Bygones

INTRODUCTION

Over the big concert piano in the living room of my aunt's home in Ljubljana hung the black-and -white reproduction of a painting. I looked at it often and carefully as a boy, in those long evenings in which my cousin would play the piano and sing folksongs in her beautiful alto voice and I would sit there awash in home sickness. The picture was mysterious to everyone in the room and, when asked, my aunt just said it hung there because she liked the looks of it. It showed two elderly gentlemen in peculiar uniforms, one dark and one light. They were sitting in the shade of a large tree, engaged in an evidently very animated discussion. The branches of the tree were decorated with some odd beard-like ornaments. A broad sunny lawn extended into the background behind them towards a handsome white building fronted by Grecian pillars. The mystery of the picture was only deepened by its caption. It said "BYGONES" (pronounced roughly "bee-gone-ess" by everyone in the room).

I had to become a refugee and an immigrant to the US before the mystery was resolved for me. I came to realize that the two old gentlemen in the picture were civil war veterans, that the tree ornaments were spanish moss, and that the handsome white building in the background was a southern plantation. I also learned what "Bygones" meant and how to pronounce it.

These notes are recollections of similar bygones, the happenings in the years before and after our immigration. Until recently the idea of writing down these recollections never had much of an appeal for me. The death of my brother Ernst changed that. I am now just about the only person left who can tell our story, assuming that it is worth telling, and a number of people have told me that it is. Let me hope so.

The idea is to describe the events that affected me and my immediate family during a few years that preceded our immigration to the US and a few more after we arrived here. It is possible that our children and grandchildren will have an interest in a description of that time. Much is being written about it now by people who have not experienced it and who present their own notions of it. These notions are sometimes quite false. An eye witness account may therefore be useful.

The readers I have in mind are our children and grandchildren. The pages that follow are written for them. No harm is done if none of them ever bother to look at them. If they do they may be interested also in what kind of people their forebears were. I have therefore also written down what little I know about them.

My story begins in 1934 and ends in 1946. That is now fifty to sixty years ago. I was surprised by how much detail came back to me as I wrote these notes. I like to think all that came back is fact and that my memory has not occasionally slipped in some fiction. It has a way of doing that sometimes.

Huntington, NY, March 1995

THE CRYSTAL NIGHT

The night of Nov.9, 1938, has come to be called the Crystal Night. The German word for it, "Kristallnacht", evokes the notion of some kind of shimmering fairy tale night. The real thing was quite a different matter and for our family in Vienna a fateful turning point.

The Nazis had marched into Austria in March of that year and had incorporated the country into Germany. Soon thereafter, in late August, Hitler had annexed the German-speaking parts of Czechoslovakia, a move to which France and Great Britain had agreed in exchange for Hitler's solemn promise that this would be his last territorial acquisition.

An ominous calm prevailed in Europe after that. In Vienna the situation was sweet for some, cruelly bitter for others. Stenciled notices on the park benches proclaimed them to be reserved "For Aryans only". A walk in the street without a swastika pin on one's lapel invited the suspicion of being Jewish and the danger of being jeered or harassed. Newspapers and magazines were bloated with anti-semitic venom and Nazi swagger.

During the summer my father had been dismissed from his position as Gymnasium school teacher. It was a position he had filled for thirty years, the last ten or fifteen virtually paralyzed from the waist down but carrying a full schedule of mathematics and physics classes. He had the high regard of his colleagues and his students. They admired his conscientiousness and his competence, and they showed it by their frequent social visits to our home, the students often for many years after their graduation. I myself went to the school at which he taught and I remember him well, pulling himself up hand over hand along the railings of the staircases.

He was dismissed because of his Jewish descent. The fact that, as a young man, he had become a convinced Christian was irrelevant. Neither was the fact that he converted his father, mother, and his brothers and sister to the faith of which he thought so highly. Under the Nazi laws of the land he was unfit to teach German youth. The school doors were closed to him. The visits from colleagues and students grew rarer and rarer, and finally stopped altogether.

My uncle Paul, my father's brother, had left Vienna for New York in May. His wife Hilde had followed him in October. Our remaining relatives, none of them Jewish, stayed away from us as if we had a contagious disease. We still had a few friends whose bonds with us were reinforced by common thinking and a sense of common danger. Among them were of course Hilde's parents who had moved into her now empty apartment.

The event that led up to the Crystal Night took place, without our knowing it, in Paris on November 7th. On that day a young Jew walked into the German embassy. He was armed with a pistol, and he shot and killed the first functionary he laid his eyes on. It was an act of blind revenge for the persecution of the Jews in Germany.The act was truly blind for, as became known years later, his victim was not a Nazi, perhaps the only person in the embassy who wasn't.

It took only a couple of days for Hitler's government to orchestrate the retaliation that is now called the Crystal Night. In the evening of Wednesday, Nov.9,the storm troopers fanned out into the streets, smashed the plate glass windows in every Jewish-owned shop in every town and city of Germany and beat bloody every Jew who had not

managed to escape to his home and lock the doors. In fact locked doors were not always a guarantee of safety, either.

The news of the mayhem in the streets reached our home, also. It is possible that we heard of it over the radio or that my brothers Ernst and Karl saw some of it with their own eyes. I myself did not. (I was cramming for some of my final exams which were to take place shortly.) Our mother, Mama to us, was not with us. She was in her home town Ljubljana in Yugoslavia for the funeral of her own mother. Her presence there actually had a second purpose. She was anxious to explore the possibility of moving my father to Ljubljana in order to get him out of harm's way. Nevertheless, her absence was keenly felt by us in Vienna. It intensified our sense of unease and apprehension over what was happening in the city and over what even only the coming night might bring.

We went to bed late but no one slept. At 11:30 pm the door bell to our apartment rang. My brothers and I jumped out of our beds, the only thought in our minds being that some storm troopers were coming for our father. We shouted to each other to put on shoes and then rushed into the hall, prepared to take on anybody who was coming through the door. To our great relief, our late-night visitor turned out to be a mailman with a telegram. As we signed for it I heard my father shuffling out of his room on his two walking sticks, obviously greatly alarmed over the commotion in the hall and ready to head off any serious trouble we might rashly bring on ourselves.

The telegram, it developed, was from a young Jewish woman, an acquaintance of Ernst's, who had fled to Paris some months earlier. She begged Ernst to assure himself of the safety of her parents whom she had been unable to reach by phone. We decided that Ernst alone should go off on his bicycle, and that Karl and I should stay with our father. Ernst found the girl's parents safe, if thoroughly frightened, and wired the news back to Paris. He returned home in the early morning of November 10. The Crystal Night was over but my father was clearly shaken by the episode in our hall. Our next crisis was only a few hours away.

It came as a frantic phone call from Hilde's parents. The synagogue next door to their apartment house was in flames. Out in the street the synagogue attendant was being jeered and pummeled by storm troopers, and strands of hair were being torn from his beard. The fire department had arrived but was prevented from fighting the fire. Hilde's parents were in a state of near panic because the flames were about to spread to their apartment house and were already blistering the paint on their window frames. At that point the storm troopers, perhaps warned of the danger, gave permission to hose dawn the apartment house but the synagogue was allowed to burn down completely.The blackened ruin, as those of all synagogues in Germany, were left as public monuments to the events of the Crystal Night.

Mama returned from Ljubljana in the evening of the same day. Ernst and I met her at the railroad station, a little apprehensive over her mental state after the loss of her mother. She surprised us by being lively and quite cheerful. She was buoyed up by the good progress she had made with the preparations for my father's move to Yugoslavia. She had every reason to be pleased. Countries in Europe had become quite unwilling to admit refugees from Germany and her success in Ljubljana was quite an achievement. She carried her message of optimism to my father's bedside and the five of us sat together until late in the night making plans for the future. It did not strike us then that my father seemed distracted and absentminded, and never entered actively into our conversation.

At 1:15 in the morning we were awakened by a loud thud in his bedroom. We found him lying on the floor next to his bed. He was barely aware of us and lost consciousness

as we lifted him back on his bed. Ernst used his medical training to pick a heart stimulant from among the stock pile of medications my father had accumulated during the years of his illness, and gave him a prompt injection. It was of no help, and neither was our attempt at artificial respiration. We had called a doctor and he came quickly but he could do little more than certify death. It was still dark when I waited with him in the street for his taxi.

My father had left some notes and papers on his bedside table. Among them was a brief will, a precise schedule of things he needed to do before he lost consciousness, and a letter addressed to us. I still have it. It is dated Nov.10, 1938, and it says

"Dear Ones,
today's news is proof that my presence is a danger to you. Farewell. You have shown me only love and goodness. Do not be distracted from your work. Hurry.
Give my greetings to my brother and my sister. No telegrams , only letters and those only after the funeral.

Yours
Philip

PS. My last wish to Selma: she should stay where she is; to Paul, please think of my boys."

The funeral took place on November 17. The urn with his ashes was placed in the grave with his brother Ernst. Five people were present. Mama, my father's best friend Ernst Fanta, and his three boys.

It is typical of the time that I was later reproached by some of my father's former colleagues and students for not having informed them of the funeral. They would have attended, they said. They no doubt felt that their presence, as full Aryans and in some cases as Nazi party members, would have been an honor and a tribute to my father.

We, for our parts, followed his mandate to "hurry" in his farewell letter. Within four months we had left our home and everything in it.

THE BARRACKS

Austria was probably a marginal proposition when it was created by the Allied powers in 1918. Before the first World War it had been a major empire. After it, it had fewer inhabitants than New York City, and one in every three of those lived in Vienna. The Great Depression of 1929 carried the country to the brink of bankruptcy.

Our family was still relatively well off in those years. My father had a regular income as a Gymnasium school teacher and Mama's mother supplemented it every now and then from the proceeds of her shop in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. We had enough to money to pay a woman to do our laundry and another to clean our apartment once a week. Nevertheless my cravings for a can of peach preserves was viewed as too extravagant to be satisfied in any way other than as a Christmas present.

We were however surrounded by misery on a scale and depth that make today's hand wringing over "poverty in the inner cities" seem ludicrous. I confess that, for years, I was only vaguely aware of its magnitude, even though there were plenty of sights and incidents that should have made the situation quite plain. There was for instance the man who fainted from hunger on the sidewalk in front of our apartment house but was too proud to accept food or money from the people who tried to help him to his feet. For everyone of his kind there were many others who were less proud. The door bell to our apartment was rung at least ten times a day by people begging. They rarely went away without some food or pittance from Mama. When she advertised for a cleaning woman the corridor to our apartment was jammed with about two-hundred applicants, many of them clearly prostitutes hoping for a stable income supplement.

Such incidents should have made me aware of the massive poverty in Vienna but, I am embarrassed to say, they did not. I was not alone in my indifference. The majority of the people in the city were as thoughtless as I. My unconcern came to an abrupt end in 1934.

It all began in the room my father used as his study and bedroom. He often had visitors there who dropped in for a chat and perhaps for some cake and coffee served by Mama. Among them was a former student of my father's, a Dr.Kneissl. To look at, he was a bit unprepossessing. His eye balls protruded and his chin receded. When he spoke he had trouble controlling an excess of saliva, and he spoke plenty. One of his more interesting topics was his involvement in the pro-government youth movement. He reciprocated our interest when he learned that I had had a number of years experience as a leader of a youth group myself. My experience was of a kind that was sorely needed in his organization and he was clearly eager to recruit me for it.

Being pro-government in those days meant that you had to close your eyes to a number of disagreeable facts. The best thing that can be said about the Austrian government at that time was that it was the only reasonably effective barrier against Nazism. It championed Austrian independence as the way of preserving the traditions of German culture against the perversion introduced by Hitler. This ideology was unfortunately a rather weak defense against the sentiments that were then pouring in from Germany, and to some extent also from the Soviet Union. The government strengthened its shaky position in ways it copied from Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini, all of them quite unappealing.

It first disabled the supreme court of the country by pulling out the members of its own party. This enabled a rule by decree. Among its first decrees was a ban of the Austrian Nazi party, and for good measure the socialist and communist parties as well. Their activities, newspapers, and all public demonstrations were forbidden, their leaders and many of their members jailed. The resulting dictatorship could have been quite harsh if it had not been greatly softened by the typical Austrian inefficiency (in the local vernacular, "Schlamperei"). Also, the underground opposition was never far below the surface and managed to frustrate the more heavy-handed government actions.

There was little overt opposition to the government decrees. The two exceptions both occurred in 1934. The socialists were first. They staged an uprising in the February of that year. Their party had a well-armed paramilitary wing which had hidden its weapons in the walls of the apartment houses built by the socialist city administration. Its members fanned out into the apartments carrying diagrams with the weapons locations, tore open the walls, and barricaded themselves in the buildings. There they were promptly pinned down by the government military and paramilitary units firing heavy weapons at their positions and finally taking them by storm.

The uprising lasted only a few days. My brother Ernst and I, unable to sit at home inactive while the fighting went on the city, walked into a nearby blue collar district. All the street lights were out there. A large square was filled with a silent and sullen crowd, defying the curfew that had been imposed and flinching under the thuds of the artillery fire nearby. It was an awesome and chilling sight.

In retrospect I find it difficult to say which was worse, the brutality with which the government put down the revolt or the boneheadedness of the socialist leadership. These people failed to realize that their salvation lay not in fighting the government but in coming to terms with it. In the end they achieved only one thing. The sympathies of their party members shifted from socialism to Nazism.

The Nazis staged their own uprising in July of 1934. Several storm trooper detachments emerged from the underground. They had learned from the socialists' experience and did not barricade themselves. They attacked. They took over the radio station and invaded the Chancellor's office (the equivalent of the White House) in Vienna. There they trapped the head of the government, Chancellor Dollfuss, fired two pistol shots into him, and let him bleed to death on the floor.

They apparently had no clear plan of what to do next, however. Government military and militia units were quickly mobilized and bottled up all Nazi positions in Vienna and the rest of Austria. The revolt was choked off in a few days and a new Chancellor, von Schuschnigg, took over the government. The man who really saved the situation was however no Austrian. It was Mussolini. As soon as the uprising got under way he dispatched three armored divisions to the Austrian border, as an unmistakable signal to Hitler to stay put. Hitler got the message.

Schuschnigg was a definite improvement over his predecessor Dollfuss, in our opinion as well as that of many others. Where Dollfuss had come across as impulsive and somewhat devious, Schuschnigg impressed us as thoughtful and methodical. Dollfuss in his public addresses tended to rant and appeal to emotions, Schuschnigg reasoned and spoke to the intellect. They had two things in common however. Both were courageous men personally and they were our main defenses against Hitler.

My father's ex-student, Dr.Kneissl, was a avid Schuschnigg follower. That and my father's encouragement, overcame my reluctance. I accepted the invitation to become

involved in the youth movement in which Dr.Kneissl was active and which had in fact been founded by Schuschnigg. I went through a kind of trial period in one district of Vienna and then was appointed as district youth leader in another, called Simmering. I arrived there roughly in February 1935.

Most people in Vienna knew little about Simmering other than that you had to go through it to get to the Vienna Central Cemetery. I soon learned that there was more to it than that.

To reach the hub of my activities there I had a bicycle ride of about five miles, a large part of it through an area called the Heath of Simmering. The Heath was a no-mans land at that time, in more than one sense. There were few houses in it and few roads. In day time it had one industry, the city slaughter house, which covered the whole area with its unmistakable aroma of blood and animal excrement.

At night it was pitch dark, with a few gas lanterns emphasizing their own inadequacy. Occasionally policemen would emerge into the pools of light, always in twos, in their dark green uniforms, often on horseback and wearing steel helmets. They knew that the Heath was dangerous. It was actually more dangerous for them than for me, pedaling home through the night. At those hours it was a meeting place for remnants of the socialist militia and of the Nazi storm trooper units. They were training there with virtual impunity for the armed revolts which they hoped would soon come. The police knew it but shrugged it off.

The area which was the hub of my activity lay beyond the Heath. It was called the Barracks of Simmering. As the name implied it was a complex of about hundred large wooden barracks, low, gray, smoke-enshrouded structures, separated from each other by muddy foot paths. The barracks were left over from World War I when they had been built as hospitals for the thousands of wounded brought back from the various theaters of operation.

In 1935 some ten thousand people lived in them, as I recall it. Those people were the poorest of the city. Many had no income at all, others too little to afford better shelter. Many were "stateless", the human debris left over from the break-up of the old Austro-Hungarian empire. They were typically people who had missed the chance, in the upheaval of the break-up, to declare themselves citizens of one of the successor states. As a result they were ineligible for work permits or public assistance in Austria and anywhere else.

Typical among these stateless was a family of four. The parents had been members of a small circus troupe that had performed in the villages of the old empire. When that collapsed they were stuck in some god-forsaken corner of its geography, unable to get back to their home, the puny new Austria, in time to claim citizenship. That was in 1918. In 1935, still destitute but still hopeful, they had raised their two boys as uncanny contortionists who would perform for us occasionally by entwining themselves in straight chairs. The family at that time survived by begging in the streets of the more affluent districts of the city.

I had been sent to Simmering as the leader of a sizable group of boys in the ages between ten and twenty. Half of one barracks building had been assigned to them as their club home. Until February 1934 it had been the headquarters of a socialist militia unit. It consisted of one very large room and two or three small ones. The large room was bare. Its walls had been ripped open by the bayonets of the government troops looking for hidden weapons after the 1934 up-rising and then left in that state. The small

rooms had been patched up and were inhabitable.

I arrived late in the afternoon of a frigid and wet day in February. In the large room a detachment of about twenty boys was marching around the perimeter, singing an anti-semitic song over and over, like a broken record. The room was cold and dark. The power had been shut off in the club home because the youth organization had not paid the electric bill. One of the small rooms was warmed by a wood stove and lit by a kerosene lamp. There was also some furniture in it, including a desk and a bunk bed. Half a dozen teenagers were waiting for me there, and a young man of about my age, named Gustl ("Gus") Neubauer. The room was actually his home. The other two small rooms were as cold and bare as the large one.

I quickly realized two things. For one, I was not wanted there. For another, in the Barracks I was quite out of my element.

My reception in the little room was decidedly cool but not hostile. The boys made clear to me that they had fully expected Gustl to be made district youth leader and that they would still greatly prefer him over me. In the ensuing conversation I promised that I would recommend to the organization headquarters that Gustl be appointed in my place. I would also raise the money there for the overdue electric bill and for some fire wood. The tension in the room relaxed and I felt a little less like the intruder.

My relief as short-lived. A pair of visitors arrived unexpectedly. They were a mother and her twelve-year old son. The mother wore in place of an overcoat a blanket held together by a piece of string. She did most of the talking. The boy said little but when he did his halitosis made one flinch. The mother begged for help for her son. He had TB and a heart defect. He needed medical attention which she could not afford. Then she described her circumstances.

She lived in a one-room apartment just outside the Barracks. She had no furniture in it except for a mattress on which she and her boy slept. She had owned more, she said, but she lost it all during the 1934 uprising. Government troops had at that time taken up their positions in her apartment and had fired across the street into houses occupied by the socialist militia. Her furniture had been splintered in the exchange of gunfire. She herself had dragged wounded soldiers away from her windows, crawling on her hands and knees to do so. To confirm her story the woman pulled a much-fingered piece of paper from under her blanket. It was a testimonial from a government office, expressing its gratitude for her help and heroism under fire. The piece of paper was all she got. She was left to cope with the shambles of her existence the best she could.

The boys in the room evidently knew the story and confirmed it. I myself was stunned. I could come up with nothing better than to say that I would see what I could do for her but she seemed to be grateful. Perhaps it felt better to hear the same old platitude from someone outside the wall of misery that surrounded her. She took my hand in both of hers but the gesture made my flesh crawl. She was a cripple. She had no bones in any of her fingers.

I was of course unable to do anything useful for the woman or her son. In fact I soon realized that she was only one in a mass of similar cases in Simmering. Abject, crushing poverty was so widespread that no one person or single agency could correct it. The best that could be hoped for was that a very influential person would take an active interest in the Barracks, would become an "angel" for them, as the saying went. Such a person could mobilize help for the worst problems. I found out some time later that the Barracks actually did have an angel. It was Mrs.Schuschnigg, the wife of the Chancellor,

herself. During the next winter she arranged funding for the distribution of a warm breakfast among the Barracks dwellers. It was a godsend for many of them.

A number of times during that winter I rode my bicycle across the Heath before dawn to see how Mrs.Schuschnigg's project was working. The breakfast consisted of cocoa and rolls. It was dished out in the large room of our club home, the one with the gaping holes in the walls. The room was lit by two or three dim bulbs dangling from the ceiling. It was unheated. Steam rose from the cocoa kettles and from the breaths of the people, mostly women and children, who had lined up in dark and silent groups and waited for their handouts.

I myself had no active part in the project and I never met Mrs.Schuschnigg. I had hopes that I would, sooner or later, and that I could then ask her for help in cases like the crippled woman and her son. The hope never materialized. Mrs.Schuschnigg and her child died in an automobile accident that was rumored to have been caused by sabotage, probably Nazi sabotage.

My request to headquarters that Gustl be made district youth leader in my place was denied. The turn-down, when it came, was no longer of interest. Gustl and I had become good friends. The activities and ideas I introduced, most of them learned years earlier in my youth movement days, were well received and injected a new sense of purpose and progress into the life of the group. Membership increased rapidly.

It also helped that on occasion I could be of a little help to the Barracks people. I raised the money to pay the overdue electric bills and to buy fire wood for the stoves in the club home. Mama contributed her bit. Beginning in the spring she weekly invited half a dozen boys of the group to our home and treated them to cake and cocoa. These "klatsches" were great successes. The boys thought nothing of walking five miles each way to get to them.

Among our new members were two brawny teenagers who, so others whispered to me, belonged to the clandestine Communist youth organization. We had caused disquiet in that organization, so the whisperers said, with our newly found appeal among the youngsters in the Barracks, and the two had been dispatched to learn the secrets of our success. They were fine fellows and they got a bit of special attention from us. The result was that their communist sympathies faded and their attachment to us grew.

This led to another round of whispers. According to these, I was to be given a thorough beating which would persuade me to move my activities elsewhere. I did not find the rumor particularly upsetting. I felt I could hold my own quite well against a few attackers. I also thought I could turn the event into some good propaganda for the group. Nevertheless I became more watchful, especially after dark on my bicycle rides through the Heath.

One night during the winter of 1935/6 I spotted what seemed to be a clear set-up for an ambush. It was at a place where my road crossed over a raised railroad track, making a sharp U-turn over the track and going down again on the other side. There were deep dark ditches on both sides of the track and a single inadequate gas lantern at the curb.

As I approached the tracks on that night I saw a horse-drawn wagon standing crosswise on the road and blocking it completely. A man leaned against the lantern post with his arms close to his chest as if he were clutching something there, and a second one stood a short distance away in the dark. I dismounted from the bicycle, grabbed the

pump (a rather heavy instrument in those days), and walked up to the man under the lantern. He did not turn around as I approached but I noticed that his face was covered with blood.

This somehow did not fit with my idea of an ambush. It became clear very quickly that, what I had encountered, was my first DWI accident. The man was evidently dead-drunk, and so was his buddy lurking in the dark. They had lost control of their wagon as it crossed the railroad tracks, had been pitched off the box, and scraped themselves up quite bloody as they hit the road surface. What the man under the lantern was clutching to his chest was his arm which he had broken. Neither he nor his friend was in any shape to manage the horses or the wagon nor could I by myself help them. All I could do was call the police.

The real ambush came soon after that incident, and it came without warning. It happened along the fence that surrounded the Barracks. At one point a section of it was missing, probably pulled up and used for fire wood by the inhabitants. As I passed this section, someone standing there in the dark swung a heavy piece of lumber right into my face and sent me and my bicycle reeling into the weeds of an embankment on the other side. I heard the footsteps of one or two people running away over the frozen ground, and then silence.

I felt for my face, wondering how much was left of it. To my relief I discovered that I still had my eye sight and that the essential features still seemed to be roughly in place. Later it developed that my nose was broken and a cheek bone cracked, and that one eye was closed by a huge shiner. I dragged myself back to the club home where the boys washed the blood off my face. They then brought me home across the Heath somehow, I don't remember how.

Decades later, during some political disturbances at the Polytechnic, I heard a rosy-cheeked young man tell a spell-bound audience of students that he had been "beaten up" the night before by a crowd of rabid reactionaries. I almost laughed. When you are really beaten up, your mother has to be warned of your looks before she sees you, and my escorts from Simmering had to do just that before they delivered me to my home.

Ironically, the ambush was unnecessary. A major re-organization was already underway in the upper levels of the youth movement and when it percolated down to my level in the early days of the fall 1936, I was transferred from Simmering to another district. The last major undertaking with the boys from the Barracks was an overnight hike into the surroundings of Vienna. It was June. The meadows were in full bloom and the cherries were ripening in the trees. We slept in the hay of a farmer's barn. It was an experience unlike any the boys had ever had. I remember being quite touched by their gropings to find words to describe it. Their daily vocabulary simply provided none for that experience.

By that time, the months that I had spent in the Barracks and on the bicycle pedaling across the Heath had taken their toll. Uncle Paul, our family's good and ever-present physician, diagnosed a persistent cough and a congestion in one of my lungs as a danger signal. He sidelined me for the summer. The sideline was a lovely small town, complete with walls, gates ,and a clear mountain river running through it. My family had rented a house there for the summer. I was "condemned" to a diet of cakes and whipped cream. A bakery across the street supplied a gratifying assortment of cakes, breads and rolls, as well as a pretty daughter as sales force. It was a very healthful environment and at the end of the summer I was certified as fully recovered.

My transfer from Simmering took effect shortly after my return to Vienna. The Barracks however left their mark on me. They bestowed the nick name "Prof" on me, acknowledging my special status among them as university student, to take with me to my next assignment. (They did not realize that years later the same title would be attached to me by American college students.) My face was less symmetric when I left the Barracks than when I arrived, thanks to a poorly healed broken nose. My political views had moved sharply to the left. I was in a state of permanent furious resentment against the well-to-do people in Vienna who ignored the wide-spread misery in their city and who were blithely waltzing towards their own undoing. For many, that undoing was just a year and a half away.

THE GHETTO AND THE RED LIGHT DISTRICT

My second assignment in the pro-government youth movement was in the Vienna district called the Leopldstadt (Leopoldstown). Historically, the old Jewish ghetto had been part of it, and so had the city's main red light district. Both were still there when I arrived in the fall of 1936and took up my work as district youth leader.

Leopoldstadt was a larger and more populous district than Simmering. It consisted of a large solidly built-up area, flanked by two spacious parks. My home was across the street from one of the two, the Prater. A bicycle ride of about half an hour, most of it over tooth-rattling cobblestone pavement, would take me to the other. That was the Augarten, and one of the club homes of the youth group was next to it. A second club home was near the Danube river at about the same distance over cobblestones.

The Leopoldstadt was not one of the fashionable districts of Vienna. Most of the people in it were middle-class, some white-collar and some blue, but a good deal more blue than white. The Jewish community in it was made up mostly of shopkeepers and other small business people and their families. Many of them were rather recent immigrants who had rushed to Vienna from the Eastern provinces when the Austro-Hungarian empire collapsed at the end of the first World War. Those provinces were quite primitive and so were many of the immigrants from them. They were often destitute when they arrived, could speak only Yiddish, but were determined to be successful. By 1936 many of them had in fact become quite successful. They mixed relatively little with the rest of the population, partly by their own choice and partly because the population resented them. It was a situation that was ripe for Nazism.

The second notable segment among the inhabitants of the Leopoldstadt were the prostitutes. In Vienna before World War II most of them were licensed professionals. They were required to undergo periodic medical examinations and to submit to treatment whenever that became necessary. Some operated out of their first floor apartments and advertised their business by hanging their curtains on the outside pair of the double windows that were common in the city, rather on the inside as everybody else. Another mode of operation was to work from the streets, especially from a large square which I had to cross regularly on my bicycle. I was never tempted. Even less tempting were some unlicensed operators whom I ran into fairly regularly late at night on my trips home through the Prater, poor middle-aged women, fat, ugly, bundled up against the cold wind that blew through the park and hoping against hope for an improbable customer.

The lack of temptation my seem odd, perhaps even suspect, viewed with today's sex-charged attitudes. It was not, in the 1930's. The whole youth movement was spartan and idealistic. There was no smoking allowed in it, no drinking, no drugs, and no sex. In fact even harmless consorting between boys and girls was looked down upon as a sign of weakness. The situation in the country was viewed as so urgent and critical that frivolity and weaknesses had to be avoided as much as possible. Addictions of any kind were simply unthinkable.

The urgency of the situation was brought home to me quite soon after my arrival at my new assignment. I had gone for a get-acquainted meeting with a fairly large group of

strapping teenagers. When I arrived they sprang to smart attention and the way they did it, with their elbows pushed forward and their palms flat against their pants seams, was a clear demonstration of German-style drill. I knew immediately that this was not really a unit of the government youth movement. It was a unit of the clandestine Hitler Youth. And the group knew that I knew. The Hitler Youth was then officially banned in Austria, as were all Nazi organizations. This particular group had evidently decided that they would be best able to pursue their activities under the camouflage of a unit in the pro-government youth movement.

Our meeting proceeded amicably. The boys put on a mild show of pro-government sentiments and I pretended that I took them at their face value. My idea was to play for time and an attempt at a conversion to government cause, in the way I had done it with the boys who had been planted by the communists in my group in Simmering.

The conversion failed in the Leopoldstadt. About a week after our meeting my Hitler Youth group was picked up by the police, probably following some denunciation, and thrown in jail. I rushed to the police precinct as soon as I heard about it, and pleaded for their release, hoping that my intercession would make me persona grata with the boys. My plea was successful, probably because the police were Nazi sympathizers to start with and were glad to have an excuse for releasing the group.

My intervention was in fact appreciated by them but I did not become aware of that until a year and a half later. Their immediate reaction however was to leave the pro-government youth movement and to vanish into the underground. Only one of them came back. His name was Trautman and as a convert to our cause he was no feather in my cap. It developed later that he was probably a Nazi mole in my group.

Among the bona fide members of the group, a few stand out in my recollection. One went under the nickname Honso. Honso was a born leader and when I met him he was the unofficial chief of another group of teenagers. He had in fact been the head of that group since their days as a gang of grammar school urchins. Those were the days, he told me later, when he and his gang would steal fruit from the markets along the streets. If chased by the police, they would take shelter among the streetwalkers who would pummel the cops with their handbags and yell to leave the sweet kids alone.

Honso and his band appealed to me because they were the closest thing to Simmering that I had in my new district. But there were a few novelties, too. For one, I now had a sizable contingent of boys from middle-class families with backgrounds similar to my own. They were in many ways the most reliable members in the district, and among them especially so Ernst Jodas, the son of a retired army major. I also had official authority over a girl's group and their leader, a new experience for me. I confess I am still ashamed over the treatment they got from me. I pretty much ignored them. I felt they were a potential distraction for me from my job which was to develop meaningful and exciting activities that would win the youth of the district over to the government cause.

That cause seemed more urgent and more difficult by the week. I was active in the district almost all hours of day and night and completely neglected my university studies. At one point during that period, Paul and Hilde were visited by two American girls, Helen Selle (now Helen Fairbairn) and her friend. My brother Ernst and I, as the only readily available males of comparable age, were mobilized as guides and entertainment. We were delighted by the girls, their aura of a strange and far away country and by their fluency in a language we only knew from school. Ernst was totally smitten by them but I was always chafing to get away and back to where my real mission, as I saw it, lay.

In that mission I was making some headway. Membership was increasing. I used the same ideas that had been successful in Simmering. They were new enough also in the Leopoldstadt to have considerable appeal. One type of event that was quite popular was the overnight hike. I remember one that involved probably nearly hundred boys. Its adventurous highlight was an excursion to an abandoned gypsum mine. Entry was of course strictly prohibited and not many people even knew of its existence. To avoid detection, we had to approach the mine at night through the woods and in total silence. The proper entrance had been blocked. We entered by clambering down a small crater, created by the collapse of the ceiling of the main cavern. From there we explored the passages by torch light, in single file, and thrilled by the lawlessnes of it all.

The crowning event of my term in the Leopoldstadt was a summer bicycle trip to Italy. About a dozen of the boys took part. Headquarters, in the person of its chief (a man named Schindler, as I recall) gave a small grant of money with which I could cover the expenses for the most indigent among us. Our official destination was Trieste but I had hopes of making it as far as Venice.

We left Vienna before daybreak one summer morning. Our bicycles were single-speed jobs, with back-pedal brakes. We had to cross several mountain passes on the way. Going up those passes we had to push or carry the bicycles over shortcut foot-paths, and going down on the other side we had to cool the brakes with spring water to keep them from burning up. I remember well the moment when the boys caught the first sight in their lives of the sea, in a notch between two mountains, incredibly high up and incredibly blue.

We slept in the open or in tents, sometimes in haylofts with the night wind carrying warm raindrops in to us, and once on a stony beach outside Trieste with a phonograph in a villa above us playing Victor Arlen's Stormy Weather. We cooked and ate polenta, polenta, polenta, because everything else was too expensive.

In Trieste I announced that we would try for Venice. Great enthusiasm. We pedaled along a hot and dusty highway, never far from the Adriatic, over innumerable little bridges, until we came to one where I called for a stop. From its crest we could just make out, in the distance and the haze, a city far out in the sea. Venice.

We stayed in Venice two days. We left on the evening of the second day, hoping to avoid the heat of the sun. We crossed the bridge to the mainland and struck out into the night and the Upper Italian plain. At about midnight a storm was moving in. Lightning became more and more blinding. In one of the strokes I clearly saw the two lead bicycles of our cluster converging on each other and locking. In the pitch dark that followed we all crashed to the ground. And one of us did not get up. At that moment the skies opened up and the rain came down in sheets.

The downpour had a benefit. It brought the boy lying in the road back to a state of woozy consciousness. We were able to prop him up against the wall of a nearby farm house, in the shelter of a skimpy overhang. An old farmer appeared, an oil lamp held high over his head. When he recognized our predicament he took us out of the rain and into his barn. I was the only one who did not fall asleep immediately, wet clothes and all. I lay awake next to our semi-conscious companion and gradually grew calmer as his breathing grew more regular and more relaxed.

By morning he was back to normal except for a very stiff leg which we exercised mercilessly. We found that all the damage to our bicycles could be fixed, including that of our patient. We loaded him on it and, since he could not very well pedal, towed him for

about two hours to the nearest railroad station. There we dispatched him by train to the Austrian border and instructed him to wait for us there. We found him the next day, pedaling figure-eights in the village square. All was well.

Back home I wrote a brief report to our chief Schindler, to thank him for his grant and described to him what we had done with his money. The report, was quite a hit, as I heard it. Schindler was thinking of similar undertakings in all Vienna districts for the coming year 1938. Neither he nor I knew that these plans would never come to pass. Events had by then begun to take shape over which none of us had any control and which would totally overwhelm all of our designs.

In Berlin at that time the German General staff was working on the secret "Plan Otto" for the military occupation of Austria. The German ambassador in Vienna, a man known for his skill in subversion tactics, had been diligently pumping money and supplies to the Nazi underground organizations. And the underground did everything it could to embarrass and destabilize the Austrian government. Nazis had infiltrated the army, the police, and virtually every office of Chancellor Schuschnigg's administration. The forbidden swastika flag was unexpectedly unfurled on many occasions and in many places, sometimes automatically by rather ingenious release devices. Acts of sabotage and even terrorism increased in frequency. The clandestine Hitler Youth ruled in the high schools and threatened our boys with ostracism if they did not join. Black lists were being drawn up of the names of people known to be active in the opposition to Nazism.

It was evident that Hitler was driving matters to some kind of climax.

The climax came early in the next year. On February 12,1938 Hitler summoned The Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg to his villa in the Bavarian Alps. Schuschnigg complied. There, Hitler demanded the legalization within three days of the Austrian Nazi party and the inclusion in the cabinet of a designated person in a designated capacity. The alternative: instant invasion. Schuschnigg complied again.

After that things spun out of control very quickly. In Vienna the Nazis, newly legitimized, took to the streets. The swastika became ubiquitous, on lapels, on windows, cars, trucks and bicycles. Street demonstrations, some large and well organized, others smaller and spontaneous, proliferated. The pro-government organizations including the youth movement responded.

There were clashes in the city everywhere, some between individuals and some between crowds. They grew more frequent and more violent by the day. The police riot squads were under way continuously, following up on alarm after alarm, but rarely arriving at the scene of the action in time to do any good. The Leopoldstadt boys and I were on the streets whenever we could and faced off with the Nazis singly and in groups. My recollection of those days is now somewhat muddled. I remember many rough skirmishes, especially one in the city center with Honso and his band when we ran into contingent of about fifty storm troopers and quickly routed them.

Nevertheless it was clear that a general collapse of law and order was under way and some drastic action would have to be taken.

The action came on Wednesday of March 9. It was less than a month since Hitler's ultimatum. We did not know it then but in only a few days Austria would cease to exist. I received a call from Schindler's headquarters office that summoned me to a meeting hall that evening at 7, no reason given, no questions answered, no excuses accepted. On arrival there I found that all district youth leaders like I had been called, and all were

there. Most of us carried the makeshift weapons with which had come to arm ourselves in days before and which we could conceal in our clothes, horse whips, clubs, bicycle chains, brass knuckles, etc. I don't remember what I packed but, whatever it was, I know I never used it.

A loudspeaker set up in the front of the hall soon broadcast Schuschnigg's voice. He announced a plebiscite, to be held in four days. It was to decide whether Austria should remain independent. After Schuschnigg's address Schindler told us to mobilize everyone we could in our district organizations to distribute leaflets, post bills, paint slogans on sidewalks and house walls, and promote the government cause in any way we could, right up to the day and hour of the plebiscite.

And that is what we did. I did not realize when I left the meeting hall that I would go without sleep for about 70 hours and that many of the boys in the group would not do much better. We were supplied generously with paint cans, brushes, wads of handbills and of posters.(I still have samples of the hand bills we distributed; they are in a folder in my closet marked "Misc.Documents".) We spent the days distributing the leaflets and the nights painting the district with slogans. Whenever there was time the boys lay down on the floor or the tables in our club homes and slept, with phone books as pillows. When reports came in of clashes with Nazis we rushed out and got into the frays.

Clashes were frequent and often quite bloody. My brother Ernst,a medical student, told of overflowing emergency units in the hospitals. On Thursday (March 10) a Nazi crowd tried to force their way into the headquarters building of our youth movement. The building, as virtually all others at the time in Vienna, was heated by individual coal stoves in every room. The people in headquarters defended their building by locking the front doors and dumping the coal scuttles on the attackers on the side walks below. Ernst saw the results in the hospital and helped with the bandaging.

In our district we had several ticklish confrontations. In order to cope with rising Nazi belligerence, I decided to borrow a pistol which Ernst had smuggled in from abroad a few years earlier. I intended to, and did, use it as a deterrent during the night of Thursday several times. It had a miraculously calming effect.

By Friday morning I had the distinct sense that the outcome of the plebiscite would be favorable for our cause. Only a few days earlier I would have predicted the opposite. The Nazis and Nazi sympathizers seemed to have the edge then. But now people had to face a clear-cut decision, namely whether or not to abolish their own country, and that apparently was an idea which really bothered them.

We ourselves, working the streets, benefited from the new sentiment. We were offered food, drink, money, encouragement. Even the Jewish community which had consistently ignored our efforts in the past now showed their support.They evidently realized that business would not go on as usual if the Nazis came to power.

Our mood, as Friday March 11 dawned, was upbeat. In two more days, we felt, we would be home safe and dry. Actually however we were at the end of our rope. It did not enter our minds that Hitler knew what we knew, namely that things were going against him But he knew it only too well and he realized that he had to act. And act he did. On that same morning "Plan Otto"was put in effect. By evening German troops were pouring over the border into Austria. This time around, Mussolini did not rise as he had done in 1934. He kept his army in their barracks. Hitler rewarded him with a virtually incoherent message of gratitude.

The news of the invasion spread in Vienna like wildfire.I called headquarters for instructions and when I finally got through Schindler answered himself. He evidently had sent home his whole staff. His instructions were "It's all over - go home". He sounded as exhausted as I felt. I relayed the message to the boys who stood around me in the club home, speechless and stunned. I thanked them, shook hands with each one of them, and told them that I was locking up the place.

Outside, now alone, I heard a strange and frightening noise. It took a moment for me to realize what it was. I was hearing the sound of tens of thousands of voices shouting "Heil Hitler" in unison over and over again. It was a sound that seemed to blanket the city on that evening.

Some time earlier arrangements had been made for me to go into hiding if I encountered serious political trouble. The hide-out was the apartment of my father's best friend, Ernst Fanta, and his wife. This is where I now headed. I found a taxi and directed the driver, over side streets as much as possible, to the Fanta's. At one point our route was blocked by a dense cordon of Nazis. I showed the driver my pistol and told him to force his way through. He leaned on the horn and plowed ahead, as the Nazis scampered out of his way.

I paid him off a few blocks short of my destination and walked the rest of the way. It was one of Vienna's main streets. Some of the street lights were out and the sidewalks were crowded with hurrying people. Among them I came upon a friend from headquarters. He told me he was heading for the Vienna Woods. There surely would be others there, he said, who would resist the incoming Germans, and he opened his overcoat and showed me the rifle he carried underneath it.

It was a hopeless mission. There was essentially no resistance to the German army anywhere in Austria. Outside it, there was not even serious indignation. The British Prime Minister, when questioned in the Parliament, rose to say that he felt as if he had lost a friend who had been sick a long time. That was our epitaph.

I lay in bed at the Fanta's, dead tired but unable to go to sleep. In the street below, there were the marching feet of the Nazis, their drums, and their songs. One of them has stayed in my mind because it foreshadowed things to come.

> The rotten bones of the world are trembling
> before the coming great war.
> We have broken the terror, and for us
> it was a great victory.
> We will march on, even if all goes to pieces
> for today Germany is ours
> and tomorrow it will be the whole world.

THE YEAR UNDER HITLER

Our year under Hitler began during the night of March 11,1938. It was an awful year for our family, and it has affected my view of the world and of mankind to this day.

The year began with my first night in my hide-out, the apartment of Ernst Fanta and his wife. I was trying to go to sleep but too keyed-up to do so. Half-way across the city in our apartment, Mama was unable to sleep as well. She was terrified by the thought that the Nazis would come after me and, when they did not find me at home, would take their fury out on the rest of the family. My brothers Ernst and Karl had thought it wise to move in with Paul and Hilde for a few days to be out of the immediate line of fire, also. Mama and my father were therefore left alone in the apartment.

Ours was a quiet street but during that March night it was not. The quiet was often broken by voices, some jubilant, others tense. Whenever she heard them Mama rushed to lean out of the window. Were the voices demanding entry into our apartment ? They never were.

At 3 am she heard pebbles being thrown against the window pane. Down in the street was Honso, the adventurer of my youth group, with a knapsack strapped to his bicycle. He asked to speak to me.When Mama told him she had no idea of my whereabouts he seemed crushed. "Tell him,"he said,"I'm getting out. I am heading for the Hungarian border now. I wanted him to come with me. When you hear from him please tell him good luck."

Honso never made it. The border was closed when he got there. He was turned back.

Mama survived the cold March night and her many window openings with nothing worse than a frightful case of laryngitis which, it developed a few days later, was a stroke of luck for me.

The morning of Saturday came, the first day under Hitler. The Austrians were reeling with joy on that day - and don't let them tell you any different now. Forgotten was their preference for independence of the day before. In an incredible about-face that reminded me of the Easter week in Jerusalem 2000 years earlier, almost everybody in Vienna was intoxicated with the idea of coming "home into the Reich", as the slogan went. Swastika flags appeared on most buildings, swastika pennants on most windows and vehicles. Hitler himself arrived on Sunday to an almost delirious welcome. A deafening roar of approval followed his announcement of the dissolution of the Austrian republic and its incorporation into Germany. In the same speech he scheduled a plebiscite for April 10 in which the populace were to give their solemn consent to the arrangement.

In the weeks that followed the Nazis pulled out all stops to drive home to the Austrians how proud they could be of now being Germans. The army staged a parade along the Ringstrasse. It greatly impressed everybody, those who wanted to be impressed because it showed the military strength of their new fatherland, and those who didn't because it made them realize that open resistance would have been suicidal.

Ernst and Karl watched the show. They could see the soldiers in the leading battal-

ions tower over the spectators as they approached, and wondered whether they were perhaps marching on a platform. Only as the formations came closer did they realize that every man in them was well over six feet tall. They also saw for the first time really heavy military equipment, motorized artillery, tanks, personnel carriers. I myself did not. I was still in hiding. But I did see from the Fanta's apartment window the overflights of German fighter planes moving faster than any airplane I had seen before.

The benefits of belonging to the new Germany were brought home to the Austrians in many other ways. Food stores were suddenly overstocked, and in fact displayed many products that were scarce elsewhere in the Reich. Driving on the right-hand side of the road, an issue endlessly and fruitlessly discussed in Austria, was introduced virtually overnight.

Most importantly however, businesses were suddenly hiring. One of our weekly beggar visitors came to thank Mama for the plate of soup and piece of bread she had given him regularly. He had found a job, he said. Our cleaning lady, Mrs.Kimmel, told us of a neighbor who, momentarily deranged by the news of being employed, had thrown himself out of the window of his apartment. Dr. Kneissl, the man who had originally recruited me into the anti-Nazi youth movement, visited us. Now he was proudly wearing the Nazi party pin and told us that Hitler was without question the greatest man in history. Trautmann,the young fellow who had supposedly quit the clandestine Hitler Youth a year earlier to join our movement, revealed now that he really had never done so. He had been a mole in our group, he said.

Things were changing, and in many ways. Jazz disappeared from the radio. It was too decadent. It was replaced with folk music. Women began to shun make-up. The natural look was more correct politically. They grew their hair longer and in braids, especially if it was blond. Longer hair was fashionable also among young men, and so were beards. They emphasized the Germanic heritage. Pornographic magazines vanished from the news stands, prostitutes from the streets, and racy floor shows from the stages. "Heil Hitler" became the greeting of choice, and almost obligatory when dealing with officials.

I emerged from hiding in early April, after about three weeks at the Fanta's. They were, I think, relieved to see me go. My presence had after all been somewhat of a danger to them. Any danger to me had in the meantime evaporated. Mama had managed to quash a summons that had arrived at home shortly after the Nazi take-over. I had been reported for tearing a swastika pennant from a vehicle a couple of weeks earlier. Mama went to the police station and pleaded my case, almost voiceless from laryngitis. The policemen evidently thought that Mama's hoarseness was due to her having shouted "Heil Hitler" in the street for hours. They smiled conspiratorially, told her they understood, and to forget about it. A more serious complaint was to be filed against me by a storm trooper officer whom I had manhandled during the riots before the take-over. But he was dissuaded by a Hitler Youth leader, out of gratitude for having secured his release from jail back in 1936. With these two problems out of the way, I was presumably too far down the blacklists to deserve the attention of our new masters.

I found that I had missed more than impressive army parades by being out of circulation. The Austrian chancellor Schuschnigg had been jailed by the Nazis almost immediately after they came to power. He was kept in a room of the headquarters building of the dreaded Gestapo (the German secret police) where, according to rumor, he was forced to listen to all the speeches and ecstatic roars of the populace from a loudspeaker mounted in the ceiling. Most members of the pre-Nazi government wound up in jail as well, or in its more modern version, the concentration camp. The same was true of the top echelon of the youth movement I had been active in, Schindler included. Only people

at my level or below were left alone.

The worst treatment was however reserved for the Jews. The Nazis had not yet formulated a coherent policy concerning them. In 1938 the principle was to harass them as viciously as possible. Immediately on coming to power, the Nazis rounded up hundreds of Jews in Vienna and forced them to scrub away on their hands and knees the slogans that we had painted on the sidewalks and walls only a few days earlier.

A worse fate awaited the 17000 or so Jews, immigrants from Poland after World War I and still Polish citizens. Among them was a harmless little photographer who had taken my passport picture. It was decided that these people should be promptly deported back to Poland. They were packed into trains and shipped to the border. There they were refused entry. They remained in a state of limbo in their trains for several weeks until France, Belgium and the Netherlands agreed to accept them. Their ultimate fate however still awaited them.

Jews who had been Austrian citizens were relegated to lives under constant ruthless harassment as well as social and economic isolation. Their shops lost their gentile customers, their businesses their gentile employees, physicians their gentile patients, and lawyers were not allowed to represent non-Jewish clients. Cars owned by Jews were either officially confiscated or simply appropriated by marauding Nazi hoodlums. Our cleaning lady, Mrs. Kimmel, quit. She explained that her husband, to her regret, would not let her work in a household headed by a non-Aryan.

Paul, our uncle, lost many of his patients. His car was confiscated. This left him virtually unable to attend to his remaining practice. Hilde, in an act of exceptional courage, went to the Gestapo headquarters and pleaded, successfully, for the release of the car.

Jews and people of Jewish descent soon realized that their survival lay in emigration. But emigration grew increasingly difficult. Most European countries refused entry to all refugees. The Nazis were pleased to cooperate. A large letter J was stamped on the passport of every Jewish person which in effect closed all borders to its bearer. Desperate rumors circulated in Vienna regarding where one could go, whom one should ask to see, how much one should offer to pay, for visas to Australia, to Cuba, to Paraguay. Visas to the US would have commanded almost any price but they were not for sale. If a person managed to find a country that would accept him he had to undergo a long and demeaning German rigmarole before he was granted permission to exit, and then only at the price of sacrificing most of his money and his belongings.

Jewish emigration was what the Nazis wanted in those days. Their ghastly extermination policy had not yet been formulated. They were therefore pleased to be able to report, about a year after their take-over that roughly 30% of the Jewish population of Vienna had left. It is now conveniently forgotten that a substantial number among the Jews fully agreed with the Nazis and considered their own departure a good thing. Their slogan was "Hinaus mit uns" ("out with us"). Perhaps they felt, as the Nazis did, that a 10% minority of the population of the city should not hold 25% of all university chairs, make up 50% of all physicians and 60% of all lawyers.

Among all these goings-on, I found most difficult the lack of any sense among the people of what was right and wrong. There had been, so it seemed to me, a general collapse of moral values. Many upstanding persons were fully convinced that what was happening around them was all right or at any rate perfectly excusable. I came to a conclusion which has stayed with me to this day. It is that an individual and his conscience cannot always be relied on to make moral judgments on his own. There are

times when one has to rely for guidance on Christian values and traditions.

I don't think I was alone in this conclusion. Church services were heavily attended even though the Nazis disparaged the practice. Religious organizations on the other hand played a rather uninspiring role. The catholic church, perhaps because of its more rigid structure, performed better on the whole than the Protestant, and in Germany proper better than in Austria. Nevertheless many priests and clergymen swung over and preached the Nazi cause, in the full conviction that they were doing the right thing.

The weather in the spring of 1938 ignored all this. It was the most beautiful spring in my memory, an almost unbroken series of warm and sunny days. I remember waking up one night and hearing for the first time in my life the unmistakable call of a nightingale, bitterly resentful of the lovely song in the times we were experiencing. The chestnut trees were blooming in the park across the street from our apartment house, just as they are supposed to do, according to an old Viennese folk song. And under these blossoms the German army lieutenants were putting their recruits through goose step exercises.

The weather surely helped the Nazis maintain the general euphoria in Vienna as Hitler's plebiscite approached. There were few windows in the city that were not decorated with swastika pennants. The people who lived behind them were sure to cast "Yes"-votes. The exceptions belonged either to Jewish households where nobody was allowed do vote, or else to some diehard anti-Nazis who let it be known in this fashion that they planned to take their chances and vote "No".

In our household Mama, Ernst and I were permitted to vote. After long discussion with my father we all agreed that it would dangerous and downright foolish for us to cast "No"-votes. In this frame of mind we went to the polling station. There, women officials behind a large desk handed us three slips of paper on which we were to check off a "Yes" or "No". They told us that we could make our marks in the voting booths or, more conveniently, right in front of them on their desk. When we opted for the booths we noticed poignant glances passing among them. Once in the booth I discovered that I did not have the stomach to mark my ballot with a "Yes". I voted "No". When we left the polling place we found that Mama and Ernst had done the same thing.

So we, together, had racked up three "No"-votes. When the results of the plebiscite were published a few days later only two "No"-votes were shown for our precinct. Evidently, there had been official cheating. The irony was that cheating was completely unnecessary. The outcome was clear from the beginning, just from a look at the swastika pennants in the windows. The "Yes"-votes had it with over 99% of those cast.

We were at that time already determined to leave the country. Our deadline was my graduation from the university with my Ph.D.degree which was expected for around mid-1939. All our preparations for our escape were geared toward that date. Each of us had a number of tasks to carry out before then. Mine was to study. The problem was that I had to make up within one year the three years I had almost completely given up to the work in the anti-Nazi youth movement. I had to write a PhD-thesis and I had to cram for seven exams, two written and five oral. I clearly needed luck and help.

Help came from my father. To begin with he secured a thesis topic for me. My intended thesis advisor in Vienna had been dismissed by the Nazis because of his pacifist leanings. An acquaintance of my father's at the University of Prague came through with a topic in the area of relativity theory, my father's specialty. My father then proceeded to give me a crash course in the field and then led my own research work step by step to the point at which he considered it acceptable as a thesis.

It was in fact accepted in the fall, typed by me hunting and pecking on a portable type writer. I interspersed my thesis work with periods of furious cramming for the exams, mostly in the university library. My hope was that I would be able to take them, and pass, them by mid-1939.

Some of my time, I confess, I spent on a non-academic and much riskier activity. I tried to set up an underground cell. I had resumed contact with about half a dozen of the most reliable members of my old Leopoldstadt youth group. They formed the core of this enterprise.

We met two or three at a time on the street or in a park. Our first problem was that we had to formulate some goals for ourselves. After lengthy discussions, we declared them to be an independent and democratic Austria, even though none of us had ever experienced a really functioning democracy or had a clear idea of what life would be like in one. We realized that operating on our own was pointless. We therefore groped around cautiously for contacts with similar groups, including the communists, which would make our opposition more effective.

In our family only my brother Karl knew of these activities. I kept them secret from the others because I knew that they would be horrified at the danger I was courting, a danger not only to myself but also to them and to the plans for our escape. They would have been absolutely right. The risk was enormous, regardless of the somewhat amateurish safety precautions we took, and in no way comparable to our chances of success. Nevertheless these activities made feel that we were not just knuckling under to the Nazis.

The activities, for better or worse, came to nothing. Our main problem was that Hitler kept racking up success after success in his foreign policies. Our political arguments seemed silly pinpricks by comparison, our moral objections insignificant wrinkles in a grand design. Even the Communists lost interest in us when the Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact was signed in August of that year. Morale was not greatly affected in our small group but its membership declined quite the same. One by one we were being drafted into the German army.

My turn came on Sept.8. The German induction procedure differed from the one used in the US. Here, a civilian draft board decided whether or not a young man should be given a deferment and only after a negative decision was he called up for a physical examination that determined his fitness for service. The German army by contrast summoned him for a physical examination first and when he passed it promptly administered his oath of allegiance to Hitler (himself, not to Germany). The question of deferment was not raised until after that.

I knew the procedure and was ready for it. The oath was the part that worried me. I finally decided that in this predicament, unlike in the plebiscite, I would avoid heroics. I raised my right hand along with several hundred other draftees and mumbled along with them when the time came. It is a good thing I did. If I had not, I would not be writing these lines. It is now known that there were a few admirable young Austrians who refused to take the oath. They were immediately tried for treason and executed (which in the new Germany meant being beheaded). Memorial plaques now commemorate some of them.

Having taken the coward's way out, I was issued my military ID and then was granted a deferment to finish my studies, on the condition that I would report for service promptly upon graduation. Failure to do so, it was pointed out to me, would make me a deserter

and subject to the severest punishment. I knew full well what that would be.

Shortly after this induction into the army I applied to it for permission to visit my relatives in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. To my surprise I got it. It was valid until March 31, 1939, and I used it promptly. The reason was Hitler's next foreign policy adventure. Towards the end of September of 1938 he ratcheted up the pressure against Czechoslovakia to the crisis level. He demanded the incorporation into Germany of the border areas of that country. The basis for his demand was the same as the one he had used for Austria. The people in the area were German-speaking and they wanted to be part of Germany.

In this case there were some differences however. France and Great Britain were guarantors of the Czech border and the Czech border fortifications were all in the areas claimed by Hitler. So, France and Great Britain who had merely clucked regretfully over the loss of Austria now dug in their heels. Hitler countered by rattling with his armaments, and he now had plenty to rattle with. That became clear even to me when, on my way home from the university, I saw the interminable freight trains rolling North in the night and carrying steel-helmeted soldiers, tanks, trucks, and artillery, toward the Czech border.

The situation was alarming. I realized that in case of trouble it would take merely the stroke of a pen to cancel my travel permit and to trap me inside Germany. Caution seemed appropriate, and I took off for Ljubljana. It soon developed that I need not have bothered. Hitler's bluff worked. France and Great Britain caved in and betrayed their ally Czechoslovakia. Nazi Germany gained three and a half jubilant new citizens and the awe of the world. There was no stopping Hitler now.

For our family it meant that things were coming to a head and that there was no time to lose. When I took leave from my relatives in Ljubljana I told them I would see them again soon, namely when we escaped from Nazi Germany. I did not realize then that my goodbye to my grandmother was my last one. She would die a few weeks later.

Promptly after my return to Vienna I had to sit for my two written exams. I was poorly prepared and I made a poor job of them. But I passed. I expected sympathy from my father for my dismay over my lackluster performance but I was disappointed. He told me rather curtly not to feel sorry for myself. It soon became clear that there were other things on his mind than my performance. He was already planning to take his life.

No doubt he was feeling a mounting sense of isolation. His brother Paul had left for the United States in May. Hilde had followed him in October. My father's best friend, Ernst Fanta, and his wife departed for Brazil at about that time, amid harrowing scenes on the Vienna railroad station. Their sons and daughters-in-law were waiting for them in Sao Paulo, their new home town. There weren't many close friends and relatives of his left in Austria.

October was also month in which the German army inducted my brother Ernst. The rigmarole was the same as for me. He was sworn in, then given a deferment to continue his medical studies and finally granted a travel permit to visit Yugoslavia which, like mine, expired on March 31, 1939.

For us it had now become clear that March 31 of the next year was a crucial date. We had to be out of Hitler's reach by then or else we were going to wind up in his army and his wars.

The army also inducted Ernst Jodas and Honso, both charter members of our underground cell. Neither was given a deferment and both were put into uniform right

away. I met with Ernst a number of times after that but I never saw Honso again. I heard much later that he had been decorated several times for bravery under fire at the Russian front during the World War, than transferred to the Africa Corps from which he finally deserted to the British. No one knows what became of him after that but, whatever it was, it was surely colorful.

Then came November of 1938, the Crystal Night, and my father's suicide. He had become convinced that he was a burden on his family, and perhaps even a fatal one. He may even have been right. His view of the world was one of pessimistic realism. In his worst-case scenarios he foresaw difficulties with our escape plans which we had not wanted to face. He knew that his death would remove some of them and that it would strengthen our resolve to burn our bridges behind us. That it did.

We had a family council shortly after my father's funeral. We agreed that our target date had to be March 31, 1939. After that date Ernst and I would be either in the German army or deserters from it. We therefore had to be out of Germany by then and in fact out of any other country , such as Italy or Spain, that was likely to extradite us back to Germany as deserters.

Our plan accordingly was for Ernst and me to cross into Yugoslavia in mid-March, ostensibly on a last skiing vacation before we went into the army. We would carry with us only our skis and rucksacks, and in them only what we would normally use on such a vacation. At about the same time, Mama and our youngest (18-year old) brother Karl would travel to Yugoslavia by another route. If questioned at the border, their story would be that they were visiting relatives for a few weeks, and they would carry as much baggage with them as would be plausible with that story. All other belongings of the family, Mama's Vienna Rose china, her wedding silverware, all her furniture and souvenirs, all our books and papers, virtually everything that had gained value in our lives, would be left behind.

Ernst undertook to carry out those of the preparations for our escape that could be made in Vienna, Paul the ones in New York. My job was to pass my remaining five oral exams and to get my PhD, all by mid-March. The plan was to be made known to only to a few very close friends. As far as all others were concerned, we would simply and mysteriously have vanished one day from the Vienna scene.

And this how we proceeded. We were going to have a few close brushes with disaster but on the whole, the plan worked as we expected.

Ernst had to take care of many things in preparation for our escape but two were by far the most important: our US immigration visas and our boat tickets for the trip across the Atlantic. In New York, Paul for his part had to secure sponsors for us, that is, two US citizens who were willing to guarantee financial support for us in case we should be incapable of supporting ourselves. In 1938 the law prescribed this as a prerequisite for a visa. None of these were easy tasks and I will have more to say about them in the next chapter of this story. Here, I will tell about my part in our plan. Those five orals.

I had four months to pass the exams. This was no easy task, either. In fact several of my fellow students at the university bet me that I couldn't do it. They lost but, as things worked out, I could not collect my winnings.

Cramming for the exams was bad enough. But while I did, some very alarming information filtered down to me through the remnants of our underground network. According to it, Hitler was getting ready for yet another of his reckless military adventures. This posed an acute danger for us, namely that of having the deferments canceled for Ernst

and me and trapping us into the German army.

The first inkling came down to me late in 1938. According to it, the Germans planned a D-day of some sort for mid-April of 1939. This was uncomfortably close to our own target date in March. To make matters worse, as time went on, Hitler's D-day kept advancing. At first rumors re-scheduled it for April 1, then for March 20, and finally for March 15. I kept this intelligence to myself because I did not consider it reliable enough to worry the family with it but it certainly worried me.

Then came word of what appeared to be at least a partial confirmation of the rumor. It was a post card received by a family in Vienna from their soldier son in the army. He mentioned that his unit had been issued tropics uniforms and had been told that they would be shipped to Ethiopia, a country occupied by Italy. We surmised that Hitler was using Ethiopia as a staging area for the invasion of an East-African colony which Germany had lost after World War I. The idea seemed plausible because Hitler, in his speeches, had often mentioned the recovery of the lost colonies as one of his aims.

We thought this juicy bit of information should be relayed abroad and I think we succeeded with getting it there, by way of an American journalist, but we heard of no reaction. Perhaps the people who got the word were smarter than we. We did not realize that we had done exactly what the Germans wanted us to do. We had provided a perfect channel of disinformation for them. Hitler had no plans whatsoever for East Africa. His real plan was to occupy Prague and to dismember Czechoslovakia completely, a move which he had solemnly sworn not to make only a few months earlier. And the actual date of that particular betrayal later on turned out to be March 13. We meant well but we probably just did Hitler a favor.

Our trafficking with sensitive information was dangerous business, much more dangerous than we realized. As is now known, counterintelligence agencies have found that disinformation can often be traced to its source much more easily than good information. In fact the German secret police often used this technique during the war to trap underground groups. We were just lucky that they did not or could not use it on us.

For me, these events meant increased pressure to pass my exams. I did in fact pass them all, some quite commendably, others mainly by luck. In one of the lucky ones the examining professor held me up as a shining example to two other candidates whom he had already flunked and who were clearly better prepared than I.

My last exam was scheduled late in February, in the evening of the day before the university closed down for its mid-year break. The students had all gone home. The lights had already been turned off in the mathematics institute. I groped my way along the pitch dark hall towards my professor's office, terrified by the thought that he had forgotten my appointment with him. If he had, there wouldn't be a chance of my getting my degree before we escaped. Then I saw light under his door.

I won my degree that evening. I also won my bets with my fellow students but they were on vacation and I could not collect.

The next few days were spent with frantic decisions on what to pack in the suitcases that Mama and Karl would take with them, and what in the rucksacks that Ernst I would carry. Most of the decisions were negative. There was preciously little that we could bring with us.

On March 5th I got my PhD-diploma. It was by special arrangement. I had told the university officials that I had to report for a job in Germany proper and intimated that my

work would be of a military and confidential nature. The officials were duly impressed and set up a special "ceremony" for me, right after lunch in the deans office. The dean rose from behind his desk, as another student and I were ushered in, sucked the remainders of his meal from between his teeth, handed us our diplomas, and congratulated us. Then he sent us on our way. I went home and continued packing while Mama fought back tears over the thought of how proud my father would have been over my achievement.

Two days later, Ernst and I left for southern Austria, with skis and rucksacks. Our plan was to cross into Yugoslavia near a mountain pass called the Seeberg saddle. We knew the area quite well. We had crossed there on foot and bicycle several times before but only in the summer. We were familiar with the highway over the saddle and with the German and Yugoslav border stations at the top of it.

We were also aware of a second, somewhat higher notch a mile or so east of the saddle which was actually better suited for skis. This was where we planned to cross. There was no permanent border station there. If some passing German patrol stopped us we would tell our story of our last ski vacation and show our military leave papers. There was however a very good reason for our trying to avoid such an encounter. In our rucksacks we carried two highly incriminating documents: our American immigration visas and our boat tickets. The best way of making sure that German border guards did not see this damning evidence was for them not to see us.

The last town on the Austrian side was a cluster of a few houses and a small hotel which went under the name of Bad (spa) Vellach. It was at the tail end of a narrow valley and could be reached only by a bus that got there in the evening and left the next morning. We stayed at the hotel for the night, along with a handful of elderly guests. We satisfied the inquisitive hotel owner with our story of our last skiing vacation. He reciprocated with the advice for us to stop in at the station houses at the border. Both the German and the Yugoslav stations were open, he said, and manned by a few customs agents and soldiers who also patrolled the border on skis. The road across the saddle was skimpily plowed, he added, but used almost only by official vehicles. The information was useful but not overly surprising.

We got up before daybreak on the next morning, well before the hotel staff and guests. The incriminating evidence, boat tickets and US visas, were hidden in our pants legs. At first we walked up the road towards the saddle but before we reached the tree line we strapped on our skis and struck out through the woods towards our notch. It was getting light by then. As we emerged into the open higher up we came across ski tracks, made by hikers or smugglers, going in the same direction as ours. We found them somehow reassuring. We also were safely out of sight of the station houses. The only clear sign of patrols were their ski tracks along the border. When we had crossed them to the Yugoslav side we stopped and shook hands. For us, it was a solemn moment. We had fulfilled the injunction to us in my father's farewell note. Our year under Hitler was over.

We promptly took off downhill away from the border. I still have the skis that carried me. They are in our basement, unused but gratefully remembered and never ignored.

THE ROAD TO NEW YORK

Ernst and I arrived in New York on April 20, 1939 but our immigration really started about fifteen years earlier in a doctor's office in Vienna. My father had taken us boys there for a second opinion on whether or not we should have our tonsils removed. The doctor's opinion was that we should, and having delivered himself of this message, suggested to my father that Ernst and I be registered for immigration to the United States. My father was a bit stunned. You don't usually think of ten-year old boys as candidates for immigration but the doctor said "why not? being registered does not mean that they have to go."

The doctor did not know it but his advice on tonsillectomy was far less important for us than the one on immigration. I still remember his name. It was Knoepfelmacher, an arch-typical Austrian name meaning "maker of little buttons". The doctor however was Jewish. He had changed his name from Karpeles, perhaps because he felt that after hundreds of years of separatism Jews ought to assimilate themselves into the majority among whom they lived. Unfortunately he was too late by several generations, and the Nazi take-over brought it home to him. Shortly after it took place in 1938 he committed suicide.

Back in the mid-twenties however my father thought that Dr. Knoepfelmacher's idea was quite good. He registered Ernst and me, and we were put on the waiting list for immigration visas. Unfortunately he did not register himself or our mother. He also overlooked our youngest brother Karl, probably because of his age. Karl was then only about five years old.

The immigration system at the time, as I remember it, kept you on the waiting list until your name came up. From then on you could ask for your visa at any time, provided you had a sponsor in the US, i.e. a citizen who had filed an affidavit saying that he would support you in the States if you could not support yourself.

Ernst's and my name probably came up around 1930. We must have received a notice then from the US consulate asking whether we were ready to immigrate. We were then about fourteen or fifteen years old, a bit young for immigration. Moreover the golden pavements of the streets of America had recently gotten somewhat tarnished by the Wall street crash of 1929. Under the circumstances my father replied that we would not take advantage of the offer just then but asked that we be kept on the list. The consulate politely thanked us for our continued interest and asked us to supply a self-addressed envelope for its reply if and when we changed our minds. My father took care of this correspondence, including the self-addressed envelope, without Ernst and my knowing anything about it.

With Hitler's arrival in 1939 that correspondence suddenly took on an enormous importance. A frantic search through the papers in my father's desk unearthed it. Was it still valid, we worried. We decided that I should visit the consulate to make sure that Ernst and I really still were on that waiting list.

In the spring of 1939 the consulate was already besieged by people seeking to go to the US. I was advised to get there well before day break to have a chance at entering the building during office hours. When I arrived in the dark around 4am there were already several hundred persons on the sidewalk, four abreast, their conversations in

whispers enforced by several policemen who preserved the sleep of the inhabitants of the surrounding apartment houses.

I don't remember how many hours later I got into the consulate but the news I got there was good. Ernst and I were still on the waiting list. I probably also corrected the oversight from Dr.Knoepfelmacher's days and waitlisted my parents and my brother Karl.

Ernst and I were now sure of our immigration visas as soon as we had sponsors in the US. Finding them however had to wait until our uncle Paul arrived in New York. He got there in May and he started his search immediately. I don't remember the secret of his success but, whatever he did, he was quickly successful.Two ladies agreed to sign their affidavits for us, sight unseen. It is perhaps a sign of my gratitude that I still recall their names. One was Mrs.Herrick, a member of the National Labor Relations Board and a rather important person in public affairs at the time. The other was Mrs.Rankin-Aiken, a professor of English at Columbia University.

Paul's success was communicated to the US consulate in Vienna, and the consulate confirmed it in a note sent to our home. I was completely stunned by it when the mail-man handed it to me. The envelope was addressed in the handwriting of my father whom we had buried only a few weeks earlier. My first reaction, I confess, was to look at what stamp he was using where he was writing from. Then it dawned on me that I was holding the self-addressed envelope he had submitted to the consulate ten years earlier. Still, it was hard to avoid the sensation that he was reaching over to us from another world and showing us the way.

The road to the US was now open for Ernst and me except for one major obstacle. He and I were "wehrpflichtig",i.e., obliged to serve in the German army. This meant that we would never be given the permission to leave the country for good. We had to engineer a way around this obstacle, and Ernst was the who undertook the job of doing so.

The two most important things for him to do were to buy our boat tickets, and to get our US visas. Both were very risky. Regarding the boat tickets, Ernst discovered that the agents of all steamship companies were required to turn over to the German police the names of everyone to whom they had sold such tickets. Evidently his and my name would show up on one of those lists. We had to assume that our names would then also reach the military authorities. They would put a quick end to our plans, and quite likely also to ourselves.

Ernst decided to bet on the elephantine movements of the German bureaucracy. Any information concerning us would no doubt be quite slow to reach the military. Therefore if he bought the tickets as late as possible we could be safely out of the country and out of reach of the army by the time it caught on to our escape.

Unfortunately there was a limit to how long Ernst could wait with the buying of the tickets. The liners going from Europe to the US were jammed with refugees and space on them was getting scarcer and scarcer. He planned his move carefully. He knew that as of March 31, 1939 when our military travel permits expired we would be deserters. As of that date therefore we had to be out of Germany and any other country, like Italy or Spain, that had an extradition agreement with Germany. This meant we had to reach Switzerland or France by then.

Getting into those countries in those times was quite difficult however. They were decidedly inhospitable to refugees from Germany, contrary to the impression they now often give. France allowed them to stay only four days, Switzerland twenty- four hours.

That meant that we would have to sail from an Atlantic port within five days after we arrived in Switzerland. Ernst soon established that there was no space left on any liner departing for r the US before April 15. That left him with the serious problem of where we could spend the time in April until we could embark.

The only solution to our problem was for us to conceal the fact that we were refugees. This meant that no stamp or mark in our passports could indicate that our ultimate destination was overseas. Then we could hope to convince the border officials everywhere that we were simple tourists with every intention of returning home to Germany.

It was this problem that brought about Ernst's and my first contact with an American bureaucracy and made us realize how much more human and understanding it was than its European counterparts. The place was the US consulate in Vienna and the occasion the issuance of our immigration visas.

We first made our request to a clerk, an Austrian, who told us that a visa stamp in the passport was an absolute rule which could not be waived. We could not explain to him the reason for our request. We had been warned that there were informers among the Austrian staff of the consulate. Upon our insistence we were admitted to the consul himself, an American. We took our chance and let him in on our secret. He was immediately sympathetic and observed that immigration visas were really embodied in the sheaves of paper that had already been handed to us. A stamp in the passport, while standard practice, was not essential. He told the clerk to omit it, winked at us, and wished us a good trip.

The first stop on our road to New York was with our relatives in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. Ernst and I arrived there on March 8. Mama and Karl followed us on March 13.They came from Vienna by train. On the morning of that day we saw women crying in the streets. Hitler had occupied Prague during the night. The people in Yugoslavia had a strong sense of fellowship with other Slavic countries and the betrayal of one of them, in the way Hitler had betrayed Czechoslovakia, was deeply upsetting to them. For us it confirmed our view that the German Juggernaut was on the roll. It would now take an immense effort to stop it.

We had only about two weeks to outfit ourselves for our immigration to the US. Mama and Karl had brought with them whatever they could carry in their suit cases without causing suspicion at the German border. Some of it was essential, some less so, and altogether not very much in any case. Everything else we needed, from shoe trees to suits of clothing, had to be bought locally. I don't know how it was paid for. I suppose the money came from the estate of our grandmother.

How to transport our belongings overseas was another problem. We had planned to buy a couple of steamer trunks and ship them from Ljubljana directly to New York, as part of our effort to conceal our refugee status en route. It soon developed that there was no steamer trunk to be had anywhere in Ljubljana. We were stumped.

A luggage store offered to build one for us, and we gratefully accepted. It turned out to be huge but when we brought it to the railroad station for shipment the clerk shook his head and declared the construction much too flimsy for a trip to America. We rushed across the street to a hardware store, bought a couple of hundred feet of thin rope. We wrapped that around our trunk in a mesh that was dense enough to hold in everything bigger than a handkerchief, even if the trunk went to pieces completely. In this way our possessions took off for New York.

We left Ljubljana in the morning of March 29. Mama and Karl came with us to the

railroad station. We assured each other that our separation would be brief. We would soon be reunited in America. It would in fact be six years before we saw our brother again, and seven and a half before Mama could join us in New York. Our Ljubljana relatives had stayed tactfully behind and had taken up positions at a railroad crossing waiting to wave goodbye as we rode past. They waited in vain. Ernst and I could not get a train window open. We saw them but they did see us as we went by.

In this way we got started on the second leg of our road to New York, the first having taken from Vienna to Ljubljana. Our next destination was Bern, Switzerland where our aunt Selma was to put us up until we were allowed to enter France on April 11.

Our train ride took us across northern Italy for most of the day. It was late in the night when we approached our last serious hurdle. It was at least as critical for us as the crossing of the German border. We had to convince the Swiss border officials somehow that we were not refugees but harmless tourists. Otherwise they would not let us enter their country. We would be shipped back to Italy where we would face deportation back to Germany as deserters two days later.

It was around midnight when the train pulled out of the last station in Italy and roared into the interminable Simplon tunnel towards Switzerland. The Italian border officials showed no interest in us. They briskly stamped our passports, as well as that of a Rumanian lady who shared the compartment with us, and went on to the next compartment.

Then came the Swiss passport control. That official gave us a very hard time. He simply would not believe that we were tourists on our way to a skiing vacation in the Swiss Alps. I could understand his doubts. Why would anybody go from Austria to ski in Switzerland in the first place and, even he did, why would he do so by way of Yugoslavia and Italy? I now think that he really wanted to be convinced. He asked whether we knew anybody in Switzerland. At this point Ernst saved the situation. He remembered the name of a Protestant pastor, an acquaintance Selma's. The mention of it broke the Swiss ice. The official shook his head dubiously but he stamped our passports and left.

The baggage inspector came next. He was a tall lanky man with a Fu Manchu mustache. He made a perfunctory search of our suitcases and rucksacks, then turned to examine the luggage of the Rumanian lady while Ernst and I quickly shelved ours on the baggage racks. The inspector was on his way out of the compartment when turned around, came back in and reached for exactly the suitcase that contained the incriminating documents, our boat tickets and US visa papers. Our hearts nearly stopped but he merely reached up to close one of the buckles which we had left open in our hurry. He smiled at us under his melancholy mustache and walked on.

Ernst and I looked at each other, then heaved a sigh of relieve We shook hands, as we had done on the German border three weeks earlier. The Rumanian lady, somewhat puzzled, asked us what was going on. We decided we were now safe enough to tell her. "We just deserted from the German army", we said. "Oh, I knew that all along", she replied and laughed. Ernst and I did not laugh with her. It just dawned on us that one word from her could have delivered us back into the hands of the Nazis.

It was barely daylight when we detrained in Geneva. We were surprised to see soldiers in the streets, oddly outfitted with steel helmets, rifles, and suitcases. It developed that the national guard had been called up during the night. A general emergency had been declared in Switzerland. Only this time it was not Hitler who had caused it. It had been Mussolini. His troops had been shipped across the Adriatic during the night and were invading Albania. Perhaps we should not have been as surprised as we were. For years we had seen among the thousands of slogans painted on the house walls

throughout Italy by the Fascists "Mare Nostrum", in the original Latin. It was Mussolini's claim to the Adriatic and the surrounding countries. Now, inspired by the Nazi successes, he decided to start staking his own claims as well.

The Swiss mobilization was short-lived and Mussolini's adventure did not affect Ernst and me. We spent a few days with our aunt Selma, slept in a living room festooned with ribbons bearing biblical sayings, and a few more days skiing in the Alps. On the last run of the last day, too tired for my own good, I took a glorious spill. It deposited me among some very sturdy fir trees and cracked two of my ribs. They caused me some discomfort but did not affect the rest of our travel.

During the night of April 10 we reached France by train. We had an uneventful four-day stay in Paris. People were unfriendly, partly because that is the way Parisians seem to be and partly because they assumed we were Germans. We, for our parts, observed the French soldiers on guard at their barracks entrances, lounging against the walls, smoking cigarettes and flirting with girls. We concluded that the Germans were gratifyingly disliked but the French army did not have chance against the German one if war came. And of course it came only six months later.

We left Paris for Cherbourg by boat train. From the railing of the Queen Mary we watched our huge trunk, still in one piece, suspended for a few agonizing minutes over water and then stowed in the hold. We had a cabin with three bunks all to ourselves, good food, good service, rough weather, and some skirmishes with sea sickness.

Paul was waiting for us on the pier in New York. He took us to the furnished room he had rented on Westend Avenue in Manhattan. At one point during our reunion conversations and while we waited for Hilde to join us, I wandered over to the window. Below me I could see a street sign. It said "Clean your sidewalk. Curb your dog". At that moment it hit me. The sign was in English. Not in German, or Italian, or French, or in any other language. We were in America. We had finally made it!

IMMIGRANTS

We had arrived in a new country, in fact a new continent. We had left behind us another one, infested with the inane ideologies of the twentieth century and teetering on the edge of war. We had no job prospects and very little money. We were overwhelmed by new impressions and new experiences, some trivial, some less so.

We found that America had plenty of butter in 1939, unlike Germany which had guns instead. We splurged on butter. Coffee was good everywhere and never adulterated with miserable chicory, as it often was back in Vienna. Freshly squeezed orange juice was a delicious novelty but, at a nickel a glass , a bit pricey and to be had only on special occasions. Tomato juice was unfit for human consumption, as far as we were concerned.

Along Manhattan streets, the newspapers for sale were lying on small shelves in front of the vendors' shops, unattended, with a cup next to them in which the customers left their money and took their change. This honor system amazed me but when I remarked on it I was told that nobody could possibly be so unfair as to cheat on it. I was equally amazed later on by the honor system in school exams. In Vienna at the time cheating and stealing on such occasions were taken for granted.

The girls I found to be prettier than the braided Germanic beauties I had left behind but, with a few exceptions, not quite as pretty as the movies had led me to expect. Moreover they spoke English very fluently. I didn't, and that complicated the socializing.

There was never any doubt in our minds that we should become American citizens, and as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, in 1939, naturalization was not a quick process. To start it you had to apply for your "First Papers". In these you stated your intent to become a citizen and the name under which you intended to do so. The "Second Papers" were the naturalization certificate which made you a citizen but you had to wait at least five years before you could apply for those.

Ernst and I filed for our First Papers within a week after our arrival. There had been considerable discussion over what last name we should use in them. We decided to file under our mother's maiden name. We had several reasons. One was caution. We were after all deserters from the German army and we felt we should cover our traces as best we could. Moreover we never really liked our last name Freud. We shared our father's low opinion of the founder of psychology and of his work. The idea of having to disclaim a relationship with him over and over again did not appeal to us. To our disappointment Paul and Hilde did not go along with our decision. They kept the last name Freud while I retained it only as a middle name and Ernst eliminated it altogether.

I had never really felt entirely safe from Hitler's reach until I reached the US. Our name change and of course the 3000-mile stretch of water between him and us certainly helped. More importantly however America conveyed to me a sense of tremendous vitality and strength, in a way which no other country had done. For the first time I felt that here was a reservoir brimful with the material and spiritual resources that were more than a match for those of Nazi Germany.

There was none of the persistent chest-thumping one had to endure in Germany. Americans seemed unaware of the sense of strength their country conveyed. On the

contrary they were forever agonizing over the shortcomings of their society and over the ways of fixing them. I also sensed a sort of inferiority complex among them vis-a-vis things European. In most respects their attitude was quite unjustified.

It was totally unjustified in the area of daily conveniences. In America almost every family had a car. In Europe only the very well-to-do did. Every home we visited had hot and cold running water and a refrigerator. In Europe few did. In fact in the older houses in Vienna the apartments on each floor still shared a common bathroom. Here, every apartment house with more than two or three floors had an elevator. Virtually none of those in Vienna, with their typical five floors, had one.

Central heating: I reveled in the sound of steam in the radiator of my room during the winter later that year. In Vienna every room of our apartment, as of most others in the city, was heated by its own coal stove, if it was heated at all, and then only late in the day. Getting out of bed on a winter morning meant getting into an frigid room with ice on the windows and ice in the wash basin. The kitchen and the (unused) maid's room had no heat at all.

In the hushed university libraries you could tell a European from his squeaking shoes. American shoes never squeaked. Moreover you bought them according to length and width. In Europe you bought them by length only. You had to try on pair after pair until you came upon one that seemed to fit tolerably well and then you let your feet fight it out with the shoes. Blisters and corns were your typical battle scars.

Americans nevertheless seemed to admire Europe, perhaps for its superiority in the sciences and in culture. There may have been some justice in that in 1939, and Ernst and I were only glad to bask in our share of that admiration. We soon were having serious second thoughts however.

Ernst had expected to get his MD in Vienna after another year of study. He was therefore hoping to get into the senior year of medical school in the US. He quickly discovered that getting into any year of medical school would take a near-miracle. Each school accepted only a limited number of students and all available slots were filled. Moreover the tuition was completely beyond our means financially.

The near-miracle happened quite the same. A fellowship was established at NYU, expressly for a deserving refugee from Germany, and Ernst's application for it was accepted. The only fly in his ointment was that it was for the junior, and not as he had hoped, for the senior year. He would loose a year, and he was dismayed.The loss, as he found later, was a blessing. The curriculum and rigor of the study was so much higher at NYU than it had been at the University of Vienna that he would have unquestionably been flunked out if he had been admitted into the senior year. As it was he had to work very hard to graduate.

A little later I got my own comeuppance. I had by then been hired by Villanova College as an instructor of mathematics and physics. Getting a teaching job in 1939 was a near-miracle, also. Unemployment was high in the US. The unempoyment rate was 17.2%, compared to 5.4% in 1994. Jobs were very scarce. I got mine as an act of charity towards German refugees from Father Stanford, the president of the college. The fact that I had a recommendation from Einstein helped. Neither Father Stanford nor I knew at the time that Einstein was an extremely kind and generous person and wrote the warmest recommendation letters for almost everyone who asked for them.

In addition to that letter I had my brand-new PhD from the University of Vienna. It did not escape my notice that among the three physics instructors at the college I was the

only one with a doctorate. In fact rumor had it that one of my two colleagues, a priest, had tried for a PhD but had flunked out.

Under the circumstances I was quite pleased with my scientific laurels. Still, they struck me as rather thin. I decided to improve myself by studying some of the more advanced topics in my field which I had been allowed to ignore for my exams in Vienna, probably because most of my examining professors did not know them either.

In this spirit I took the most advanced book on quantum mechanics out of the college library and sat down to study it. I found it to be an eye opener in more ways than one. The book had been donated to the library by my priest colleague and had its margins filled with annotations in his handwriting. He had evidently made a detailed study of its subject in preparation for his PhD exam. It was an examination which he then failed. By contrast, for my PhD-exam in Vienna, I had not been expected to know anything at all about the subject. So much for my proud PhD.

By fall of 1939 Ernst and I were pretty well convinced that America was either ahead of Europe, or in the process of pulling ahead, in every field in science and culture we could assess. What was more, Americans by and large did not seem to be aware of it or greatly care one way or another.

With the fall also came the great war in Europe and, for us, worries over our youngest brother Karl and our mother Mama who had not made it into the States. Karl had only gotten as far as England. I don't remember how he managed to get an entry permit there. He had it when he left Ljubljana for Bern in Switzerland in August. Mama accompanied him and stayed with him for a few days at the apartment of our aunt Selma. Then she had to say goodbye to him. He managed to get a space on one of the last ferry boats going from the continent to England before war was declared and all commercial shipping was halted.

Mama returned to our relatives in Ljubljana. Her farewell to Karl must have been a heartbreak for her. With his departure she had lost everything she had had only six months earlier, husband, home, and children. From then on, she would live in a room in her brother's apartment, with the menace of Nazi Germany only a couple of hours' train ride away.

Yugoslavia was still a neutral country in the fall of 1939 but no one in it was quite safe from the Nazi tentacles. The German consulate in Ljubljana soon approached Mama with inquiries concerning our whereabouts. She stonewalled as best she could by replying that we had deserted her. We in turn tried to support her story with a phony letter in which we apologized for having abandoned her. I don't know whether she ever used it.

The fire storm which Hitler unleashed on the world began on Sept.1. On that day his troops invaded Poland from the West and his Soviet allies from the East. Two days later France and Great Britain declared war on Germany. Fifty million people would die before the war ended.

I myself had started on my job at Villanova College. My salary was $1000 for the academic year, from which $500 was subtracted for room and board. I was assigned a room in a students' dormitory and ate my meals in the student cafeteria.

I soon got to know some of the students and found them a delightful contrast to their counterparts in Germany. They were clean-shaven and wore their hair in crew cuts, rather than in ways that emphasized some lofty military or racial traditions. On the street they sauntered along instead of walking in lockstep, as we had done. In short, they did

not take themselves seriously.

At the College the boys studied when they had to, and had fun otherwise. They had little interest in politics, national or international. This bothered me at first. I felt they were wasting the great resources of enthusiasm and commitment that reside in all young people. Then I remembered what awful use these resources had been put to in Nazi Germany. Theirs, I concluded, was a much healthier attitude.

My teaching load was three classes. To be on the safe side it had apparently been decided by the academic authorities that I should teach only non-paying students to start with. Those were the seminarians preparing for the priesthood, and they were the most enjoyable students I have ever taught.

The three classes were in trigonometry, in physics, and in first-year German. Except for having to teach in English, the trigonometry class was easy. German was dismaying. I had no idea of how beastly the German grammar is. I felt sorry for the boys who had to grapple with all the rules, and exceptions to the rules, most of which were as new to me as to them.

Physics was a bit more of a problem because the class the boys had to take after mine was one in scholastic philosophy. The philosophy teacher, it seems, started his instruction by asking the students "and what did he tell you today?" After he was informed, he would suggest to the boys a particularly hairsplitting scholastic argument with which they could trip me up in my next class. The counter-arguments which I then produced in defense of modern physics were sometimes a bit on the slippery side, I confess. I then often felt a little guilty over my slick sophistry but it seemed more important for me to defend my precarious job than modern physics. The boys and their scholastic prompter seemed to be satisfied with my replies, anyway.

Among the more imaginative and persistent debaters in the physics class was a tall rather lanky fellow named Bill Gordon. Perhaps in order to show me that there were no hard feelings he invited me to a Christmas dinner at the home of his parents in Brooklyn. There I finally met two girls who were fully as pretty as I had expected them to be from the American movies. But my English, newly sharpened by trigonometry and physics, unfortunately was inadequate to the occasion. I resolved to try it again at some later date. That date did not come for several years but my English was adequate then. In fact I persuaded one of the two girls to marry me.

In the mean time I fashioned a meteoric career at Villanova College. At the end of the first year I was moved from the students' dorm, with its loud radios and latrine-like facilities, to the rich students' dorm where I had a quiet room with a private bath. I was entrusted with classes of tuition paying students who were off-limits to scholastic philosophers.

My salary was raised. Perhaps Father Stanford would have liked to have done even better for me in this respect but could not. At any rate in the spring of 1940 he recommended me as a kind of male governess to a family with five boys.

The Jayne's were Philadelphia blue bloods whose forebears included everybody who was anybody in the American revolution. They were unusual also in that they were Catholics and Democrats. Mr. Jayne was the director of the art museum of the University of Pennsylvania. He seemed thoughtful and somewhat remote much of the time except when he was behind the wheel of his Buick. There he was demonic. Mrs. Jayne wore formal dresses for dinner and saw to it that the meal was treated as a fairly festive occasion. She kept a permanently stiff upper lip, even after I had graduated from a WPA

driving school and took her and the boys for a spin.

The family lived in a large mansion set in a formal, if slightly neglected, garden. They had five live-in women servants, all black, and an Italian gardener who chauffeured me back and forth to the College for my classes. I now suspect that such a household could not very well have been maintained on a museum director's salary, and the fact is it was already fraying a bit on the edges.

Among the Jayne's, I felt, I was as close to the roots of the best of American traditions as I would ever get, and I greatly enjoyed that. They in turn treated me not like an employee but as a relative, though perhaps as a somewhat impoverished one. The comfort of their family environment was especially welcome to me in that spring of 1940 because the news from the war in Europe kept going from bad to worse.

Hitler's armies had invented a new and frighteningly successful form of warfare, the blitzkrieg. They had in short order overrun Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. Casual observations in Paris a year earlier had convinced Ernst and me that the French military would not stand up to the Germans. We had been right. Within a month the Germans had eliminated it as a fighting force. Italy joined the war on Germany's side and Mussolini got ready to show the world that he, too, could do some blitzkrieg campaigning. Unfortunately for him, his campaigns all promptly fizzled out.

Nevertheless, in mid-1940, he and Hitler were at war essentially with only one remaining opponent, namely the British Empire, and England was their obvious next conquest. There were many people on both sides of the Atlantic at that time who fully expected the conquest to take place within a month.

To say that I was greatly alarmed by these developments in Europe would be an understatement. I worried over whether England would be able, or even willing, to stand up to the German war machine and what would happen if it gave in. I was worried most of all over what would happen to our brother Karl. On a less personal level I was worried over what would happen to the whole world if the loathsome trio of Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini were to become its rulers.

Americans by and large were not as alarmed as I. The sympathy of the majority was certainly on the side of England but it was no more than that. The general attitude seemed to be that the events in Europe were certainly most regrettable but that they were the Europeans' business and should be left for them to settle. The Germans were regarded with some grudging respect, especially for their victory over France, but those who actually sympathized with them were a small minority. Relatively little was known of their treatment of the European Jews and what was known was often considered too preposterous to be believed.

Among the boys at the College there were many of Irish descent and for some of those any enemy of England was their friend. Another large group, as at any Catholic college, were of Italian descent but they had no sense of fellowship with Mussolini's Italy.

Karl's existence in England seems to have been near the brink of calamity much of the time. He had arrived there with only days to spare before the war broke out in the fall of 1939. He was first put up by a compassionate family near London but almost immediately faced internment as enemy alien. As I remember his story, his host family interceded for him and secured his classification as refugee. But they were able to do so only at a price, namely his relocation into the industrial region around Manchester, the so-called "black country". There he was to work in a factory engaged in war-related work.

We in the US, and most of all our uncle Paul, made every effort to bring Karl to America. Karl's letters to us from England still tell an agonizing two-year story of hopes raised and hopes dashed, living with scant rations, through series of air raids, illness, unremittingly hard work, and finally of bitter disappointment.

Compared to his life, mine was easy. I felt that my side of the American street was already paved with gold, what with my princely salary at the College, augmented by my wages as governess. I needed very little. My main expense was the bill for food and board from the College. Most of the rest of the income went into my bank account. The only thing I really missed was the sight of mountains. I often tried to imagine that the clouds above the campus tree tops were mountains but they never were the real thing and they always dissolved before my eyes.

My bank account came to the rescue. It enabled me to buy a car. It was a second-hand Ford coupe which I christened with the Austrian diminutive for Josephine, namely Peperl. This car was one of the great thrills of my life. In Vienna I used to dream occasionally of owning a motorcycle and I would have happily settled for one of the scrawny little machines that sputtered along the city streets and highways. It would never have occurred to me that I could own a real car in which three people could sit side by side, in full comfort, sheltered against the weather, with windshield wipers to turn on when it rained and a heater when it got cold.

In the August of 1941 I asked Peperl to take me West so I could see mountains again. I saw them, and more. Peperl carried me through upstate New York, along Lake Erie to Chicago, and from there towards South Dakota. I saw a road sign that said "Visit Wall's Drug Store, Rapid City, 850 Miles". Together we crossed the great sea of sage brush and the fantastic Bad Lands.

Then we came to the mountains, the Black Hills, the Big Horns, and the Grand Tetons, some in the first snow of the season, and I drank them in. Outside of Salt Lake City, under a road sign that said "San Francisco" in one direction and "Denver" in the other, I stopped and counted my money. I discovered I had enough to buy gas for my trip back to Villanova but not for anything else. I drove almost day and night, slept in the car, nearly fainted from hunger in Iowa, but made it to the College for a real meal and night's sleep. When I tried to start Peperl the next morning the battery was dead. I was too broke to buy a new one.

The new semester started almost immediately, with its routine of preparing classes and teaching, giving and grading exams. It was on a Sunday afternoon while I was sitting at my desk, grading and listening to the New York Philharmonic broadcast, that the news came over the radio. The Japanese were attacking Pearl Harbor.

The war had engulfed the US.

ALMOST A SPY, TWICE

The attack on Pearl Harbor changed everything, for me, for our family, and for the whole country. I was itching to get into action of some kind although, as a non-citizen, my options in early 1942 were quite limited. I would have been satisfied with simple soldiering. I would not have dreamt that I would come close to being sent abroad as a secret agent for the US, and not only once but twice.

The generally lukewarm attitude among Americans toward the war changed overnight. People were furious over the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, especially because two highly placed Japanese envoys were at the same time in Washington ostensibly negotiating a peaceful solution to the differences between the two countries.

Recent writing seeks to explain away the duplicity of the Japanese pre-war policy by saying that it was all a misunderstanding and, anyway, Japan had been forced against the wall by the machinations of the US government. The facts in the matter are, I think, much simpler. The Japanese were highly impressed with Hitler's military successes in Europe and with the ghastly "Neue Ordnung"(New Order) he was imposing there. They had concluded a pact with him earlier in the year which conceded to them the Far East as their "sphere of influence" which gave them a free hand to do the same sort of thing in Asia and the Pacific. They felt they would easily do in their sphere what Hitler had done in his and they were going to use the German blitzkrieg strategy to achieve it. The attack on Pearl Harbor was the crucial part of that strategy.

The attack was followed by a flurry of declarations of war, by the US on Japan and by Germany and Italy on the US. My brother Ernst and I were wondering whether the American fury would translate into the kind of drastic action which a total war requires. We were reassured a month later by a picture in one of the newspapers. It showed acres of machines moved from the General Motors production line into an open field and covered with snow. Evidently, America meant business.

Another concern of ours was our status in the country. Were we now enemy aliens? We had to report to the nearest post office where the postmaster had to determine our status. Ernst reported in Manhattan and was branded an enemy alien. He was registered and warned that he had to obtain permission for, among other things, travel beyond New York City. I reported in Villanova where the postmaster knew me and declared me a friendly alien. I was free to travel as I wished.

It soon developed that our status did not matter in the least. For all practical purposes Ernst was as unrestricted in his movements as I was.

We were worried for a while that we would be the butts of hostile remarks. After all, we were out of uniform, non-citizens, and had Austrian accents. We compared notes later on. I had experienced no sign of animosity of any kind, and Ernst one. I ascribed this to the general spirit of fairness among Americans. I decided I would never accuse them of bias without first asking myself whether there was not perhaps some good reason for it.

The main effect of America's entry into the war on us, as a family, was that we were now much more drastically separated than before. Shortly before the Pearl Harbor attack our brother Karl had obtained permission on both sides of the Atlantic for his immigration into the US. He had had every hope of joining us in early 1942. That hope

was now gone. All non-essential travel between England and America was immediately discontinued. It would be three years before it was reopened and Karl was granted space on a boat. Until then we were reduced to letter writing.

Our contacts with our mother were almost completely broken off. Yugoslavia had become enemy territory. In April a change in the government of the country infuriated Hitler to the point of ordering its invasion. He invited Mussolini to join in the fun. Together they conducted a particularly murderous campaign and occupied the country. Ljubljana was handed over to Italian troops who proceeded to rule with pompous and vicious arbitrariness. The only contacts allowed with Mama were brief and insipid messages, conveyed through the International Red Cross and taking months to reach their destinations, if they ever got there at all.

In those months Ernst and I were both greatly bothered by the fact that we were civilians when almost all young men and also many young women were in uniform. As non-citizens we had very little to say in the matter. In particular we could not volunteer. Ernst was immediately deferred in order to finish his medical training. When I spoke to Father Stanford, the president of Villanova College, about quitting the school in order to be drafted he asked me to hold off. Villanova had been selected to be among the colleges which were to give advanced technical training to sailors in the Navy. I would be needed for this V12 Program, as it was called. I would be more useful to the war effort on the campus than in the army, Father Stanford said. The College would insist on my deferment, whether I liked it or not.

Father Stanford was probably right, judging by my experience several years later as an enlisted man, but at the time I was quite unhappy over being side-lined in this fashion. I was hoping for a stroke of luck that would extricate me from the humdrum of teaching and get me into action. In the 1943, after more than a year of V12-teaching, this stroke of luck seemed to have come my way.

It started harmlessly enough with a letter from the Office of Strategic Services, the cloak-and-dagger outfit that became the CIA after the war. It said the Office understood I had photographs of southern Europe and would I mind if they made copies of them. I sent what little I had to the Washington address I had been given. Then I began to wonder: if they could use my photographs, could they perhaps use me? My inquiry led to some correspondence (I still have most of it; it is in a folder marked Misc. Documents of Some Interest) and an invitation to visit the OSS in Washington. The visit turned out to be altogether breath-taking.

I had been prepared for the exact opposite. Before I went I asked Father Stanford for his advice and permission. He then told me he had a good idea of what the job offer would be. The US Army was training officers to form military governments in occupied countries and people like I were being hired to add local color to the instruction. I found this a very uninspiring prospect and I was all primed to say No. But I traveled to Washington in order to say so.

As it happened the visit actually had a different flavor altogether, and right from the start. A marine escort took me from the front door of my destination along a series of corridors and through a room full of typists to the office of the captain I had come to see. He apologized for the lack of privacy in his office and took me to another one which was clearly unused. There he started to ask me in increasing detail about my background, my activities in Vienna, and my familiarity with Austria and Yugoslavia. When he seemed satisfied with what I told him he got up opened the door, looked out into the corridor, closed the door again, and then asked the crucial question.

"Would you be willing to go behind enemy lines in civilian clothes?"

I nearly fell off my chair. The question I had been prepared for was whether I would be willing to supply local color in some Army school and I was ready to answer No. It took me only a few seconds to gather my wits and then to answer Yes.

The rest of my conversation with the captain dealt with a few formalities, for instance, would I want to operate as a paid employee of the OSS or would I prefer to be first inducted into the Army and function as member of the Armed Forces.(I opted for the latter.) Then the captain said he wanted me to talk to someone else.

This someone else turned out to be a lieutenant. He was less formal than the captain but harder driving. He had a larger office, with a huge map of southern Europe on the wall. His questioning was more animated and, if anything, even more detailed than the captain's. Where would I best establish myself? I pointed to the map on the wall and outlined the mountains on the Austrian-Yugoslav border. I knew the area well, I told the lieutenant, and spoke the local dialect tolerably well. What would be the best way of getting me into the area, by submarine or by parachute? I couldn't answer. Lack of experience with either. The lieutenant smiled. How long could I operate in Vienna without being detected? Not very long, I replied, three weeks perhaps. "That's not long enough," was the lieutenant's opinion.

The interview ended with the discussion of some administrative detail. I asked how long I would have to wait before being called. "About three weeks," said the lieutenant, " but I won't be here when you join us; I'll be in Cairo." What should I tell Father Stanford before I suddenly vanished from the campus? My suggestion that I had been drafted to work on a top-secret rocket development project was accepted. Then the lieutenant said good-bye. "I'll see you in Cairo," were his parting words.

Ernst had joined my OSS initiative shortly after I had started it. He had been interviewed on the same day as I but at the New York branch office of the OSS. His interviewer had been much cagier than mine. Still we assumed we were in this together and we settled down to wait for our summons.

Ernst arranged a meeting between us and two men who had active contacts in Yugoslavia and who, he felt, might advise us on how we could establish ourselves after the OSS had infiltrated us. They showed us letters that had been smuggled out of Yugoslavia and which provided a picture of the conditions there under German occupation. It was a very disturbing picture.

There was wide-spread guerrilla warfare throughout the country. This, Ernst and I felt, would be most helpful to us. The letters soon changed our minds. The trouble was that there were two large groups of guerrilla fighters, the Chetniks whose aim it was to restore Yugoslavia to its pre-war status, and the Partisans under Tito who wanted to set up a Soviet-style regime. The two groups, according to these letters, were fighting each other at least as bitterly as they were fighting the Germans. It became clear to Ernst and me that we were headed for a situation of compounded danger.

It was a very tense waiting period for both of us. Ernst's was aggravated by a fierce appendicitis attack. It was treated with ice packs because he refused an operation in order to be ready when the call came.

My problems were of a less dramatic kind. I wandered till late in the night among the silent streets around the college and tried to think ahead. I greatly doubted that I would see the end of the war if it lasted any length of time, and in 1943 there was no end in

sight. For survival, I felt, I would need some characteristics which I lacked, such as a short reaction time and the knack to flim-flam and deceive when necessary. And I was saddened by the thought that I was about to leave the country that had welcomed and liberated me and that I would never see it again.

As it happened Ernst and I need not have worried. The call from the OSS never came, and not until well after the war did I discover the reason. Our activities were obviated in November of 1943 by a momentous meeting in Teheran between Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin.

The chief topic at the meeting was the joint allied strategy against Germany in the following year. All agreed that the main thrust in the West would of course be the cross-channel invasion of France. There would however also be a second one, coming from the south and supporting the first one. Roosevelt and Churchill proposed one through what they called the "Ljubljana gap". Ernst and I were presumably to be sent into the area to prepare the way for this Anglo-American push. But Stalin in Teheran dissuaded his allies from the idea. He wanted Yugoslavia reserved for his fellow communist Tito. The supporting thrust, it was decided, would come through southern France.

Without our knowing it Ernst and I had thus lost our jobs with the OSS. We were unemployed spies. I now think it is a good thing we were. Roosevelt's and Churchill's plan might well have turned into a disaster. In my opinion there is, for one, no such thing as a "Ljubljana gap". The town is surrounded by mountains and the allied troops would have ground themselves to bits fighting their way through them. Ljubljana would no doubt have been destroyed. Our mother might have survived the destruction, or she might not, but I doubt that Ernst and I would have.

At Villanova, totally unaware of these high-level negotiations, I bombarded the OSS and other agencies with letters but got only bland replies saying that there were no openings. Then, several months later, a second opportunity arose from an entirely unexpected source. Our uncle Paul knew a Mr. Seckel who, Paul assured me, had very good contacts in the OSS and who was quite willing to get me into the organization. Paul arranged a meeting. It turned out to be quite a memorable one.

The occasion was a soiree at the Seckels' apartment, a rather luxurious affair on Central Park South, featuring antique furniture, oriental carpets, and a view of the park. There were four couples there. The wives, I remember, struck as uncommonly good-looking but a bit snobbish. I was the odd man out. After dinner two of the couples settled down to a game of bridge in the living room and Mr.Seckel took me into the bedroom for a private chat.

From Paul I knew something of his background. In the days before Hitler he had been the head of the Austrian state tobacco monopoly, one of the few organizations that had plenty of money to spend. It spent some of that money in the tobacco-growing Balkan countries, partly on tobacco and partly to buy favors among influential government officials there. Apparently many of these favors had not been called in by Mr.Seckel when, thanks to Hitler, Austria as well as its tobacco monopoly ceased to exist. It was those favors that made Mr. Seckel so useful when war broke out.

The Seckels had by then moved to France. When the Germans overran that country the White House gave their immigration to the US the highest priority. They were smuggled across the border into Spain, in the disguise of monks, and from there to Lisbon and a ship that brought them to America.

Here the OSS were no doubt waiting for Mr.Seckel. He was a Balkan expert with

excellent high-level contacts and such a person was in great demand at the time. Bulgaria and Rumania had entered the war on the German side. Turkey was teetering on the edge of an uncertain neutrality. Yugoslavia and Greece had been overrun by German and Italian troops. They had become occupied countries and were riddled with guerrilla warfare. Only an expert might know what, if anything, could be done in the area to help the allied cause.

In the privacy of his bedroom Mr.Seckel opened our conversation by saying "So you want to join the OSS."

After I assured him that I did, very much, he assured me that he could get me in. "You are exactly the kind of person they want," he said, "and I will be glad to recommend you but before I do I would like to tell you a few things which you may not be aware of.

" First of all you should know that there is a leak in the OSS." He recognized immediately that I did not really believe him, so he continued. "You don't believe me, do you? Did you know Count Loewenstein?" I answered that I did not, and in fact did not know any counts, Austrian or otherwise. Mr.Seckel proceeded with his story. "He was a person just like you, young, idealistic, determined, in very good physical shape. He volunteered to go into Germany as an OSS agent. The Abwehr (the German counter-intelligence service) waited for him when he got off the gangplank in Lisbon and followed him until he reached the German occupied part of France. There he was arrested, jailed, and executed a few days later."

He got up from his chair and went over to an antique cubby-holed desk. "I'll show you another piece of evidence," he said and fished a letter from one of the little compartments. He gave it to me to read. It was in German but it made no sense to me whatsoever, and I told Mr.Seckel so. "Of course it makes no sense to you," he said, "it is written so that only I can understand what it says and here is the story behind it.

"A couple of months ago word reached me that the Bulgarians were sick of the war and were ready to negotiate a separate peace. They were prepared to sent a clandestine delegation to Istambul to talk terms with a similar group from the US. The OSS was delighted when I mentioned this to them and asked me to head their negotiating team. I was about to leave for Istambul when the letter arrived which you have just read. And now I will tell you what this letter really says."

He pointed to a perfectly harmless sounding passage and explained its meaning to me. "It says the Germans know that we are coming from the US to Istambul. It further says that the Bulgarians know that the Germans know, and they are not coming. I showed this letter to the OSS," Mr.Seckel added, "and told them there was no longer any point in anybody going to Istambul. But they would not believe me. So they sent a delegation headed by Mr.Botvinnik (or some such name) who is now sitting in our living room playing bridge with ladies. His mission was bound to be a failure if for no other reason but that the Germans knew he could be bought for $10000 and the Bulgarians knew he could be bought, and they stayed home. And now Mr.Botvinnik is back here with nothing to show for but a handful of playing cards."

He returned the letter to its cubby-hole and then sat down again with me.

"Tell me," he asked, "just what do you expect to do as an OSS agent in Germany?" I had no clear idea. Sabotage, I told Mr.Seckel, such as blowing up bridges and tunnels and similar daredevil undertakings. He proceeded to disabuse me of such romantic notions.

"Don't forget, "he said, "that from the point of view of the OSS you are not an especially valuable operator. Your trouble is that you don't know any important people. You will therefore get a rather low-level assignment to begin with. You will probably be told to rent a room overlooking the switchyard of a rail- road junction and to count the number of freight cars that are moving through it. This is important strategic information all right but you take an enormous risk collecting it.

"Look at it this way. Assume that you avoid Count Loewenstein's fate and manage to get to your station. You will then live day and night with an ear cocked for the sound of heavy boots on the stairs to your room that tells you that you have been denounced and that the military police is now coming for you. And that will then be the end of you, of course.

"And back at the OSS headquarters in Washington they will do little more than cross your name off a list and shake their heads regretfully over having lost another railroad car counter."

Mr.Seckel did not stop there. He went on with his depressing picture of life as a spy. "This may not happen of course," he said, " you may be lucky and survive long enough in this assignment to be promoted to the next. Instead of watching railroad trains you will travel on them. Your job will then be to listen to the conversations of your fellow passengers for bits of factual information which you will then relay to your superiors. Most of this information will seem totally trivial to you. It will in fact be trivial until it is collated with other similar bits coming to your superiors from other sources. Then a picture may emerge that is important enough to present to the generals.

"You may of course be lucky and overhear an unguarded remark about an impending German offensive. You will immediately recognize its importance and you will be all excited when you relay it to your superiors. Do you think you will be praised for your discovery?" Mr.Seckel laughed at the mere thought. "You won't. Two things can happen. One is that the generals act on the information you gave them. In that case they will defeat the German offensive. They will be glorified for their military skill and will be awarded medals from one shoulder to the other. Your part in the triumph will be forgotten.

"The second possibility is the more likely one. It is that your information is ignored. If that happens the generals could never admit that you had warned them. Your message, and in fact your existence, will become their uncomfortable secret. There may even be a sigh of relief if the Germans should apprehend you and dispose of you because the generals' secret is then safe."

The pessimistic picture painted by Mr.Seckel made me ask him at this point just what in his opinion the survival probability was of the OSS agents in Germany. "Right now," he guessed,"no better than ten percent but that of course depends on how much longer the war lasts. The war, at least in Europe, will probably end at some time in 1945. This will certainly improve your chances of seeing the end of it."

He evidently regretted the ray of hope that he had injected into his story because hurried to extinguish it. "Don't think that your troubles would be over if you lived that long. You will then have new ones. The people in the OSS will surely wonder how you managed to survive when so many others did not. Did you perhaps save your skin by a double-cross? They know full well that spying attracts the scum of the earth. Are you perhaps one of that crowd? Their suspicions of you will hang over you for the rest of your life.

"And in other countries your status will be no better because they will all know your wartime role and you will be watched warily from the moment you enter till you leave."

Mr.Seckel had made his point and he now asked whether I still wanted him to recommend me to the OSS. I made a quick mental assessment of what he had told me. He clearly wanted to dissuade me from a cloak-and-dagger career and had painted as dark a picture of it as he could. My uncle Paul had no doubt put him up to it. Nevertheless there was surely enough realism in it to make it a rather unappealing proposition.

I thanked Mr.Seckel profusely and said that, all things considered I'd rather go into the Army as a private.

And that is what I did shortly afterwards.

SOLDIER, AT.LAST

Ernst, Karl, and I finally got into the army, perhaps late but not never.

Ernst was the first. He was inducted into the Army Medical Corps, with a second lieutenant's commission, as soon as he finished his residency requirements in the fall of 1944. He was promptly shipped to a camp in Pennsylvania for a short training period and then sent to Europe. He arrived there in time to see the collapse of Nazi Germany and the millions of displaced persons and refugees who flooded the continent in its aftermath. Some were trying to get back home from the factories and prison camps to which the Germans had abducted them and others were simply trying to find a roof over their heads.

These crowds were poorly nourished, poorly clothed, dirty, bug-ridden, and diseased. The danger of sweeping epidemics on the continent was acute. Ernst was deeply involved in the prevention campaign. He never spoke of his role and his experiences without being asked and then only to answer questions. I regret that I never asked him enough of those and that I learned too little to tell his story now.

Karl was the last of us three to go into the army. He had finally arrived in the US in early 1945. The combined navies of England and America had by then effectively won the Battle of the Atlantic. German submarines had grown scarce and civilians were given space on some of the troopships that were returning, still largely empty, from Europe. Karl had managed to get one of those spaces.

When I first saw him I was on a weekend leave from an army camp. He was lying in bed in Paul's and Hilde's apartment, bright yellow with jaundice and speaking English with an English accent. It was the accent that brought home to me that we had been separated for almost six years. He joked about the stormy crossing and blamed his illness on the rich food on the boat, his first since rationing was imposed in England. He was cheerful and looking forward to a new life in this country. As it happened the miserable luck that had dogged him up to then continued to dog him here.

He went into the army as soon as he was well enough to get out of bed. It was clear at the time that the war in Europe was drawing to an end but there was no telling how much longer it would take to defeat Japan. He fully expected to see combat in the Pacific but instead spent his army time in several seedy camps in the Carolinas and Georgia.

In one of these camps he was taken to the station hospital with open ulcers on his legs. The resident doctor told him that one of his legs would have to be amputated. Karl threatened him with murder if that happened. The operation was indefinitely postponed. In another hospital he was diagnosed of a tumor that is almost always terminal. An operation was mandated, and this time Karl did not argue. He was transferred to the prestigious Walter Reed Hospital where the operation was performed. His surgeon afterwards displayed him as "the luckiest soldier in Washington". Against all prior expectations the tumor had been found to be benign.

If anybody ever deserved an honorable discharge, he did. And he got it.

I launched my own army career in November of 1944 by resigning my job at Villanova College. The Navy V12 program was winding down and so was my usefulness there. As a non-citizen my only way of becoming a soldier was to be drafted. I therefore asked

the College president, the successor of Father Stanford, to notify the draft board of my availability. He said he would and then promptly forgot. It took some prodding before he finally did his patriotic duty, with the result that I was inducted into the army in early 1945. My PhD was not as good as Ernst's MD. I got the rank of private, and not even private first class at that.

I underwent the usual induction rigmarole. At the end of it I viewed myself in the full-length mirror with the sign over it that said "You are now looking at the best-dressed soldier in the world". And here I was, in a uniform two sizes too large, dragging shoe laces two feet long and the arms full with green underwear.

I drew my first KP duty in the hospital of the induction center. It was a novel experience to work on pots that were so big I had to climb into them clean them. The mess hall was carefully segregated. A smattering of white soldiers was served first and then a large crowd of black ones. I was greatly impressed by how many more black heroes were recuperating from their wounds in the hospital than whites but when I remarked on this to one of the staff the answer was: "Are you kidding? They aren't wounded. They are all being treated for VD."

Then came the overnight train trip to Camp Croft, South Carolina, for basic infantry training. We went in Pullman cars, two men in each of the lower berths, one in the upper. I was in an upper, I was glad to say.

Aside from the thundering snores during the nights I had no problems in basic training. Some of the men in the company, especially the New Yorkers among them, nearly collapsed from the strain of the cross-country hikes and the exercises. I was in good physical shape and had no trouble with them. In a more soldierly line I was taught to fire the rifle (not a gun - the word "gun" was strictly forbidden), the carbine, and the bazooka. I did all right in that line, also. My only failure was in marksmanship. I had my heart set on earning the Sharpshooter's badge with the rifle but I was disappointed. I had to settle for being just a Marksman, for reasons totally beyond my control.

We had to do our target shooting from five positions, prone, standing up, kneeling, sitting, and squatting. I passed four of these positions with flying colors but squatting was my undoing. Everyone was mystified by my inability to hunker into a regulation army squat. My center of gravity apparently was somehow off-center. Noncom and commissioned officers alike tried their hands at arranging me in the proper position but when they let go of me I immediately rolled over on my back in the most undignified fashion. The company commander muttered about insubordination and court martial but he presumably decided in the end that the legal problems with the prosecution of a squat-disadvantaged soldier were too murky to be pursued.

Machine gun target practice was to be next but it came off without me. I was suddenly yanked out of basic training and transferred to the Technical Detachment of the War Department in Washington. I was deprived of ever seeing combat. Even at that I left Fort Croft with two new disabilities.

One was inflicted by the post dentist. He pulled six of my teeth because he had found them to be abcessed. The Veterans Administration would be glad to replace them, he assured me. Free of charge, but only after my discharge. Until then I would just have to chew the best I could. My second disability was contracted on the bazooka firing range. The Captain had decided that my mathematical training made the ideal man to keep score during target practice. It was a position of great trust and it showed that in the end science is more important than squatting. But it surrounded me all day with furious explosions. By evening I was nearly deaf and my hearing never fully recovered. The

place to report that would have been the discharge center but when I got there I was in too much of a hurry to do any complaining.

It was the long reach of Father Stanford, the former president of Villanova College, that succeeded in pulling me out of the infantry. He had become a strong voice in military/educational establishment and his opinion, according to which I was wasted in the infantry, carried weight.He did not know it but his intercession, unrequested and unwelcome as it was for me at the time, re-oriented the rest of my life.

My new posting was at Fort Myers just outside the Pentagon and my job inside, at least for a while, was to translate captured German technical documents. The Fort was the more interesting of the two locations, even though it was summer and the wooden barracks as hot as ovens. What made them interesting was that they were temporary accommodations for soldiers with highly unusual backgrounds.

I remember two such visitors who had escaped from a German prisoner of war camp. This was quite an extraordinary feat, and the Pentagon was eager to learn how they had pulled it off. They had done so during a tree felling detail in the woods by axing their German guards. I confess I was rather glad to be on their side.

Another of the transients was a Russian sea captain. The normal beat of his ship were the small harbors along the Siberian coast and that was what made him interesting to the Pentagon. He jumped ship at his first chance, which was provided by a routine trip to the West Coast. He delivered to a grateful Washington its first detailed navigational picture of the Sea of Okhotsk. He also brought the first news of the mass killings of Polish officers who had been kept in prison camps outside the Siberian harbors. The massacre of thousands of others in the now infamous Katyn Forest of European Russia did not become known until well after the war. The captain's story has never been made public.

My main assignment from the Technical Detachment was to the Ordnance Department at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. I was one of three, a physicist, a chemist and a mathematician. All were fluent in German. On the morning after our arrival there a major appeared at our barracks to pick us up in his staff car. This was just about as extraordinary an event as the archangel Michael appearing to take me on a tour of heaven.

The major however took us three speechless privates to a large garage-like building. He told the soldier standing guard there, in full battle dress with a rifle on his shoulder, that from now on we,and only we, were to be admitted to the building. He unlocked the door and inside showed us a sea of over seventy huge crates, all of them marked "Reject Fuses".

The crates however contained no fuses. What was in them was the complete document file of the Peenemunde Proving Grounds where the German V2 rocket was developed. This technological treasure had been discovered by the scouting parties of the Ordnance Department and the "Reject Fuses" label had been painted on the crates to keep them out of the greasy fingers of the Army Air Force. Now we three privates were let in on the secret. We were to evaluate and catalog the Ordnance scoop.

The job was overwhelming. Not only was the mass of documents absolutely immense. Their subject was fascinating but totally foreign to us and, for that matter, to the rest of the country. To make things worse the texts were heavily coded. As we came across the code names we wrote them with chalk on the garage floor and piled the pertinent letters, memoranda and reports on these designated spaces. Gradually we

began to make sense out of the chaos.

We also got some help. Two secretaries arrived to start with the listing of our findings, an elderly Russian scientist with a mysterious field of specialization and an explosive temper joined them,and so did one or two others.The first real help however came in the early winter of 1945 from an altogether unexpected source.

After the collapse of Hitler's Reich teams of scientists and engineers from American universities and industry scoured Germany for whatever useful and interesting items they could retrieve from the rubble of the country, equipment, information, and people. Among the people those who had developed the V2 rocket were of special interest, and one of those search teams quickly zeroed in on them. I learned later what happened when it did.

It found a rather demoralized band of people, haphazardly quartered in southern Germany where they fled from the Russians and the Western bombs. One of them, the head of their guidance and control group, had walked into the woods and put a bullet in his head. I still have some of his books. The rest put their trust in the intelligence and skill of their project director, Wernher von Braun. It was a good place to put it.

Von Braun met the American team and was ready to do business. The British, he said, were finished economically and therefore of no interest. That left the Americans and the Russians. Other things being equal, he and his crew would be much prefer to work with Americans.

Other things, it seems, were equal. The result was that on a cold winter day five Peenemunde scientists arrived at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, ready and very willing to help with the work in our garage. To the people in charge of the Proving Grounds they were clearly a headache. The US after all was still officially at war with Germany. The pictures of the near-skeletons emerging from the concentration camps and the prisoner of war Stalags were still on everyone's mind. And here were five men on their hands who were obviously enemy aliens, from their accents when they opened their mouths and from their clothes when they didn't. Moreover they were smack in the middle of the most sensitive American military facility. How was their presence to be explained?

Apparently the decision was made to avoid all situations in which such an explanation would become necessary in the first place. The Germans were quartered in some forlorn old barracks sitting on a land spit in the frozen Chesapeake Bay, and we three privates were assigned to them as their chaperons. We stayed at the same barracks with them, stoked the fires in the coal stoves, and drove them in an army-style stretch limo back and forth to a private mess hall, and of course also to our garage.

The relations between the Germans and us, their American handlers, started out cool and formal but gradually grew warmer. They were perhaps warmest between a German who lost his whole family in an Allied air raid and Austrian Jew who worked with us and who had lost his parents in a concentration camp. At one point during their stay the Germans were made to look at a film shot during the liberation of one of those camps. They were clearly in sock from what they had seen. They came back from the showing in silence, did not look at each other, did not speak to us, but just retired to their cubicles.

The Germans were helpful with the work of organizing and cataloging the mass of material in our garage but it soon became clear that our small group could never finish it in time to do anybody any good. It was decided on some high level to look for help among the tens of thousands of German prisoners of war. PWs were still being held in

camps all over the US, restless and waiting to be repatriated into the shambles of their country. One or two hundred of them answered the American call for volunteers and were shipped to Fort Eustis in Virginia where we and several tons of documents were waiting for them.

"We" were a group of about ten American GIs, all with technical training but not all with a knowledge of German. Fort Eustis was made up of three sections, one American and two German. The American section was nearly empty and run by a skeleton staff. That is where we were quartered. One of the German sections was a PW compound inhabited by about a thousand rabid Nazis, the other a low-security camp for our volunteers.

These volunteers were an interesting crowd. Some had agreed to help us as a statement of conscientious objection to Hitler's regime, others because they hoped for some tangible benefits for themselves. All had received messages from the Nazis in the other compound, telling them that they would be hunted down on their return and charged with treason before suitable kangaroo courts. They took those threats very seriously. None of them had been told what it was they would be doing for us.

About ten percent of them quit as soon as they found out. They were frightened off by the Top Secret stamps on most of the documents. To work with that sort of material meant to "live with one foot in the grave", they told us. Nominally in charge of the group was an Austrian major who had commanded a battery of artillery on the southern coast of France. He was scouring the sea with his binoculars daily, he told me, until one morning when he saw a "forest of masts" that grown there overnight. He ordered his battery to hold its fire and when the first Americans arrived at his emplacement he gave them his smart salute and surrendered.

The major had to be removed however. He felt that his high rank entitled him to cut into the line waiting outside the PX in the evenings. He precipitated a near riot. Our PWs had become sufficiently infected with subversive American democratic ideas and were no longer willing to put up with the major's rank-pulling stunts. He was quickly replaced with a quiet conscientious German captain and his pet raccoon.

Our volunteers were an interesting mixture. Most of them were quite well educated and spoke good English, a few of them better than I. There were industrialists among them, teachers, engineers, jurists, and artists. A crayon drawing by one of them hangs in our living room. One of them was a count with a family name that had already been prominent in the seventeenth century during the thirty-years war. His brother, it so happened, lived in New York and was the president there of the American Arbitration Association. We GIs conspired to bring him to Fort Eustis where we smuggled him into the compound for a reunion with his imprisoned brother.

The atmosphere in the compound was one of relatively cheerful and busy activity. The subject of our work was, after all, new and fascinating to them. Their busy-ness however overlay a substrate of sadness and anxiety. The men had no idea of what awaited them on their return. Many of them knew that they had lost their homes either to the Russians and Poles or to the air raids of the Allies but they did not know the whereabouts of their families or indeed whether they even still had families.

They agonized over the Nazi treatment of the Jews and, an aspect now generally forgotten, of the prisoners of war in Germany. They held seminars in the evenings to search for answers. Was there perhaps some defect in the German language that introduced a blind spot in their thinking or their conscience and that allowed them to overlook the events in their country under Hitler? In the end they had no answres.

The fort Eustis project came to an end in late spring of 1946. Our volunteers had produced a huge three-volume accession list, a glossary of special terminology and its English equivalents (many of them our own inventions), and various other documents. On the last evening they arranged a little farewell ceremony to which they invited Major Lions, the American chief of the project, his lieutenant, and us eight or ten noncoms. There was a general leave-taking and the usual promises of letter-writing, most of them unkept. A day later the Germans were on their way to an uncertain future in their homeland.

Major Lions recommended military decorations for us enlisted men, a medal for me as the unofficial supervisor and Commendation ribbons for the others. I don't remember the name of my medal except that, among soldiers, it was called "the colonel's Good Conduct medal". I didn't get it, anyway. I got the Commendation ribbon and the rest got nothing.

We were shipped back to the Aberdeen Proving Grounds to finish the work on the documents and to wait for our discharge. Mine arrived on Thursday, September 26. On the day before, I managed to shoe horn myself as the last man into a barracks full with soldiers expecting to get their final papers on the next day. I am still grateful to the empty bunk on which I managed to spend the night. Thanks to it, I was processed on the next day together with the my barracks mates. Otherwise I would have had to spend another weekend in the army.

Three more days as a soldier would not have been all that bad. The main problem was that I would have missed my own wedding and the beginning of the best years of my life.

11/11/06

Dear Andy:

Thanks for the loan of the enclosed. Also enclosed is a translation of the inscriptions on the gravestones of our family graves. The graves are in the protestant portion of the Central Cemetary in Vienna. The maintenance of these graves was a joint project with Hilde for some time bur, as all joint projects with her, fell apart years ago, for reasons I probably did not understand at the time and don't remember now. I do remember once suggesting to her that we subscribe to a permanent plan which was available at the cemetery at that time but Hilde turned that down. As usual, she proceeded on her own. I confess that I was relieved because any joint project with Hilde was a source of continuous friction. The thought of what to do about the maintenance has occasionally occurred to me since her death but no solution came to mind. I am surprised over Christian Mastny's interest. Shouldn't we bear at least his expenses?

Enclosed is a translation of the inscriptions on the gravestones. As you know, gravestones never lie. We have already reported to you that ours in Vienna has revealed Hilde's real age: she was not six years older than I, as I had been told when she first showed up in our family. She was nine years older. She always pretended being Vienna-born but actually came from Leipzig. We were greatly impressed and so was, I suspect, our uncle Paul when he married her.

The Freud Family was originally Jewish, as you probably know. As a young man my father read the New Testament of the bible. As he told me years later, it was a revelation for him. It impressed him as a total departure from the Old Testament, and he became an instant convert. He was baptized a Lutheran. He also persuaded his parents and siblings to convert. He was also a great admirer of the Germans and things German. I suspect he fell in love with my mother in part because of her Germanic looks. He had two great disappointments in his life. One was the rise of Nazism in Germany and the other the failure of his work in general relativity theory.

The first name Sigmund on the gravestone is a euphemism for the Jewish Simon, pronounced "See-mon" in German. The grandfather's name was the same as that of th e famous psychoanalyst. I remember being asked as a first grader whether I was related to the famous Sigmund. I was rather puzzled by the question but answered "Yes, he is my grandfather". When I dutifully reported this to my father, he asked what my answer had been and only said "Oh, my God", when I told him. He considered the famous Sigmund a fraudulent windbag and was appropriately dismayed.

All this reminiscing is because of the luxuriant new monitor. Yours

Dad

Aug. 28, 06

Dear Eddie: —

I meant to return to you the two Reminisce magazines after your and Gordon's visit here yesterday. They are enclosed. And while I am writing, here is an answer to one of your 11 questions, namely, how come I am in the US. It is because of my tonsils. And here is how it happened.

When my brother Ernst and I were about 10 and 11 years old our pediatrician said: "These boys' tonsils have to come out."

My father was deep into relativity theory in those days and he did not accept other people's words, not even Einstein's. He said:" I want a second opinion."

The second opinion came from another pediatrician. He was Jewish and he had changed his name from Karpeles to Knopfelmacher which means "Maker of Little Buttons". Dr. Maker-of-Little-Buttons looked at our tonsils and said, :"yes, these tonsils have to come out," and then asked "Did you think of registering these boys for immigration to America?"

"What?" stammered my father, "these boys are 10 and 11 years old."

"That does matter," said the Herr Doctor. " They don't have to go there if they don't want to."

Then came 1929 and the depression, and we didn't want to, and then came 1938 and Hitler, and we wanted to very badly. Our father had died during those years. We checked with the US Consulate and found that we had been registered for immigration years earlier and that our registration was valid.

And that is how we got into the US. But Dr. Maker-of-Little-Buttons did not take his own advice. He committed suicide during the night after Hitler's troops marched into Vienna.

HERR PROFESSOR DOKTOR

By Gordon Hall

Rudolf Drenick, one of our cottage residents known locally as "Rudy", was born in Vienna, Austria circa World War I, and came to America in the tumultuous days before WW II. After Hitler's troops invaded Austria in early 1938, Rudy and his brother were drafted into the German Army, but were promptly given deferments to continue their studies in physics and medicine, subjects considered useful by the Nazis for their military ambitions. These deferments now gave the brothers some breathing room in which to make a vital choice: remain in their native country, becoming German soldiers and participating in Hitler's plans for world domination; or, take the great risk of seeking asylum in a country where values and beliefs were in tune with their own.

They were very lucky, indeed, to have that choice! It had come about many years earlier, when their pediatrician (a Jewish doctor) had advised their father to "register" them with the U.S. Consul for eventual immigration to America. This their father did, although the doctor, failing to heed his own advice, committed suicide the night after Hitler's invasion of Austria. Rudy's father, while not Jewish, also failed to affirmatively act, and died before he could profit from such a move.

Having obtained an educational deferment, Rudy continued with his studies at the University of Vienna. His father, himself a physicist, was very helpful as he prepared for his doctoral thesis, amidst increased pressures caused by the now-planned escape. Final

trip arrangements required both visits to the American Consul's office to complete visa paperwork, and trips to the Cunard Line offices to finalize ship-passage to America. Rudy's thesis was successfully submitted late March, 1939 and he immediately asked to receive his diploma, under guise of having a job awaiting him in Berlin. Again, he was in luck, and it was handed to him, rather informally, during a lunch break just after the Dean had finished his meal At last, Rudy and his brother were ready-to leave Nazi Germany!

The next problems confronting them were the border crossings that lay ahead, especially those from "dictatorship" countries; i.e. into Yugoslavia, and from Fascist Italy into Switzerland. Both involved carrying incriminating evidence in their backpacks, such as tickets and immigration papers to America. They solved the first crossing by traveling through an unguarded mountain pass on skis, which avoided any baggage inspection. While they saw border patrol tracks in the snow, they encountered no border patrols. However, at the first Yugoslav town they came to, the sight of several women crying in the streets puzzled them. When they reached the home of their relatives, (initial destination), they learned that the German Army had occupied Prague during the night! As Hitler's conquests continued, so did the brothers' luck.

Their departure from Yugoslavia, and travels through Italy, were by train that arrived at the Swiss border about 3 AM. Rudy and his brother were seated in a compartment with a Rumanian lady on the trip, and the impending Italian passport control was quite worrisome for them. As it turned out, the inspectors were both harried and distracted at that late hour, and the one who examined their baggage did so only superficially, before turning to the lady's suitcases, while the brothers quickly replaced their bags on the luggage rack. However, on the way out, the inspector turned around, reached up to the bag containing the incriminating evidence, closed a buckle left open in haste, smiled and left. Thereupon, Rudy and his brother shook hands vigorously. At this, the Romanian lady became curious, asking Rudy why. He then recounted the story of their recent escape, and she indicated she felt that was what was going on. Luckily, she did not speak up any sooner, as desertion was punishable by hanging!

The two brothers traveled across Switzerland with their Romanian friend, leaving her only when they disembarked at Lausanne. Although it was early in the morning, the streets were teaming with soldiers in full uniform. The initial apprehension was quieted, however, when cautious inquiry got the response "Oh! Haven't you heard? Italy has invaded Albania during the night!" The still-anxious travelers spent ⇨

HERR PROFESSOR DOKTOR

the remainder of their 15 days in Switzerland relatively near the French border, and were allowed to enter that country without incident. They proceeded on to Cherbourg, where they embarked on the Queen Mary for the 5-day voyage to New York. Rudy often tells of his inner reaction and remark to self, upon seeing the American flag flying at pier's end: "You are finally safe!" This happened some 68 years ago, but the epic journey's memory is always with him, as are his "escape skis," which hang outside the front door of 40 St. Charles Place!

Rudy and his brother were fortunate to have an uncle already living in America. He welcomed them upon arrival, and provided both with food and shelter. However, they also needed an income and, once more, good luck was with them. Rudy obtained a teaching position at Villanova College (now Villanova University), while his brother got one of the rare fellowships that allowed him to finish his medical studies at New York University. As World War II approached, Rudy taught in a U.S. Navy program at Villanova, and then, after Pearl Harbor, he went into the U.S. Army as a private. When only halfway through basic training he was assigned to the Technical Detachment of the War Department, where he translated and evaluated captured German technical documents (especially ones dealing with large rockets). The V2 Rocket

He received his Honorable Discharge from the Service in 1946, two days before he married his lovely wife, Joan. As a married man, Rudy was first employed by General Electric, followed by positions at RCA and AT&T's Bell Laboratories. Eventually, he combined his love of teaching with that for research, moving to Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. There he was a full professor, and served as Chairman of the Electrical Engineering Department for two years. While there he received research grants from several sources, often including sufficient funds for student fellowships. An interesting story about one of those fellowships will appear in a subsequent issue of this publication.

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

Alice Rhodes and Adele Smith

Louise Bender and Nettie Israel

Selbstverständlich!

JA!

Wir bleiben treu

Mit Schuschnigg für ein freies Oesterreich!

Willst Du Arbeit und Brot, stimme

Mit Schuschnigg für Oesterreich!

Herausgeber, Eigentümer und Verleger: Vaterländische Front, Amt des Bundesführers. Für den Inhalt verantwortlich: Dr. Fritz Bock. Sämtliche Wien, I., Am Hof 4. — Druck: J. R. Bernay A. G., Wien IX.

Handbills of the kind I handed out in early March, urging Austrians to vote against a unification with Germany, in a plebiscite scheduled for March 15 1939. The plebiscite did not materialize: the Germans invaded on March 13.

der Heimat

und Fey!

Herausgeber und verantwortlich: Wilhelm Greiner, [illegible] Ritterg. 3. — Druck: Richard Treiler, Wien, 7., [illegible] 25

Wenn auch die Stürme brausen,
wenn auch ein Wetter droht,
hoch weht unser Banner,
Oesterreichs rot-weiß-rot.

Es gibt keine Ehre ohne Freiheit

Stimmt: Ja!

Unsere Fahne bleibt

Rot-Weiß-Rot!

Stimmt: Ja!

Die junge Revolution marschiert!

Zertrümmert ist der Liberalismus. Die soldatisch-revolutionäre Haltung unserer Zeit ist durchgebrochen, die Haltung, die sich in Führertum und Gefolgschaft, Wahrhaftigkeit, Schlichtheit, Volksgemeinschaft, Glauben und Einsatz verkörpert.

An uns ist es, sie nun mit den ewigen Werten, Christentum und Deutschtum, zur neuen Weltanschauung zu vereinen.

Darum muß Österreich selbständig bleiben!

Denn weder sind wir mit einem verschwommenen, **„positiven"** Christentum zufrieden, dessen propagandistische Zielsetzung wir an dem Beispiel anderer Länder zur Genüge beobachten konnten; noch vergessen wir, daß Deutschsein mehr ist als eine Sammlung von Rassenmerkmalen. Deutschsein heißt:

Gerecht, Frei und Wahrhaftig sein!

Es gibt ein ewiges Recht, das mehr ist als „das, was dem Volke nützt."

Der deutsche Mensch ist frei und nicht geistig kollektiv gleichgeschaltet. Und es gibt eine letzte Wahrheit, die mehr ist als ein „lächerlicher Objektivitätsfimmel".

Erst diese Grundlagen geben uns das Recht und die Möglichkeit, das Reich der christlichen Völker des Abendlandes zu formen und zu führen. Das Reich, dessen Herzstück Österreich werden soll und das kein **machtberauschter kleindeutscher Nationalstaat** sein wird, sondern ein **großdeutsches, freigeordnetes Reich** von der Nordsee bis zum Schwarzen Meer.

Der deutsche Führer, der diese Idee trägt, ist **Schuschnigg!**
Deutsch-Österreichs Graue Jungenschaft kämpft mit ihm!
Deutscher Mann, Du stimmst für ihn, **stimmst mit ja!**

Eigentümer, Herausgeber und Verleger: Österr. Jungvolk (Studentenfreikorps); Verantwortlich: Helmuth Jörg, alle Wien I., Am Hof 6. — Druck: Robert Wachel, Wien IX., Roten Löweng. 5—7.

8

Deutschsein
heißt frei sein!

Deutschsein
heißt treu sein!

Ja oder Nein?

Ja!

Mit Schuschnigg
für Österreich!

Mütter!

Wir wollen, daß weiterhin Friede sei!

Ihr wollt dasselbe. Ihr wollt es für Eure Söhne. Ihr wollt, daß das Wort des Kanzlers gelte: „Die Jugend soll nicht gegeneinander sterben, sie soll miteinander leben."

Mütter, darum stimmt Ihr für Österreich, darum stimmt Ihr mit

Ja!

Eure Kinder danken Euch!