

Sunday, 4 / 1 / 42. Child, last night I dreamed so vividly of “your apartment”, a cosy living room in antique nut brown with double cane-work, matt-red velvet cushions, warm, flowers everywhere – I look at it all quite carefully, found it much nicer than your Cologne flat and thought: a reddish woollen blanket would have looked better! One feels so close in a dream – and so infinitely far apart in reality. People were saying something odd in the Christmas holidays:

“Christmas is cancelled”. Why?

Joseph is fighting in the East,

Mary has been conscripted into the labour service,

The Christ child has been taken into the N.S.V. Children’s creche,¹

The manger is being used by the N.S.V. Infant Care,

The hay and straw that were in it have been confiscated by the army,

The 3 Kings didn’t get a visa,

And it’s all because of that donkey – so it’s not worth it in 1941²

Good Friday 1942. My Darling, Darling – I haven’t written for so long – what am I to write? Life goes on, remorselessly. One difficult day follows another. What a hard, cold winter that was! And the soldiers out there in Russia at 45 degrees below, at the Channel in water and mud, in Africa the dreadful sandstorms! Germany has become a quiet country – When you open the newspaper – Fathers and sons who have been killed. If you go out – all the grief! And all the wounded.³ The wounds from the World War have still not healed. We are so awfully tired. Does it have to do with the sparse and fatless food? If only I knew: are you out of danger, permanently? Do you have a home? Do you have enough to eat? Is

¹ NSV – Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt (Engl. National Socialist People’s Welfare). This public welfare organisation was formed in May 1933 and was directly affiliated to the Nazi Party. Its activities were carried out in parallel to those traditionally provided by the State, and focused mainly on issues of public health, but also with an emphasis on political indoctrination. Joseph Goebbels, the Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, set out the agenda for the NSV in a speech in 1938 in which he said that the main concern of the National Socialist movement was not to provide universal welfare, but only to support those who merited attention for racial reasons. This meant that Jewish families, households with disabled family members, and politically unacceptable people were denied assistance. In 1943 the NSV had 17 million members. Membership of the NSV was often considered an acceptable alternative to the Party itself for those who were reluctant to commit to National Socialism yet were required to make a gesture for professional or other reasons. (Kammer and Bartsch, 173 – 175)

² Repeating anti-Nazi jokes could have dire consequences for those telling them. In August 1943, a Catholic priest in Lower Saxony, Joseph Müller, was arrested for recounting the following joke to the father of a local National Socialist official: A mortally wounded man asked to see, for one last time, the people for whom he was about to die. He was brought a picture of Hitler, which was placed on his right, and a picture of Goering, which was placed on his left. He then said: “Now I can die like Christ.” Subjected to a show trial in July 1944 at the Volksgerichtshof (People’s Court), Müller was sentenced to death for undermining defensive morale and executed on 11 September. (Müller, Oskar. *Ein Priesterleben in und für Christus. Leben, Wirken, Leiden und Opfertod des Pfarrers Joseph Müller*. Hannover: Giesel, 1948) The judge who passed sentence on Müller at the Volksgerichtshof was Hans Joachim Rehse, who may have been related to Charlotte by marriage. (See the annotated family tree at the end of this journal).

³ According to the historian Rüdiger Overmans, there had been “only” 130 000 German military deaths prior to the attack on the Soviet Union on 22nd June 1941. From that point until the end of March 1942, around the time this entry was written, a further 476 000 deaths had been added to the German casualty lists. But the darkest days were yet to come: in the last five months of the war alone, from December 1944 to May 1945, there were 1.5 million German fatalities. As Overmans points out, each of these months had a higher casualty rate than the total figure for the German catastrophe at Stalingrad. (Overmans, R. *Deutsche militärische Verluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Beiträge Zur Militärgeschichte. Ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt. München: R. Oldenbourg, 2000. p. 239.) A total of 5.3 million German servicemen perished in the course of the war. (Overmans, 316)

the father still alive – how we wish him peace – and how is the mother? And the lonely old grandmother – Why is life so hard and grim? During the day you can't get any rest. The daily chores without any help, the dreadful chore of shopping. The greengrocers open at 3, with 40 – 50 women waiting since 1.30 or 2 o'clock. At 4 o'clock everything is sold out. I don't have the strength anymore to queue up. From the 22 March until today I've got a pound of carrots, a pound of beetroot – the latter frozen and inedible – and 1 lettuce – But then I always think: if only you have enough!! How one worries – Dorothee has it incredibly hard – no maid, just Schiebert 3x week, 1M an hour, the heating, the footpath, everything on her own, and on top of that the difficult operation in autumn. On 1 May Sister Martha is going on leave for ¼ year. Her brother-in-law, a young parson, has been killed, 3 little children, the 4th expected in May. How Dorothee is supposed to manage I don't know. 4 weeks ago she was here on a Sunday, terribly miserable and exhausted. Ernst is working beyond his limits, constantly back and forth between Berlin and Paris and he's still taking aircraft to the front. Peter is going to school, he's learning quickly, thank God he has the Angermann memory, and looks forward to Sunday the whole week. He was overjoyed about the coal holidays.⁴ Sybille is remarkably independent, she goes tobogganing on her own. She is a real Westphalian blonde and unfortunately enormous, far from being as graceful as Dorothee was. The main thing is they're both healthy and there's no sign of the war yet down there in that quiet village in Upper Bavaria. Frau Laubmeyer is still in Langenberg. But she's not coming here, there are shortages everywhere and she would come empty-handed, she says. If she but knew what her visit would mean to us – How will the year go on? How dreadful was the air-raid on Lübeck.⁵ How Münster⁶ and Cologne have suffered.⁷ Why? Child, may the Lord God give you peace and tranquillity. Our anxieties for you are like mountains which we cannot, can never, get over anymore. Will our thoughts find their way to you? Where? How? How awful this life is -

27 / 6/ 42 My Darling, tomorrow extra early we are travelling to Grainau through Munich where we'll have to stay overnight, to look after the Schnabels' children. As much we are happy to do it, it's a big responsibility. I hope to God it goes well. You are travelling with us – I've just put your lovely photo in my handbag. Perhaps we'll then take an occasional look at the little band brought up without rules. Peter has already told his mother that he's going to ask grandma if his mum was always good when she was little! Work as you

⁴ During the war, schools in Germany were closed in particularly cold winters in order to save on coal for heating.

⁵ The devastating raid on Lübeck was carried out by 234 aircraft on the night of 29 March, 1942. Visibility was excellent which allowed crews to descend to 2000 feet, thus increasing the accuracy of their bombs. Targeting was centred on the densely built Altstadt (Old Town) with its half-timbered houses. Two thirds of the bombs were incendiaries and therefore significant damage was done by fire. German sources estimated that 62 percent of buildings in the city were either destroyed or damaged, many of them of inestimable cultural value. According to Arthur Harris, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Bomber Command, the experience showed that Lübeck was "built more like a fire-lighter than a human habitation." (Terraine, John. *The Right of the Line: The Royal Air Force in the European War 1939 – 45*. London, 1988. 476. Quoted in Friedrich, 71.) Over 300 people were killed in the attack on Lübeck – the highest toll inflicted on a German city until that point in the war. (BCWD, 251 - 252)

⁶ According to the Bomber Command War Diaries, the city of Münster in North-Rhine Westphalia had been hit three times in the twelve months prior to this diary entry: there were four raids from 5 – 9 July with 45 people killed, and a further five people died in a raid on 22 – 23 January 1942. (BCWD, 158 ff)

⁷ The major raids on Cologne in 1942 prior to this diary entry were: 13 – 14 February (thick cloud and little bombing); 13 – 14 March (62 killed and 237 fires started); 5 – 6 April (23 killed); 22 – 23 April (4 killed). (BCWD, 235 – 259)

will, the clock will still get round to 11 pm again! Child, dearest, how are you? Do you sense that my last thought today again is with you? ...

For Pentecost we sat quietly at home. I haven't been at all well in the last few months, larynx, bronchial catarrh, a painful bladder infection. One is getting so old and so terribly tired. How long will this dreadful war go on? For the first time we are using the lovely suitcase we bought in Elberfeld⁸ for a visit to Spain. Will we ever be able to visit you, where, when? Life is dreadfully, dreadfully tough ...

30 /9 / 42 My darling, darling I haven't opened this book for so long – we've had to cope with so many difficulties in the last few months – so enormous is the desire to hear from you both just once: that you are alive, are happy together, have a living, don't have less to eat than us – Child, why did we have to lose you? How terribly lonely our life has become. If you could only see Father: 113 pounds, perhaps even less now in his suit, an old man, and so tired. He's not needed anywhere, all his honorary positions have been taken from him - his lodge⁹ – Life is not easy! Don't let me say anything about Grainau. We did what we could: spent very little money, looked after the children with love and care from 6.30 in the morning to 8 in the evening. Then I was often sewing until 12 at night because none of the clothes were in order. Ernst arrived to check up on things after we'd been there for five weeks. I can't describe to you how he treated us. Anyway, Dorothee arrived a few

⁸ A district in the city of Wuppertal.

⁹ The term "lodge" refers to Konrad's membership of a Masonic lodge. (See also a similar reference in the entry of 30 January 1943.) Although Freemasonry tended to draw its members from middle-class professionals, a demographic that was generally well-disposed to Hitler, the movement was viewed with some suspicion by the Nazi Party because of its "internationalism, its egalitarian and tolerant ideology, its ties to Jewish history [...] and its esotericism" (Thomas, Chris. "Defining "Freemason": Compromise, Pragmatism, and German Lodge Members in the NSDAP." *German Studies Review* 35.3 (2012): 587–605. 588.) In the early days of the Nazi regime there was a blanket ban on Freemasons joining the Party or holding responsible positions in the state apparatus, but this hard line softened over time as it became evident that the skills of the highly qualified and experienced Freemasons were much in demand. In order to join the Party in Germany, Freemasons had to have left their lodge before January 30, 1933 (the date of Hitler's accession to power) and to sign a declaration that they had renounced forever the principles of Freemasonry. Further, anyone who aspired to a position of responsibility in the civil service must not have held a senior office or rank within their lodge (though there was a waiver for honorary positions). These rules, however, were frequently revised and were never administered consistently throughout the various German regions or by senior officials charged with staffing their departments. Furthermore, each new edict on Freemasonry was always accompanied by the qualification that an individual could appeal his exclusion from the Party or public office directly to the Führer. By the early 1940s, policy on Freemasons was less governed by ideological considerations than it was by pure pragmatism:

At every step along the way, "exceptions permitted" accompanied each new policy, paving the way for the next policy shift. What few restrictions remained (e.g. barring from office) were enforced so sporadically that "enforcement" is not even the right word. Those in charge of carrying out the policy recognized the value of keeping the men, even if they had belonged to a Masonic lodge, and either refused to carry out the order or campaigned vigorously to keep the Freemason in question in his office. (Thomas, 600)

Charlotte seems to imply here that her husband was not able to carry out even honorary work because of his status as a Freemason. It would certainly have been the case that formal work, particularly in the civil service, would not have been open to him if he had not renounced Freemasonry before January 30, 1933 and had not been granted an exemption. From 1939, however, any Mason who was already working in an honorary position did not have to meet these criteria – provided he had left his lodge. (Thomas, 593) If Konrad Angermann could indeed not work in an honorary capacity, it may have been because he had not formally abandoned Freemasonry. However, this assumption would be at odds with his curriculum vitae. He had been mayor of Langenberg in 1933, and the fact that he continued to hold a senior position in the municipal administration there even after the Nazis' reform of local government, indicates that he was probably regarded as politically acceptable.

days after, imitated Ernst and we left for home, we'd had enough. The children were so sweet, they clung to us, and they felt so comfortable in the little bit of homeliness we always took the trouble to create for them. A little bit like what you had at home. Although Dorothee always let us feel how little we cared for you two – And you, child, you said to us in those difficult years in Cologne: what would I have if I hadn't at least had those lovely, carefree days of my youth! Apparently you were completely neglected, even your health – we often sit together and ask how it was possible that Dorothee was so lost to us, that there is no road back to us. It is as if Ernst Schnabel were an alien presence that has come between us. Father is at an end with Ernst. How sorry I am for him – the children are so terribly dear to us. We felt sorry for Peter. He was grumpy and discontented, almost certainly homesick, feels all at sea and ill at ease with himself. This nanny, Martha, has got to such a stage that I wouldn't trust her with my children for 4 weeks.

Sybille is a charming thing, a ray of sunshine, we were the best of friends. It meant a lot to us to be allowed to have the children on our own. But it will probably never happen again – On the trip home we visited Uncle Edgar¹⁰ and Aunt Erna¹¹ in Augsburg, a married couple, unworried, well-groomed, a fabulous household. Father thought of the days he spent with you in Augsburg! It made a sorry impression: the churches empty, the portals and fountains boarded up¹² as they were in Nuremberg where we saw the Party Rally Grounds. There are no words for it – I sat there like a poor dwarf while Father ran around and thought myself in ancient Rome – the new Congress Hall is like a Roman forum and the access road is supposed to be 80 m wide, built from stone blocks. It's as if you were dreaming. The silk Party flags are so big and so heavy that they can only be hoisted electrically. Nowhere do you feel so pathetic as you do in the midst of these gigantic buildings - ¹³

¹⁰ Edgar Ludwig Theodor Angermann (1882 – 1963). A first cousin of Konrad Angermann. For further information on Edgar Angermann, see Charlotte's family tree at the end of this journal.

¹¹ Edgar's wife, Erna Angermann *née* Goldstedt.

¹² Monuments were boarded up to protect them from bomb damage.

¹³ Nuremberg was chosen as the site for the Nazi Party Rally Grounds because it was a well preserved late medieval city and therefore could be used to represent the National Socialists' ideas of German history. The aesthetic unity of Nuremberg's cityscape, Hitler believed, derived from the absolute social unity of medieval life in which the various corporate elements (peasants, town-dwellers, tradespeople, the military, aristocracy and so on) were completely integrated, and in which personal identity, and a sense of life's purpose, were conferred by one's social position. This fantasy of a lost social coherence was to be restored in the Nazis' political programme and architecture would play a crucial part. The giant urban project launched by the Party in the southeast of Nuremberg in 1935 was intended to provide a series of spaces in which this idea of an absolutely unified national body could be realized by staging events "in which spectacle and architecture might combine to legitimate and glorify the regime, enhance the personal charisma of Adolf Hitler and imbue amongst the masses a strong sense of National Socialist community and purpose." (Hagen J, Ostergren R. "Spectacle, architecture and place at the Nuremberg Party Rallies: projecting a Nazi vision of past, present and future." *cultural geographies*. 2006;13(2):157-181. 158) The Congress Hall, which Charlotte refers to here, was never completed. The design was indeed intended to echo the Colosseum but also to surpass it in scale: sixty metres high and built of pure granite, it was to seat 60 000 with a further 2 400 seats on the stage and sufficient space for 900 standards, which would be manipulated with the latest electronic technology. (Taylor, Robert R. *The Word in Stone. The Role of Architecture in the National Socialist Ideology*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1974. 172) The Große Straße (Great Road) was also built of granite and, after completion in 1939, ran for two kilometres between the Luitpoldfeld (Luitpold Field), with its capacity of 120 000, to the much larger parade ground of the Märzfeld (March Field), which could accommodate 500 000. Due to the war, much of the Nuremberg project was never completed. Today, the Congress Hall houses a documentation centre on the Rally Grounds and provides space for the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra. Recently (January 2022) there has been a controversy over whether the Congress Hall was an appropriate place for the Nuremberg

Now we've been back home for months, we worry about you. Like everybody we brood over what on earth is going to happen and fill our days with work at home and all this awful running about to do our chores. On Monday Father gets the potatoes, and queues up a long, long time for them. Then he gets our 1/8 [l] of low-fat milk. Every day. On Wednesday we go to a market garden a long way away to get some vegetables because in the shop they're only available once a week depending on your number in the queue. There you sit on a box – to be recommended for all gall bladder sufferers - in all weathers for 1 ½ hours before they open up at 3 o'clock – In the meantime, almost 50 and more women gather. 12 are let in and whoever doesn't make it in with the second lot is out of luck. It's the same with getting fish or cake. Oh, what has happened to our wonderful Germany! The air-raid suitcase stands ready in the bedroom. And I often wonder whether you have seen all this awful destruction in the newsreels at the cinema: Cologne, Düsseldorf¹⁴, Kassel¹⁵, Oberhausen.¹⁶ Oh, such endless misery on both sides!

1 / 11 / 42 My darling, it is a miserable Sunday – gloomy, foggy, cold and wet, rain the whole day – one must give thanks to the Lord in the midst of all this misery that one still has walls that are still standing and a warm room. At least there's some comfort at home. – Just to have one word from you, how you are. One gets sometimes quite desperate. Now I'm sitting night after night working on a beautiful cross-stitch cushion, your Christmas present. You once said: if I had time I'd work on a cushion like that. Will you ever get it? There's the wool fur blanket, the big hem-stitched tablecloth, a silver candlestick and a silver thimble. The cushion is being added in '42. Oh, how we miss you, dear, dear child! One day passes like another – life is no longer worth living. Looking after the house is getting more and more difficult. No washing powder, no mops, no washing-up brushes, no floor wax, no scrubbing brush. Everything is breaking down, stockings, shoes, underwear. Clothes just hang off you and you get wrinkled and grey. The bread is hard to cope with and there's only cabbage or kohlrabi, lots of potatoes – and we have to be grateful that we have those! Gall bladder pain, awful back pain, diarrhoea and vomiting, bladder infection from standing for hours in the rain – we crawl into bed at 9 o'clock and are glad that another day is over. We wonder how you are? On Monday Peter turned 7. The dear boy! We haven't heard anything from Dorothee for 4 weeks. We assume she's in Grainau – and then a brief letter arrives – one grows further and further apart and that's hard. If she were to say just once: come to Berlin – the last time we were there was in June

City Council to build a temporary structure to house the city's opera company. (Olaf Przybilla, "Ein millionenschwerer Kulturbau auf einstigem NS-Gelände?" *Süddeutsche Zeitung Online*, 16 January 2022. <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/nuernberg-oper-ns-kongresshalle-denkmalschutz-1.5506891> Accessed: 16 January 2022)

¹⁴ Düsseldorf was targeted by 479 aircraft on the night of 10 – 11 September. All parts of the city were hit except the north. Damage to both industry and residential structures was severe: there were 132 people killed in Düsseldorf and Neuss, with 116 others classified as missing. Over 19 000 people were bombed out of their homes. (BCWD, 308) In August, police reported that many people were "dismembered beyond recognition and often severely carbonised due to the fires burning beneath the rubble." (Hüttenberger, Peter. *Düsseldorf. Geschichte von den Anfängen bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*. Düsseldorf, 1989. 3:634. Quoted in Friedrich, 219.) According to Jörg Friedrich, rescue and recovery teams needed to numb themselves with alcohol in order to carry out their tasks. (Friedrich, 219)

¹⁵ Kassel was bombed by 306 aircraft on the night of 27 – 28 August and damage was widespread, with 144 buildings destroyed and a further 317 seriously damaged. Unusually, more soldiers than civilians were killed – 28 as opposed to 15. Destruction could have been worse as many bombs fell outside the city in woods and fields. (BCWD, 303)

¹⁶ Oberhausen, a city in the Ruhr, was badly bombed on the night of 1 – 2 June 1942 as part of a series of attacks on industrial targets; 83 people were killed in this raid. (BCWD, 283)

'40. And it's so close. Father suffers terribly from that. Well, you have to get over that too like you do over so many other things – How we miss you!

Christmas 1942. My darling, today I can't write – my desire for you is so gigantic and so utterly tiny is my hope of seeing you again – We are quite alone: old and alone! In the afternoon we were at vespers in the Church of Our Lady. It was closed for years because of building work. Now it has emerged again in all its glory.¹⁷ Everything as it used to be. Only the lovely gold cross on the altar is missing! We didn't know that it's now the seat of the German Christians.¹⁸ So it was just a ceremony without any mention of God. But the singing of the Kreuzschule¹⁹ choir was magnificent. We gave ourselves a good book as a present, we're going to bed to read. Our thoughts are with you, and with Dorothee and the children. May the Lord grant that you are in good health, that you are doing well, that you are having just a little German Christmas ...

¹⁷ Decay had necessitated more or less constant restoration work on the Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) in the first part of the twentieth century. In 1937, heavy rains caused water to enter the main cupola and cracks and damage were evident in the interior cupola. The following year the church closed for four years for general refurbishment. This work included broadening the base of the interior piers, sealing cracks in the brickwork of the cupola by injecting cement, and partially removing the paintings on the cupola. As indicated in Charlotte's entry, repair work, which also encompassed a renovation of the interior, lasted until 1943. <https://frauenkirche.de/geschichte.html> Accessed 15 December 2020

¹⁸ See Charlotte's entries for 23 August 1940 and 21 May 1945.

¹⁹ One of Germany's oldest schools, founded as a grammar school for members of the Church of the Holy Cross (Kreuzkirche) choir.