

REMINISCING

I have set myself on a formidable undertaking. I was dissatisfied with the way I had written some chapters of my biography. Since I had done most of the work in a hurry, always worrying that I would not live long enough to finish the work, I had left out important parts and that I want to correct now.

What I want to do first is to show what enormous luck Lisa, Paul, and Francis had, when they came out of France and over to Cuba. If that man Agramonte*^(see page 321) in Havana, Cuba had come to me two months later, or more exact one month and 17 days later, it would have been too late for Francis, Lisa, and Paul, and they would not be alive today.

I will bring certain details and have therefore to go through some books which I have and especially the book "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" by William L. Shirer, from which I will have to cite certain parts.

I have to go back to the German-French armistice agreement, which was signed on June 22, 1940. The main points were that the French army would lay down their arms and that the soldiers would become prisoners-of-war in Germany and would be sent home after a peace agreement was signed, which meant, since the war lingered on till 1945, that they would be kept as war prisoners for 5 years. Another more important point of the armistice agreement was that France was divided in two zones, the occupied zone in the north and west and the un-occupied zone in the east and south under the regime of Petain with the seat in Vichy. A third point was that the French fleet would not be used in the war and would be stationed in French ports under German supervision. Like almost all of Hitler's promises this one too would be broken. The French were considering plans to form a French government-in-exile in French North Africa, the plan being defeated in the end not by the Germans but by the French defeatists Petain, Weygand, and

Laval. Hitler did not trust these people and had the idea they will come over to him and help him fight the Allies.

A fourth point was that all the refugees in France had to be delivered to the Germans. This point was not accepted by the French. Hitler considered them as very dangerous and wanted to get hold of them. Weygand called this dishonorable in view of the French tradition of the right of asylum, but when it was discussed the next day the arrogant general Keitel would not listen to its being deleted. "The German emigrants" he shouted were "the greatest warmongers. They must be handed over at all costs".

A plan under the code word "Anton" was prepared, which consisted of breaking the armistice agreement and ^{the} occupation of the rest of France.

Hitler was now at the zenith of his military power with most of the European Continent at his feet, his victorious armies stretched from the Pyrenees to the Arctic Circle, from the Atlantic to beyond the Vistula, rested now and ready for further action. He had no idea how to go on and bring the war to a victorious conclusion. Nor had his generals. A peace offer to England was rejected. Hitler's speech was a masterpiece and no strings attached. He says he sees no reason why this war should go on. "If it does, it's England's fault." Landings in England were considered by the generals, but given up as too difficult to undertake. Germany was not prepared for it. The generals feared a colossal debacle and it was temporarily postponed. Instead a massive bombardment of England was planned to bring England down. Thus, at the height of dizzy success, Hitler and his captains hesitated. They had not thought out the next step and how it was to be carried through. This fateful neglect would prove to be one of the great turning points of the war and indeed of the short life of the Third Reich and of the meteoric career of Adolf Hitler. Failure after so many stupendous

victories was now to set in. Beleaguered Britain, now holding out alone, girded herself with what small means she had for the German onslaught at the summer's end.

Thus, though Hitler had put off a decision on the invasion, he had by no means abandoned it. Give the Luftwaffe another few days to finish off the R.A.F. and demoralize London, and the landing then could take place. It would bring final victory. So, once again all depended on Goering's Air Force.

There came bad times for the Germans; first the breakdown of the army at Stalingrad with a loss of $1\frac{1}{2}$ million troops and enormous stretches of territory and second the loss of the Rommel army in North Africa. In addition, a huge British expeditionary force, consisting of hundreds of ships loaded with troops and war materiel, which had come from England, went into the Mediterranean and had started to land troops in Algiers. It was the right moment to intercept the rest of the retreating Rommel army, which had been beaten at El Alamein by the British under generals Montgomery and Alexander. In that bad situation Hitler could be helped by getting command of the French fleet; it would have amounted to a turning point, the regain of power in the Mediterranean.

Now to the main part of my task. The date of the signing of the armistice agreement was June 22, 1940. It was broken on November 10, 1941, when the Germans invaded the un-occupied part of France and went south in a hurry to the outskirts of Toulon, where the French fleet was tied up since the armistice. On the 27th of November 1941 German troops attacked Toulon, but French sailors held them up long enough to allow the crews, on the order of admiral delaborde to scuttle the ships. The French fleet was thus lost to the Axis, which badly needed its warships in the Mediterranean, but it was denied also to the Allies, to whom it would have been a most valuable addition.

With the invasion of the un-occupied zone of France by the Germans the terror started for the thousands of Jews, German, Austrian, Polish, Hungarian and for the French Jews too. Very few survived, after having been rounded up and shipped to the extermination camps in Poland. The Germans had some Jews in jails and they were the first to be deported. Hedy's cousin Jaques Ziegler, who was in Vienna director of the Rothchild Bank was taken away and so were his wife Trude and daughter Dorli. Some people in Southern France who could make it to the Swiss border, could escape. Paul Rosegg was also one of the lucky ones. We had sent him a Cuban visa, which he picked up in Cannes. He was supposed to register with the police, but he did not do it and moved to another place for the last few days, so that the police would not find him. He was lucky to get on a ship in Marseille, which went to Morocco, and there he got on another boat which went to Cuba. Less lucky were three other relatives of Hedy, who were in Nice. The parents of Erich and John Forster and Erich himself were picked up by the police. At first Erich and his mother Elsa were picked up in the street. Erich's father, worried that they did not come home, went the next day to the police to ask what had happened to them and he was there arrested and never seen again. Erich has a terrible story to tell, how he and his mother were deported to Poland into an extermination camp, but that he, being young and strong, was separated from her and put into a slave labor ^{group}, where he survived. Towards the end of the war, the Germans emptied the camps before the Russians arrived, and the internees had to march for days with rest periods at night. Once they were put in a big barn, the doors locked from outside and the barn put on fire. The Germans were outside shooting at some who succeeded to get out. Erich, young and strong could swing himself up on beams to a window high up and got out, letting himself fall down to the ground and crawling into something like a pigsty. They shot at him and he got away with a wound in the groin.

When he arrived in the United States, his wound in the groin was still open and I removed a tiny piece of bone, probably loosened by the bullet from the crest of the pelvis. He is now a professor for chemistry at Rutgers University, head of a ^{a wonderful} family of wife and 6 wonderful children. The story of "the finest" of the French police; I would like to read a book about them.

Now back to my main task. I don't remember the exact date when Mr. Agramonte came to me the first time. I remember that he came 10 days later, when I went with him to the dentist and after that about three weeks later to tell me that he was cured, that the attacks of trigeminal neuralgia had not come back anymore and that I then went with him to a notary public, from there to the immigration department and then ~~to~~ to the State Department, which sent the cable to the Cuban consul in Nice. This date I have because I have the copy of the telegram which I had sent on the same day to Lisa to inform her that the telegram to the Cuban consul in Nice is on its way. The date is the 21st of April 1941. On the 21st of May, 1941 I received a telegram from Lisa, in which she informed me that the telegram had not arrived yet. I went to the State Department, and they found out or perhaps knew already that the first telegram which they had sent to Nice could not have arrived, because they had sent it by mistake to Nice and the Cuban consul was not in Nice, but ^{They now sent another telegram to the consul in Cannes.} in Cannes. On June 14th I received again a telegram from Lisa, in which she notified me that the telegram had not arrived yet. One more telegram arrived from Lisa, dated June 21 with the good news that the visa had arrived. That we were very unhappy on account of these delays is understandable. We were also in contact with Lisa by writing frequently to her and receiving letters from her, assuring us that they were in contact with the organization Hicem in Marseille and that they will procure the voyage passes for them without having to pay anything. The next telegram from Lisa came on August 14th, which said that they got the tickets

for the next ship but that the date was uncertain. All these dates show how slowly progress was made. It took from April 21 till August 14 that they got the tickets for the boat, 4 month in all and they still did not know when they would get on a boat. According to an addition to my biography, written by Lisa, they were in September still in Nice. They got on the boat "Villa de Madrid" on October 1st and arrived in Havana on October 12th. They must have left France on or about September 23rd and it took them one week to get to Lisbon.

This is the date I wanted to find, which shows that they had left France 47 days or one month and 17 days before the German invasion of the un-occupied zone. The various delays with the visa and the tickets for the boat could have meant disaster. The first visa-telegram was sent on May 21 and the real order to write the visa arrived on June 21. It took another 54 days till they got the tickets for the boat and another 39 days till they left France. There must have been a Guardian Angel at work, who saved their lives.

UNSCHULD

Ihr armen Schwerhoerigen,
Ihr Nichtswisser, Ihr die
Niemand etwas hoertet von
Gaskammern, von Millionen
Morden.

Die niemals Eure Maenner,
Eure Vaeter fragtet: "Wie
Viele hast Du heute umgebracht,
Wie viele Frauen, wie viele Kinder?
Wo hast Du all das Geld her,
All die schoenen Kleider, all
Die Oelgemaelde, das Klavier?"

Ihr Armen, Ihr wusstet nichts,
Ihr fragt nicht.

Ihr koennt sagen: "Ach wie schoen
Ist das Leben, Das Reisen, der
Wagen, das wunderbare Essen und
Die Stadt ohne Juden. Wir haben
Reine Haende."

INNOCENCE

You poor hard-of hearing,
You not-knowers, you who never
Heard anything about gas-chambers,
About millions of killings.

Who never asked your husbands, your
Fathers: "How many did you kill today,
How many women, how many children?
Where did you get all that money from,
All the fine cloths, all the oil
Paintings, the piano?"

You poor souls! You did not know
Anything, you did not ask.

You can say: "Oh how beautiful is life,
travelling, the car, the fine food,
And the city without Jews. We have
Clean hands."