

CHAPTER 36
MORE LETTERS FROM THE PARENTS.

We were all the time in close contact with the parents in Poland. We received letters frequently, sometimes via Julius Ziegler in Vienna, sometimes via a Dr. Wyler in Zuerich, who knew Annie Goldschmied at the time, when she was in Zuerich. I find it necessary to bring here some letters of the parents, to show how they fared during all these months.

First a letter from my mother-in-law, dated October 2nd, 1941:

"My heartily loved children:

Now, finally, you are all, except Erich, together! Wednesday evening, that means yesterday, we received a telegram

from Julius, bringing us enormous joy, announcing your, dear Lisa and Franzerl, happy arrival. Immediately, I imagined that I was with you, your being together, - with a little bit of melancholy. But the main thing is, thanks to your ability, dear Adolph, that it was achieved; and stones had dropped from our hearts. We are all right, the same as before, although we get now less mail from Minny, Karl, Terry. Fall came relatively early, although the last days were summer days. Two letters we received from you, dear Lisa, written while you were on the way. Did the young woman, whom you had met, write to her parents? Thanks God, Papa is healthy and again natty as before. Franzerl will be a little less satisfied with me, as I had gotten a little grayer. Unfortunately, we now hear from you nothing else, since you wrote us. I would be very interested to hear about the fate of aunt Betty and Hansi. From aunt Susi I got a very kind letter and a love-parcel. She learnt about everything very late. I also had to shorten my dresses and made narrower, which was done by the daughter of a seamstress, our former landlady. Aunt Klemi writes, how they all miss us. Aunt Elsa Z. has much to worry about all her children. We worry very much about Jaques. Lise Mueller is faring best. Julius got very nervous on account of the happenings of the last months. I am reassured by the fact that Antoinette is brave at his side, and helping him to withstand everything better. Marianne and Leon are hopefully well, and he can expect new progress. Now we are expecting your reports, dear Adolph, and what kind of effort will be necessary to get to the country you are aiming at. Now you have again your Franzerl, who is supposed to be a model boy. And Hannerl her

big brother. I have now to imagine everything that I would have loved to see and hear. I press you all at my heart, which is full of longing for you, and kiss you again and again.

Your Mama"

With the same date, a letter from my father-in-law:

"Beloved children, Lisa, Franzerl, already included. The quick, happy landing of both is first of all to be thanked to the energetic initiative of you, dear Adolph, but then also to the special travel-ability of Lisa, the excellently perfected travel agent. I would not have imagined as possible that accomplishment. We were yesterday, the day of atonement, all day long, abstaining from food and drink, in the temple of this place, with very primitive, for us strange public worship. I said dutifully Kadisch after my mother. It was the 75th day of death of my mother, your grandmother, and birthday of dear uncle Marcus. In the evening came the telegram from Julius, announcing the happy landing of Lisa and Franzerl. We were happy, our worries for the two during their voyage removed. Now we know you happily united. You can now at last press your dear Franzerl at your heart, after having been torn away from you for three years, post tot discrimina rerum, as it is said in the Aeneide. The youngster, with his 10 years, has really gone through and seen a lot, has behind himself a three-years Odyssey. Now he will be again guarded and guided^{by his parents.} Lisa was doubtless an excellent substitute for you during all that time of his separation from you. The boy, already experienced in life, will now see a new world, a new fauna and flora. His proneness for natural science, as always shown, his talents, will now under the proved guidance of Papa further

develop and broaden. But it has to be done with moderation. It is one of my motifs "Much is the enemy of good". Thus, Franzel will, after having gone through a rough school of being torn away from the parents, be able to take the quiet, favorable road through life. May God help! I can not comprehend, how Lisa could overcome all the immense difficulties of the voyage from Nizza to Havana. The description of the experiences during the voyage will be very, very interesting. We received from her already a report from Lisbon. It proves certainly the positive triumph and progress of humanity, that it is possible nowadays to cross in a very short time hemispheres and oceans, and that old barriers fall off. Be embraced, all dear children, in the mind, saluted and kissed from

Papa and Grandpapa."

Very often, when I wrote to the parents, I asked Johanna and later also Francis to dictate a few lines for them, and since I have copies of all the letters that I wrote to them, I will bring here translations of some of their chatter.

Here first a little note from Johanna from July 5th, 1941, when she was 5 years old:

"Dear grandmama and grandpapa!

You should soon come here. At night, when I am already lying in bed, I always pray for you that you should soon come here. And at the end I always say: Amen! Dear grandpapa, are you already well? When I get up in the morning, then I get dressed fast, and pack my things, and go to Hortensia, and they take my things and we sit and wait for the auto, and we go then to the Playa. There I play first with the sand and then I go into the water. And in the water I walk

about and I cower and jump like a little rabbit. We go home by bus, at noon I am already at home. We have many cockroaches, but Papa kills them all. Yesterday it rained very hard, and it thundered and lightened, and suddenly the lightening struck nearby, and I have a friend and I thought that her house will collapse, and I was very insulted. My friends name is Teresita Pina Esposito and she is a very good child, but she is a little naughty. When her mama says something to her, she does not hear, not even for a moment. But otherwise, she is very good and she likes me very much and still more Hortensia, because Hortensia is still little. Today, we all were at Paecht, that is a coffeehouse, and we met there Mr. and Mrs. Wechsler. I got there chiclets, which is chewing gum, and chocolate with nuts. I drank there orange juice, with a straw, and water, two glasses. Now I am finishing and I go to bed, because I am sleepy. Good night, and I will write more to you to-morrow, a long letter.

Many pussis Hannerl."

Now a letter, dictated by both, Hannerl and Francis on October 15th, 1941:

"Dear grandpapa and grandmama!

I send you many pussis. Francis and Lisa have already arrived, and we have again the telephone, before we did not have one. It is very beautiful here. Francis and I sleep in the same room, and Francis got a new mosquito-net, and Lisa sleeps in another room, my aunt. And in all the rooms the walls have been painted, and they have painted them beautifully. Francis has caught already many butterflies on the meadow, and I was already at the dentist, but he did not do anything for me, put only a little iodine into a tooth. I

was in the movie, saw "Snow-White" and the "3 Piggies". And then I saw the bull and the duck. For my birthday I got beautiful white, high shoes. And now Francis will write.

Hannerl."

"I did not write to you for a terribly long time, and I am dictating for the second time into the machine. Today, Hannerl and I have played all day long with the Matador. I have a crane, a truck, a railroad with waggons, and I have made a swing. I have come to Cuba with the "Villa de Madrid", and when the ship arrived, I was not allowed to go down. Lisa had thought that there was nobody there, but I noticed that Mama and Hannerl were near the grate and we beckoned to each other. Hannerl jumped high up when she saw me. I have read the birthday-letter, which you wrote to her and it was very beautiful. How are you? I am very well, as I have never felt in my life. Mama is very, very nice to me. I am catching here beautiful butterflies. Hannerl has started to save money, so that you will be able to come to Cuba. Hannerl is a smart, thickish girl (Dickerl) and I like her very much. I am learning English with mama at home, and I know already a lot. Write to me also soon again. Many, many pussis from

Franzi."

These little letters from the children were greatly enjoyed by the parents. We received very frequently letters from them and wrote them long letters, also Lisa. But after America had entered the war the connection was less good and we received mail from them directly only sporadically, most of the time via Julius. They led a relatively quiet life there, had no direct contact with the Germans, at least never

wrote about it, could take walks in the woods, as mother once wrote, and father could bathe in a river nearby. In this respect they were even better off than other Jewish people, who were exposed and harrassed by the beasts.

And there was for a long time the hope that they would one day leave that place and join us in Cuba. We also believed it for a long time and wrote to them about our endeavours to get Cuban visas for them. Not that we wanted to mislead them, certainly not. We thought that it would be possible to get the visas at the Cuban consulate or embassy in Berlin, and that the only difficulty for them would be to get the permission to travel to Berlin.

How wrong we were! We did not know then, found out later that none of these people, in the situation in which they were, deportees in Poland, could ever get out of that area. I wrote before of that devilish plan, hatched out in the Reichs-Chancellery by Hitler and consorts and executed by Adolf Eichmann. I wrote about the "Concentration Camp Leopoldstadt", but that was only one part of that plan, PART 1, and there were three parts. PART 2 was the deportation and settlement of the deportees in small towns and villages in that area in Poland, where our parents were, and then came PART 3, about 1½ years later, which I will describe in the following pages in detail, using also letters of the parents to explain better what developed.

Toward the middle of the summer of 1942 their situation changed, in the first place their food supply, as the relatives in Tchechoslovakia, Minny, Grete, Karl and probably also Terry were also deported, and nothing came from there anymore.

There were only Julius and Antoinette left and the friends Mr. and Mrs. Welzl. And in the second place something else, rumors, which were circulating and were brought to them too and alarmed them, rumors about things that happened to people in neighboring villages.

Here is a letter from mother to Julius, without date:

"My dear Julius!

I thought I can bring you better news, but instead the rumors get thicker about our further wandering. When it will come to that, I will certainly be more quiet. But the great worries about uncle, since they talk about separation of men and women, then to find the best of the few things one is allowed to take along! Unfortunately, we have no thermos bottles. Perhaps one can get it here in Ostrowiec. People spend the nights dressed. Karl wrote that they will travel at the middle of November.

Please tell Klementine, she should forbid energetically to write to her directly. I should send somebody to the post office to get the card back. Besides, his loud discussions; writing, etc. are driving me to despair. I am still going to mail the letter, am closing therefore. Embracing and kissing
you, your aunt Gina."

And here another letter to Julius, dated August 17, 1942:

"My dear Julius!

With a heavy heart I wrote today. The news or rather rumors are coming closer to realization with giant strides. Remember Miss Baj. if you want to know something. Just now, she is going to Zakopane; I am sorry as I would have needed her now. But she herself is frightened. I don't have to

tell you: don't send anything anymore. I want to thank you and Antoinette thousand times. You have helped us to make our lives bearable. What will now be with us I don't know. Perhaps we have a guardian angel. But I am afraid that my heart will not endure much more. My whole worry is poor, good uncle. What does he still have to endure, at his age? The redemption before is almost more desirable! Money we have, that will perhaps be the only thing that we can take along - if we get away, but it is possible that we will end up here. You will find out about it in any case. Let us hope you will be spared. Thanks to dear Klementine for all her love! I know how difficult it is for her, but she should set her teeth and endure. I would like to write more, but I have palpitations. Thank also dear Hugo for us, he did more than he could, and all the others. I kiss you.

Your aunt Gina."

I have a few more letters and postcards from the parents and I want to bring them here. These are the last ones they had written. After all, this is a family biography and the parents were the center of our family, the main persons. So, for those readers, who are not interested, there is the possibility to skip these few pages and go to the next chapter.

Here again a letter from mother, dated September 24, 1942:

My dear Julius!

Just now came your dear letter with letter from dear Olly. For these good news I thank you very much. After all, you are right, considering the fact that the children, and I hope dear Erich also, are all right, we should endure our destiny calmer. Unfortunately, it is not anymore like last year,

when it was easier to stay calm, but now the nerves are not anymore that strong. No day, no night is anymore like then. From Olly's letter I learn that she is corresponding with Hella, even very fast, since she already knows that you had moved. But she does not write whether she is also informed about our children. I would be so happy to know that Lisa is happy and well provided for. But I think I have now only feelings of fear! How can it be, if one does not have that anymore! Dear Antoinette seems to make even from a W - - burg a jewellery box? I thank her for all her efforts, which are more than that - You can believe me that I can understand that very well and each time I read it get strong heart beats. Your letter had this time the postmark of the 20th, and had arrived fast. We don't hear since a long time from Klementine. From Lise Mueller you also don't hear anything? That is the way I assessed her! From the nearby villages one hears about removals! Alfred wrote again; unfortunately there is now not anymore sending of packages possible in the General Gouvernement (Tchechoslovakia). Hugo will try to send him warm underwear. Did I write to you that our landlady has raised our rent to 100.- zloty? We can not do anything about it. May God help us that we will always be able to pay it and for a long time and that we will come from here to our children. We have now much luck with the weather. One can not really dare to prepare heating material. I again write the address of Suzanne: Marie Perin, 10, rue de Vignes, Plateau d'Avron, Neuilly Plaisance, S.et O. We hope that Trude and Dorly are well, also poor Jaques. If Suzanne gives any information, you will let us know. Many greeting and kisses to both of you, stay happy and healthy.

Your grateful aunt Gina."

An addition of a few lines to that letter from father:

"Our Best! We write in some nervous unrest, especially aunt, since there are rumors circulating about possible changes of domicile. I am taking that calmer and surrendering to destiny. Please confirm, dear Julius, whether you received my letter with addition for dear Klementine, and whether you are finding yourself troubled on account of our frequent letters. I am indifferent, despising all being and happenings. May God be with you as with us. With all love

Uncle Benj.

And another letter of mother, dated September 28th, 1942:

"My very loved ones!

I am thinking over, whether I should send you this letter, which I wrote one month ago - it is again very actual! Now it has been postponed, they say, for one month, but "with destiny's powers....etc." I gave various good things to Byha. One has, as one walks and stays, to march - for us it means death. Uncle is not able to do that (to run). One has to be quick and must not be old! The last day was almost our end. A miracle happened. Perhaps another one happens! If I would only have news from the children and others! I live on the Valeriana pills. God may save you from all that. Then, if you will perhaps talk to my children, tell them especially what kind of angels you have been for us at the time when we needed it most urgently - Landlers and Neustadt! in the beginning - you at the end! Uncle is much more composed than I, but I am mainly so excited on account of uncle. My heart has to withstand enormous demands - I can not find repose. The other day uncle told me: "When I see the butterflies...", more I

don't need to tell you. Suzanne does not want it that one writes to her - M.P. is her housekeeper. Today there was once again no mail. From Hugo there should come a package from the 10th, till today nothing came. Please don't reclaim yours. Write to us how your home is. Is Dr. Mueller still there? Altogether anybody? What kind of floor did you have to have made. So, what do you think about a wonder? Greetings and kisses for you. I gave also your address to a neighbor (Volks-Deutsche), since she speaks German. She will have the things of Karl and Grete in case of deportation! (Schaffransky - Fri-seur).
Your grateful Aunt Gina."

Now a postcard to Julius from father, with same date:

"Dearest best children! You exhaustively informing card of the 23rd received, many thanks for it. Marie Perin is the housekeeper for many years at the Feingolds. Suzanne lives in the house with her little one, and mama Louise Feingold, under the last name, does not live under the name of her former husband. I can not tell you more, since I have read the notice in the news about less stringent measures regarding your loved ones. Hopefully you will soon receive confirmations from them. Thanks for the sending on of the letter to Klementine, still more to good Antoinette. Since she wants personally to go to Mrs. Welzl: it will perhaps be quite a rewarding fall excursion. Thousand thanks for the extraordinary goodness of dear Antoinette. With a further letter to our children I take my time. We are in the meantime happy about the news of dear Olly via a connection of dear Anny. Perhaps it will be possible to use this way again successfully. Thank, dear Julius, the good Nitra people in our name for the forwarding of

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the message. We wish them all the best, They may remain favorably inclined toward us. Dear Ernst should remember now, as he is putting so much effort into his work, my previous advice of treatment methods with cold water. In any case we beg for further, even indirect transmission of news to us. Dear Gina is on account of disquieting rumors out of psychic equilibrium, but there is now calmness prevalent. So, greetings from house to house, but not meant houses, firmly constructed like in good olden times. There will soon follow our more concrete letter, by aunt Gina. Thanks for all your kind care. Remain furthermore our safe retreat. Be heartfully embraced, greeted, and kissed . Uncle Benj. and aunt Gina."

Now again a postcard from mother, dated October 3, 1942:

"My dear Julius! Just now arrives your dear card of September 30th. I have to tell dear Klemi, that I am, unfortunately, already disinterested in things, which belonged to me. As I have let you know, we are preparing ourselves for a transportation with uncertain end! We have never given ^{Mr. Friedmann} nor could we give any messages or news about one of the aunts. On my behalf Antoinette should not have called Lise Mueller. From our friend Mrs. Welzl nothing comes anymore for a long time. The last two times came 10 more then dubble from Mrs. Fraenkel. I don't know anymore whether I had written to her. Perhaps she is also not there anymore. I also have little interest in greetings from Dr. Sz. A suit of uncle I have now sold, also a pair of shoes. I have deposited many things, which will perhaps be for you or the children, whoever it will be at the end. You know with whom. We live now so from one day to the next. The wonderful summer and fall days seem to be

gone. Today it is cloudy. I am afraid of the cold. That is after all the only permanent in me! Be it about others or ourselves! I will write to my sister Susi one of these days and burden you again with it. Kisses for Antoinette and you.

Your aunt Gina."

Added by father: "We are well, even materially in prosperity. Thanks for the noble letterpaper. Uncle B."

And now^a long letter, written by father, difficult to translate, which he called at the end his legacy:

"My dears!

October 9th, 1942.

If one is, like I, already in the 9th decennium, one has under all circumstances and especially in our present ones to think of the end of life. Indeed, the thought of non-existence should mean nothing dreadful to someone, who is used to look at things like a searcher, completely unbiassed from his ego-circle, that means outside of oneself. Human life and ambition is something temporal and is, considering eternity and infinity of the universe, very void and transient. From such a point of view one is very sublime above the instinct of self-preservation, which is in every living creature inherent and organically imbedded. One goes easily into Nirvana, the buddhistic blissful non-existence, with unburdened conscience, as soon as one has been serviceable in the life of truth and goodness, having set aside aspirations of any possessions and with renunciation of the many sensual desires, in accordance with buddhistic teaching.

Should not rapid death be preferred to rooting-up of ones life, the distraction of all of ones different relations, and as a living being to go through the annihilation of all ones

ideals, especially the dissolution of mental connections with the world?!

In the last years of my existence, now condemned to idleness, in reality already at an old age, following a lifetime inclination, I have occupied myself intensively with a mathematical-philosophical theme, which I called "Analytic des Alls" (in English) "Explanation of the Universe") with special leaning upon the thesis of the thinker Ernst Mach, that "considering the innumerableness of phenomena, only short generally valid laws and all-comprising theories should be construed." It is there adduced for the sake of proof the eternity and endlessness of time and space containing energy and matter.

Furthermore, there is added to monotheism the deduction of eternity and infinity of God, that means his highest perfection, as anything more perfect, surpassing infinity can not be anymore. This perfection obliges one who acknowledges God to supreme morality, which means that he has, in order to stand as the very image of God, to keep his eyes parallel, as in presentation of saints, and fixed at infinity and not finiteness, sensuality, so that man may become God-like, but certainly not God man-like, thought of as affected with human attributes and impulses.

I have sent the detailed manuscript of my work into the hands of our good Julius, the "resting pole in the flight of phenomena" (des ruhigen Pols in der Erscheinungen Flucht), (after Schiller). Perhaps there will once be a possibility to send it to you for inspection, so that you may occupy yourself closely with it as my legacy.

Be greeted and try to follow my exemple and to set yourself

up as much as possible in my philosophical way of living.

From the nature sanctifying and closely nestled to it
all his life

Dr. Ziegler."

Father added to that paper a short letter:

"Dear Julius! Golden Antoinette! October 9, 1942

You are again approached by the suggestion to send on the enclosed letter to our children. Perhaps a sensitive affair. But I think that these philosophical contemplations, without any political or, let us say, real allusion, will pass the censorship. That is up to you. But I think that one does not have to be afraid nowadays. So, good luck!

All that is written in haste, due to the unrest and uncertainty of our fate these last few days. It is a kind of farewell letter, should be considered as a legacy.

Be heartily embraced. Keep cool. In love, your faithful and grateful uncle F Beni."

"I embrace you in love and gratitude, your aunt Gina. Regards to Mrs. and Mr. Welzl. I think of them in love and gratitude."

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THE OLD-TIME DOCTOR

The old-time doctor — Bless his heart!
I see him yet, with his horse and cart
As they ambled down the shady lane,
Or hurried on through snow or rain
To ease our aches and cure our ills
With his little bag of bottles and pills.
No hour too late, nor storm too wild
To heed the call of a crying child —
Whose care was the first that we had known,
Who loved us all as his very own.

Old-time doctor — The good he wrought
Was less in his skill and the drugs he brought
Than his gruff, kind ways and his gentle touch
That the sick heart longed for overmuch;
That brought the sun to the darkest room,
With the green of fields and the scent of bloom
That clung about him and seemed to float
From every fold of his old black coat —
A faith that banished all fear and pain
As the cool caress of an April rain.

Old-time doctor — His recompense
He never measured in dollars and cents;
Oftenest only in gratitude,
And satisfied to be understood:
His duty done, to be laid to rest
With the single thought — he had done *his best*.
When the books are opened, he will stand
While the Great Physician takes his hand
And leads him to a sure retreat,
I know is close to the Mercy Seat,
Apart for those to be numbered then
Who have done *the most* for their fellow-men.

7th April, 1940

Charles Coleman Stoddard

With warm greetings, from Paula

This poem was once sent to me by a patient, who thought that it describes very well what kind of a doctor I was. But I thought that it is rather a magnificent description of my father-in-law and fits perfectly as a picture of him, and I therefore insert it here to honor him, as a tribute and sign of my love and undying admiration.

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Meine innigstgeliebten Kinder! Wir schreiben
an Euch diese Zeilen in völliger Schwermuths-
traurigkeit in Euren auch nicht ob so ganz
Leich die Ketten erreichen! Doch wollen wir Euch
versichern, daß wir tieflich unserem weiteren
Los in's Innere schauen. Wir sind glücklich
es ist parata - daß Ihr nicht hier seid -
und Gott hat mir geholfen, als es gelang,
Euch so weit hin zu bringen. Ich weiß Ihr seid
Alle noch recht glücklich sein, denn
mein ganzes Leben war ein Beden für Euch.
Ihr Gedanke an uns soll Euch nicht beunruhigen.
Wir hatten es bis zum Schluss gut. Wir würden
besonders Papier von alten Geacht in geachtet
Eure Bilder in sonstigen Anzeichen sind bei meiner
Hause in für Euch aufbewahrt in dort so Euren
die ich hat. Wir legen unser weiteres Schicksal
in Gottes Hand. Es ist möglich daß wir schon morgen
d. d. 11. X. um 5 in Früh von München, kann
aber noch paar Tage dauern. Es ist auch möglich
daß wir Euch noch alles über Leben in
uns wiedersehen! Kommt in unsere Freude
um so viel größer. So lebt denn wohl
meine geliebten Kinder, laßt uns immer
Eure Euch sein denn wir sind nicht mehr
mit - d. h. seid wie immer - ich war für
so glücklich gemacht Euch Alle glücklich sein.
Liebt Euch! Gute Nacht!

This is the original fare-well letter of our mother, and father's letter on the other side. The translation of these letters into English is on the next page (page 362).

1. So, Man muss eigener Leiden, wie aller
! Sorgen und Sorgen um sich am Ende setzen an,
! dem Herzen zu wissen verstehen, im Abzug
! und Augenblicke, die mit Menschen da sein notwendig,
! verbunden sind zu manchen Zeiten noch sehr
! sorglos, oft unzusätzliche, aber
! Brustweh