to be plagued by constant supply problems, despite the Soviet reorganisation of agriculture.[223] According to Slaveski, the problem lay less in the inadequacy of production than in the excessive consumption of the Soviet military. In summer 1945, for

[219] Nettl, J.P. *The Eastern Zone and Soviet Policy in Germany* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 172. Quoted in Slaveski, 89.
[220] Slaveski, 89.
[221] ibid, 90. In the British zone there were, writes Slaveski (92), strikes and riots in protest at the starvation level rations.
[222] ibid, 91.
[223] Relatives of Marianne were directly affected by the Soviet reorganisation of agricultural production. The country estate at Thum in Saxony which belonged to Charlotte's first cousin, the Wehrmacht Major-General Otto Beutler, was expropriated by the military administration. Other members of the wider Beutler family, of course, had been involved in still more ruthless expropriations of foodstuffs as members of the German occupying forces in the Soviet Union. See the family tree in this journal for further details.

example, special commissariats accessible to the Red Army and its dependents began to open on Soviet bases, and these were stocked with products drawn from German farms and businesses which were under exclusive military contract. Germans had not seen many of the items on the commissariat shelves since before the war, and this naturally caused considerable resentment.

At the Angermanns' residence in the Silberweg Charlotte, too, recognised that the occupying forces clearly had access to food of a quantity and quality that was simply not available to Germans. On 24 June she wrote enviously of the food consumed by the officers whom she and Konrad were forced to billet: they eat "magnificent bread, eggs, butter, cheese, honey, sugar". Six days after this entry, she wrote that she had used the butter residue on the wrapper discarded by her lodgers for her own meal.

This military overconsumption proved to be a particularly difficult problem to resolve because of demarcation disputes between the various arms of the Soviet occupation (military administration, army, and state security services), and the conflicting jurisdictions of the kommandantura, which was the basic unit of the occupation forces. When a local commandant had responsibility for supplying scarce goods to a local civilian population as well as his own troops, it was invariably the latter who were given top priority. The confusion and unequal distribution that might result can be seen from the situation in Dresden where, according to Norman Naimark,

> [T]here were four kommandanturas, one for the city, one for the district, one for the headquarters of the provincial military administration, and one for the First Tank Regiment. Reporting functions were confused and there were problems with those [combat] units in the city that carried out strictly military activities.[224]

Just what "problems" the administration had with the army are illustrated by the case of SVAG and army tensions in Bergen on the island of Rügen in the Baltic in early 1946. There, the local SVAG kommandantura, frustrated at the army's inability or unwillingness to impose discipline on its soldiers for infractions of martial law, had taken to arresting suspected soldiers and dealing them severe beatings, which sometimes resulted in death.[225]

However, the tables could also be turned on SVAG by members of the security services, such as the anti-espionage department SMERSH. Slaveski mentions such a case in Dresden in late 1945 when SMERSH agents, who had previously served with SVAG, but had been dismissed for indiscipline and drunkenness, set out to exact revenge on anyone wearing the SVAG uniform. On the night in question, they waylaid the unsuspecting Lieutenant Iazikov:

> They 'asked' him to hand over his papers and get out of the car. Iazikov handed over his papers but refused to get out. They then dragged him out of the car, beat him, and left him to die on the roadside. Now with a car at their disposal as well as bottles of good vodka that they had embezzled from the supply store, the agents were ready for their usual night out. They would walk along Dresden city streets

[224] Naimark, 14. "[…] the problems of rivalries within the administration and overlapping competencies were legion." (Naimark, 23)
[225] Slaveski, 44.

> beating up pedestrians and shooting their machine guns erratically around the city centre, or more accurately at ducks swimming in the city pond.[226]

Unsurprisingly, Charlotte's journal entries were oblivious to this inter-agency rivalry amongst the occupying forces. She was, however, attuned to the realities of the new administration's authority which required no less deference than that of the National Socialists. Thus, Konrad obediently queued for two hours to hand in their (already broken) radio, and they willingly participated in street sweeping in response to edicts issued by the occupation forces (see entry for 12 May). At other times the exercise of Soviet power was sudden and violent. On 2 August Charlotte recorded that she was waiting patiently in a queue at the greengrocer when she was suddenly thrown against a wall by the force of a blast: the Red Army had just detonated a Nazi ammunition dump on the Heller, a military exercise ground just north of the Weisser Hirsch.

As the Weisser Hirsch had been largely unaffected by the bombing of Dresden and the Angermanns' apartment was intact, Charlotte and Konrad were required to billet a series of Soviet officers and contribute to their housekeeping. In the case of the Angermanns it appears that this work consisted of serving, cleaning and washing dishes (see entry of 24 June). Cooking was done in a communal facility, which Charlotte refers to as a "Russian kitchen" – presumably modelled on the kinds of kitchen found in the greatly overcrowded Soviet apartment buildings of the era. Unpaid or poorly paid work of this kind was routine in the first months after the war, with women and girls required to work at clearing up war damage, or at household tasks,[227] while men were directed by labour offices to work at war clearance, transportation and in the dismantling of industrial plant so that it could be shipped back to the Soviet Union in lieu of restitution payments.

Violence and rape during the Soviet occupation

On 26 August 1945, Charlotte recorded an incident of appalling violence in her journal. Inge Pflugbeil, a young acquaintance of the Angermanns, had gone to search for mushrooms on the Dresden Heath with two of her friends but had got lost. Her body was found two days later. According to Charlotte, she had been raped and her tongue bitten off. The same journal entry records the rape in the mortuary of the female gardener at the local cemetery, and of gangs attacking and raping passengers on a Berlin to Dresden train. While Charlotte's accounts of widespread sexual violence may be anecdotal such incidents have long been substantiated by a large body of scholarship: soldiers of the Red Army did indeed commit rape on a massive scale during the offensives that carried them into enemy territory from 1944 and in the occupation that followed.[228] The British military historian Antony Beevor estimates that between 95 000 and 130 000 women and girls were raped in Berlin alone, with around ten percent committing suicide as a

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[226] ibid, 58.

[227] See Charlotte's entry of 16 May in which she recorded an incident in which her neighbour, Frau Kessler, was pressed into service to clean up after a Soviet officers' party.

[228] See, for example: Beevor, Antony. *The Fall of Berlin*, 1945. New York: Viking, 2002; Slaveski, Filip. *Soviet Occupation of Germany: Hunger, Mass Violence and the Struggle for Peace, 1945–1947.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013; Grossmann, Atina. "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers." *October* 72 (1995): 43-63.; Naimark, Norman M. *The Russians in Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945 - 1949*. Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard University Press, 1995; Gebhardt, Miriam. *Als die Soldaten kamen. Die Vergewaltigungen deutscher Frauen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs.* München: Deutsche-Verlagsanstalt, 2015; Brownmiller, Susan. *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975.

result. Red Army soldiers, writes Beevor, raped perhaps as many as two million German women (1.4 million in East Prussia, Pomerania and Silesia) with the majority likely to have been assaulted more than once.[229]

Propaganda and violence

The wave of violence that broke on German civilians in May 1945 had been building momentum for some time. As the Soviet forces approached German territory proper in January of that year, the threat of rape became central to long-established German propaganda efforts to portray the Soviets as an inferior people. By depicting the soldiers of the Red Army as incorrigible sexual predators it was hoped that resistance to a Red Army invasion could be shored up by toughening the resolve of German fighting men. But as Norman Naimark observes in his landmark 1995 study, *The Russians in Germany*, the propaganda of the Germans was more than matched in virulence by their foes who were able to draw on the very real atrocities visited on the Soviet peoples by the Wehrmacht and SS. Red Army soldiers were encouraged to dwell on the memory of all that had been done by German forces in the homeland and to seek revenge.[230] Prior to crossing the border into the Reich for the first time in East Prussia, the Main Political Administration of the Army urged soldiers to regard themselves now as masters of the Germans: "on German soil there is only one master – the Soviet soldier, that he is both the judge and the punisher for the torments of his fathers and mothers, for the destroyed cities and villages … 'Remember your friends are not there, there is the next of kin of the killers and oppressors.'"[231]

Alternatively, Soviet authorities could regard rape as the just reward due to soldiers for the hardships they had endured during the war. Such was the attitude of Stalin himself who, in response to the criticisms of the Yugoslav writer Milovan Djilas, replied: "Can't [you] understand it if a soldier who has crossed thousands of kilometres through blood and fire and death has fun with a wench or takes some trifle?" Stalin also kissed Djilas's wife and joked "that he made this loving gesture at the risk of being charged with rape."[232]

War and the limits of discipline

Soviet commanders were nevertheless taken aback, writes Naimark, at the extent to which the rank and file took this propaganda to heart and used it to fuel an orgy of

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[229] It should be pointed out that rape was not a crime exclusive to the Soviet sphere of operations. Miriam Gebhardt writes that as many as 190 000 women were raped by soldiers of the US occupation forces. Gebhardt is more circumspect in her estimate of total rape victims in all occupation zones and puts the figure at 860 000. (*Als die Soldaten kamen. Die Vergewaltigungen deutscher Frauen am Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs.* Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2015. Web.) Atina Grossman takes issue with what she sees as the competitive nature of statistics in some discussions of the subject. In her critique of Helke Sander's film on the topic of the rape of German women, *BeFreier und Befreite* (1992), she asks whether numerical data have been deployed in order to shore up a view of women as victims which is "central to [a] particular historical and feminist agenda." ("A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers." *October* 72 (1995): 43-63. Here, 46.) Grossman does not question the scale of the rapes, but she emphasises that they should be seen in their very particular historical context. It this historical contingency, she argues, that does not allow these rapes to be appropriated easily for ideological purposes.

[230] Grossman, 52.

[231] Quoted in Naimark, 72.

[232] Quoted in Naimark, op. cit., 71. Stalin could happily contradict himself on the subject of the treatment of Germans, however. On the one hand, he could blame indiscipline on the penal battalions fighting for the Red Army or a few rotten apples amongst the regular soldiers – while, on the other, exhorting his forces to maintain the highest possible standards of morality appropriate to Communism. (Naimark, 76-77)

violence: in East Prussia "it was not untypical for Soviet troops to rape every female over the age of twelve or thirteen in a village, killing many in the process; to pillage the homes for food, alcohol, and loot; and to leave the village in flames."[233] The relentless political indoctrination in an atmosphere of total war made German civilians appear as legitimate targets, but it was also noted that the plentiful supplies of alcohol available to plundering troops allowed them to overcome their inhibitions at these acts of intimate savagery. German authorities had deliberately avoided destroying stocks of liquor because they reasoned that intoxicated soldiers were incapable of fighting, but, as the anonymous narrator of the memoir *Eine Frau in Berlin (A Woman in Berlin)* observes, the tactic simply made life much more dangerous for women and girls.[234] Indeed, the most striking feature common to almost every eyewitness account from the period is the level of drunkenness shown by the Red Army; this Soviet obsession with alcohol is something Charlotte also makes frequent reference to in her journal – see, for example, her entries for 8 - 9, 16 May and 1 June.

Once official sanction had been given to the Red Army's desire for revenge and the basest impulses of the soldiers allowed full and free expression, a momentum of violence developed that proved extraordinarily difficult for the Soviet military authorities to stop. While the subliminal message of Soviet propaganda may have been that the abuse of German women was justified by the rules of war, rape soon became a general misogynistic frenzy that did not distinguish between 'friend' and 'foe'. The phenomenon of rape had already begun in Poland, and in Germany the Red Army continued to rape indiscriminately, including those Ukrainian, Belorussian and Russian women who had been put to work as slave labourers by the Nazis. In March 1945 a report from the Political Department of the 1st Ukrainian Front detailed a number of occasions in which Soviet soldiers had violated Soviet women. The report noted that the behaviour of officers was often every bit as bad as that of the common soldier:

> For example , Eva Shtul, born 1926, said, "My father and two brothers joined the Red Army at the beginning of the war. Soon the Germans came and I was taken to Germany by force. I worked in a factory here. I cried and waited for the day of liberation. Soon the Red Army came and its soldiers dishonoured me. I cried and told the senior officer about my brothers in the Red Army and he beat me and raped me. It would have been better if he had killed me."[235]

[233] ibid, 72. Naturally, such savagery was not universal, and there were also instances of Russian soldiers risking their lives to prevent the rape of German civilians when they looked to officers for protection. An example of an individual prepared to take such risks was the writer Lev Kopelev, "a political officer, [] arrested by SMERSH counterintelligence for having 'engaged in the propaganda of bourgeois humanism, of pity for the enemy.'" (Beevor 2002, 28.)

[234] Anonyma, the author of this memoir, makes the following observation: "Herr Pauli heard that a directive had gone out to German troops never to destroy any stocks of alcohol, but to leave them to the advancing enemy since experience had showed that they would held up by alcohol to the detriment of their fighting ability. That's men's gossip, thought up by men for men. They ought to think for just two minutes [and realise] that schnaps makes people horny and dramatically increases their sex drive. I'm convinced that, without all the alcohol that these lads found everywhere here, there would have been only half the number of rapes." Anonyma, *Eine Frau in Berlin: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen vom 20. April bis 22. Juni 1945*. Andere Bibliothek. 5. Ausg ed. Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 2003. 192.

[235] Quoted in Beevor 2002, 110.

Some German Jewish women and girls who had managed, at unimaginable cost, to evade the Nazis and survive the Allied bombing, emerged from their hiding places only to discover that they had fallen into the hands of soldiers who saw in them simply another form of war booty.[236] A particularly harrowing example of such an encounter is provided in the book *A Woman in Berlin*. The female narrator describes a Jewish couple who had successfully survived the war, but were then bitterly betrayed by their would-be Soviet saviours:

> Then when the first Russians broke into the basement and went after the women, there was a scuffle. Shots were fired. One bullet ricocheted off the wall and hit the man in his hip. His wife threw herself at the Russians, begging them to help, in German. Whereupon, they took her into the hallway, three men on top of her, as she kept howling and screaming, "But I'm Jewish, I'm Jewish." In the meantime her husband bled to death.[237]

Soviet authorities recognised the dangers this universalised violence posed to the efficient exploitation of conquered territories and the administration of their populations. In East Prussia, for instance, commanders were exasperated by the level of destruction wreaked by their men who blindly destroyed housing and farm machinery, slaughtered livestock and burned crops – all assets which could be used to relieve the burden of supplying an army and to reduce the privations at home.[238]

The rampages of drunken and ill-disciplined troops who looted and raped seemingly at will also threatened the planned political hegemony of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, since it made it difficult to persuade newly subject peoples of the superiority of the Soviet system.[239] Already in February 1942, Stalin had emphasised the distinction between the Nazi leadership and the Germans as a whole,[240] and his orders once the battle for Berlin began directed soldiers to think of Germans in more differentiated terms – to distinguish, that is, between 'Nazis' and 'good Germans'.[241] But these appeals were based rather on military calculations – the desire to avoid stiffening German resistance and thus lower Soviet casualities – than on humanitarian motives. In any case, as Slaveski notes, a nuanced view of the Germans was not so lightly arrived at for the Soviet soldier: "The years of Soviet wartime propaganda which had hammered into the Soviet people the message that all of German society was responsible for the war could not wash off so easily, the Soviet experience of German occupation and bondage even less so."[242]

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[236] Grossman, 53-54.
[237] Anonyma, 197.
[238] Naimark, 73-74. Even Marshall Zhukov, the hero of the Soviet conquest of Germany, was accused of furnishing several of his Moscow properties with goods stolen from the occupation zone. (Naimark, 34)
[239] As Slaveski (40) points out, by late 1945 it had become apparent to Stalin that violence committed by Soviet troops "was making it difficult for SVAG to achieve some of the tasks he had set them, to run the country, and position Soviet-friendly political parties at the apex of political power."
[240] Stalin's order of 23 February 1942 became a much-quoted slogan in Soviet-occupied Germany: "It would be laughable to identify Hitler's cliques with the German people, with the German state. Historical experience shows that Hitlers come and go; the German people, the German state, remain." Quoted in Naimark, 76.
[241] Slaveski, 11.
[242] ibid, 16.

The problem for the Soviet military leadership, however, was that discipline was exceedingly difficult to enforce because its exercise depended on the willingness of lower level commanders to punish offenders; these men, however, were often just as brutalised by their experiences as their troops. Further, many officers saw rape as a natural consequence of wartime experience, and ignored or trivialised the complaints of civilians, while others recognised that the aggression of their men was such that they risked their own lives if they were to try to subject rapists to martial law.[243] Where discipline was enforced it might be completely misdirected (NKVD rifle regiments, for instance, punished their soldiers not for rape but for catching venereal disease from their victims[244]), or arbitrary and ferocious like the original crime. On 8 May 1945, for example, a young woman near Magdeburg, Liselotte S., witnessed a soldier accused of rape beaten to death by his superior officer in front of a terrified group of villagers.[245]

A significant part of the problem lay in the fact that Stalin's totalitarian state – like its National Socialist opponent – produced cohorts of people so ruthlessly oppressed that they had nothing left to lose and so did not respond to disciplinary measures. The poorly fed, equipped and trained Soviet conscripts who had been captured by the Germans languished in prison conditions little better than those of the Nazis' death camps. As Soviet troops advanced into Germany in 1945 they liberated these detainees along with their compatriots who had been taken to Germany as forced labourers. For these individuals, however, the arrival of the Red Army was often a grotesque disappointment since it resulted in little more than the exchange of one tyrannical regime for another. The deeply paranoid Stalinist state regarded any Soviet citizen found alive in Germany with the greatest suspicion. The soldier truly committed to the Communist cause could not possibly have allowed himself to be captured, the reasoning went, and any Soviet civilian found working for the Germans must have colluded with the Hitlerite war machine – regardless of their virtual enslavement: "[…] a general idea had [] been fomented by the regime that any Soviet citizen taken to Germany, either as a prisoner of war or as a slave labourer, had tacitly consented because they had failed to kill themselves or 'join the partisans'."[246] Political redemption was offered to these Soviet citizens if they

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[243] Naimark (75) quotes just such a case in which two Soviet soldiers risked their lives to prevent the gang rape of a young girl in the presence of her father. One of the editors of this volume, August Obermayer, was a child in Vienna at the end of the War and can recall a similar incident occurring in a friend's family:

> In 1945, shortly after the end of the war, the Red Army had 'liberated' Vienna and established itself as one of the occupational forces in Austria. One day the sixteen-year-old sister of my friend Fritz walked home through a park adjacent to the block of flats where she and her family lived. It was broad daylight and her father watched her from the window of their flat. Suddenly, a Russian soldier with a machine pistol round his shoulders grabbed her and tried to drag her into the bushes. The father came running down shouting and waving his arms wanting to assist her, when the soldier aimed his pistol at him. At this moment a loud voice commanded "Stoj!" [Halt!], a shot was fired and the soldier went down. A Russian officer who witnessed the scene shot his own man and explained to the deadly pale and trembling father and daughter in remarkably good German that the Red Army does not condone rape.
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> But this was, of course, an isolated incident. Thousands of women got raped by soldiers of all the occupational forces. (Email from August Obermayer, 20 February 2023)

[244] Beevor 2002, 107.

[245] Hildebrandt, Dieter and Felix Kuballa (eds). *Mein Kriegsende. Erinnerungen an die Stunde Null.* Hamburg: Hörbuch Hamburg, 2010. 221.

[246] Beevor 2002, 109. This widespread suspicion, Beevor goes on to argue, may partly explain why female slave labourers in Germany were regarded as legitimate objects of violence by Red Army soldiers. "The notion that Soviet women and girls taken for slave labour in Germany 'had sold themselves to the Germans'

(re)enlisted in the army which was desperate for manpower due to the massively costly battles fought in the last months of the war. Even here, though, there was no guarantee that survival – a slim chance in any case in a frontline unit - would provide protection against deportation to a gulag once the war was over.

In the months after German capitulation, therefore, there were a huge number of men in the Soviet occupation zone – re-conscripted soldiers, POWs, former slave labourers – whose futures were highly uncertain and whose morals had been coarsened, if not erased, through years of mistreatment. POWs awaiting repatriation were still accommodated in their camps where they inadequately fed and supervised. Many of them took to wandering the surrounding countryside, and these foraging expeditions often turned violent, especially when alcohol was readily available. The rural districts northwest of Dresden were affected in this way in late 1945:

> At the POW camp near Riesa, just north of Dresden, in October 1945, POWs wandered into nearby villages to rob houses and upon being confronted by homeowners or townspeople ended up shooting them. Liberated slave labourers in the area did the same, but raped rather than killed the women.[247]

The response of German women to rape

The horrors of rural Saxony were also visited on the city of Dresden itself, particularly in the early months of the occupation. Many of the cases of rape recorded in Charlotte's journal occurred so close to the Angermanns' apartment that the screams of the victims could be heard at night, as she noted on 13 May. On the 24 – 25 May Charlotte wrote of hearing further details of the fates of two women known to her, Ferdinande Niesel (61) and her daughter, Dorothea (24), who lived at 49 Bautzner Landstraße, about five kilometres west of the Angermanns. When Soviet soldiers forced their way into their apartment, the older woman was able to hide her daughter and a younger girl in a cupboard, but this act of maternal protectiveness led to her being raped three times in the presence of her other, elderly co-residents. Unable to cope with the thought that this might happen again, both mother and daughter subsequently took their own lives.

Suicide was a common response to the trauma of rape, and the Dresden Sterberegister (death register) records a number of cases on 8-9 May of mothers and daughters dying by their own hands (see, for example, the footnote to the entry of 9 May). Although it is true that committed National Socialists also often killed themselves and their families when faced with the indisputable fact of Soviet victory, twin fatalities of both mother and daughter were much more likely to be a response to rape (the "dishonour" mentioned by the Soviet victim above) – or, indeed, the ultimate means of preventing it from occurring at all.

Yet as time went on and rape became an endemic problem during the Soviet occupation,[248] a number of survival strategies emerged. A few women, for example,

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was very widespread in the Red Army, which provides part of the explanation of why they were so badly treated."

[247] Slaveski, 21.

[248] According to Naimark (89) rape became an entrenched problem during the Soviet occupation: "incidents of rape continued up to (and no doubt after) the founding of the German Democratic Republic" in October 1949.

entered into a relationship of convenience with a high ranking officer in the hope that he would provide a degree of protection from the arbitrary attentions of gangs of soldiers. Such was the case with Anonyma, the anonymous author of *Eine Frau in Berlin*, whose 'patron' was a Soviet colonel.[249] As Norman Naimark observes, during the occupation German women were subject to various forms of sexual coercion in a range of different circumstances. While some of these might have appeared to offer a degree of agency – such as when a woman exchanged sexual favours for food, clothing or housing – submission to power was involved in every case, whether that power came at the point of a gun or through the extra rations that helped avert starvation.[250]

According to Atina Grossman, even the insistence on victimhood may have paradoxically offered a point from which women could draw the strength to keep going, even if the construction of such victimhood involved a continuation of National Socialist rhetoric. Grossman notes that the image of the Soviet soldier as a barbaric and rapacious fiend had been conjured so often in the preceding years by Nazi propaganda that many women felt "that they were re-enacting a scene in a film they had already seen when the drama they were expecting actually unfolded […]".[251] Out of the abyss of their experiences, therefore, they were able to see confirmation of themselves as already superior to their brutish assailants.

National Socialist discourses also played a role in determining the policies that shaped the health services available to rape victims. The wave of rapes by Soviet soldiers brought with it a surge in the demand for abortions which, under German legislation largely dating from the foundation of the Reich in 1871 (Paragraph 218 of the German Penal Code), were rigorously restricted. Although aspects of this legislation were put into abeyance in 1945 for a complex set of reasons – including genuinely humanitarian motives – the grounds for its suspension had already been prepared through the exceptions allowed for in National Socialist health practices. In the name of preserving the so-called 'genotype of the German people' the Nazis had transformed abortion legislation into an instrument of racial and eugenic policy, so that terminations were ruthlessly enforced whenever a German woman became pregnant from a liaison with a non-German man.[252]

[249] Atina Grossman questions the authenticity of these diaries, but their high literary standard makes them a well-regarded source material in Germany, and they condense many of the phenomena that occur individually in other women's oral history accounts.

[250] Indeed, Antony Beevor goes so far as to suggest that rape did not occur on quite the same scale in the US zone because the well-supplied American GIs could simply purchase what they wanted and did not have to resort to physical violence. (Beevor 2002, 414) Often the exploitation of unpaid labour – widespread in the immediate aftermath of the war in Western and Eastern zones of occupation – merged into sexual exploitation and outright violence. Silke Satjukow records such a case from 6 September 1945 in Dresden: on that day, the city commandant requested the labour office to provide "five pretty girls up to the age of 25 years to work as maids in the Red Army Hotel, Braunsdorfer Straße 13." Once this request had been processed, another group of Soviets turned up with a similar, though less articulate demand in pidgin German ("five women come clean officer"), and a more obviously criminal intent: "they selected five women and went with them into one of the ground floor apartments that was standing open and raped them there." (Satjukow, 53)

[251] Grossman, 52.

[252] Grossman, 52-53.

The last days of Konrad Angermann

In the months following the German capitulation the Angermanns, like many of their compatriots, exhausted their financial resources and were forced to sell their possessions in order to feed themselves. On 11 October 1945 Charlotte wrote that the couple had only 150 marks in savings left and that she was having to sell her blankets, with the Meissen porcelain next in line. Three weeks later, she wrote that she was working from 6.30 am to 8.30 pm to look after their own needs as well as those of the Soviet officer who had been billeted with them. They were plagued by hunger and cold, wrote Charlotte, and Konrad's pension had not been paid since March. Their circumstances seem to have been reduced also by looting. On 31 October Charlotte made the following remark: "How unfortunate that we were not able to keep your precious silverware – everything is gone, both my things and your things."

Already in his seventies and affected by the privations of the war, Konrad's health declined rapidly. On 10 November he fainted in the street and was brought home covered in blood (entry of 15 November); he spent the next several days in bed. The Angermanns may still have had some means at their disposal, or perhaps they were able to call on contacts, because they managed to secure an appointment for Konrad to see a surgeon at the Möller Sanatorium in Rochwitz (Loschwitz) on 4 December.[253] On the way to the clinic, Konrad again collapsed and hit his head, and, in Charlotte's account, the couple had to struggle on for a further fifteen minutes carrying Konrad's luggage. Too weak to undergo an operation, Konrad languished for another three weeks in hospital before he finally died on the morning of New Year's Day 1946.

Just how difficult things must then have become for Charlotte, now in her sixties and without nearby family during the first months of the Soviet occupation, is indicated by the remarks she addresses to Marianne in her journal under the date "January 1946":

> The difficulties and horrors I experienced in the next few days, the paths I had to tread, how vulgar and nasty everything was, I'll keep all that to myself, it shouldn't burden you both. Perhaps you wouldn't be able to understand it, my dear, because although you experienced the beginning, you never experienced the end of Hitler's Germany.

The one bright point for Charlotte during this dark time came in mid-November 1945 when she finally heard through relatives in the Rhineland that Marianne and Franz were alive and well (see entry of 15 November). Although regular, direct postal communication between Germany and Great Britain would still be some time away, mother and daughter began to exchange news through intermediaries – sporadically at first, then ever more regularly – from 20 December 1945 onwards. That correspondence will be the subject of Journal 3.

[253] The sanatorium had been used as a military hospital by the Wehrmacht during the war.