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3 letters - 15 pages

Letter #1

My dear girls,

This morning I received your two letters from Oct. 9, with much joy. I thank you with my whole heart for your lines. Because mail can only be sent in weight of 20 grams at a time I'll begin my answer with letter number one and will continue in more letters. I am typing my response that Vera as well as Paula might have understanding; since you both are interested in the fate of your loved ones.

Wholeheartedly, I thank you for the trust you have put in me. To find you was the last promise I gave your beloved at the time of departure. A promise that I saw as my Holy task, and hoped to fulfill it. To write you is one of the hardest tasks I have ever put myself through; especially knowing this all these years was horrible to me, since we weren't just people who knew each other, but people that fate brought together, - the Family Schmulewitz and us. You may be disappointed when I tell you that we aren't a Jewish family; but that doesn't matter because ever since we were little we were always around and part of the Jewish "clique" so really no one should be able to tell a difference. My father owned the booths that were erected for the Leipziger cafeteria; there already your grandmother Schmulewitz was one of our customers. You really couldn't know that since that was before your time. While I was in school, I had two close friends, Dora Ganger and Toni Kern. We grew up together and I met many other Jewish people. My husband at the Felsenstein (mountain stone) Company, Rauchwaren (cigaretts, tobacco, etc.) in Briihl. We continued meeting many Jewish people and to this day are still in contact with Felsensteins who are now living in England. Many Jewish friends were welcomed at our house; one family you know - the Feliners. We kept Jewish holidays and

sabbath just like you; and ate matze at the right times. Our children; still small at that time knew more Jewish Onkels and Aunts than Christian ones. We were steady customers at Uncle Adolfs store in the Turnerstreet and when the boycott began we stayed with him. The year 1938 you remember and exactly on Nov. 9/38 we were in the store and became witnesses of a man entering the store demanding his suit finished or not. He was a very demanding man who couldn't be turned away. We later learned that this man knew what was to take place this night. On this evening I met Yette, as she tried to calm the man. What happened during this night you know. Since that performance there was no more peace for the Jewish society. The next morning we were befriended with the Koppold family. You know, the whole situation took on a threatening character and we helped Uncle Adolf as best we could to hide his belongings. We later sold these things so his family could live. Soon after, you left for England. Why didn't I know you? In that time of chaos it was important to help as many families as possible so my husband and I parted and went to different camps. Then we brought various (non-Jewish) helpless people across the border. Before that I was in Austria and Hungary to try and import various goods. But in Nov. in 38 we had to make our move. I think Nov. 38 is when I visited Onkel Adolf and Aunt Clarchen, Emilienstrasse and met the rest of the relatives and friends as well as the two small boys Harold and Siegmar. Siegmar, with curly hair is as sweet as a doll, and Harold is a little older. Uncle Adolf and Aunt Clares meeting was in such a style that both Jews and Christian could mix and find whoever they wanted or needed. The conversation never dealt with the sorrowful situation all were in, and no one knew what the future would hold, but no one knew anything good. Any mention of sorrow was always towards the children that were out of the country. Being separated was painful. Your mail brought much happiness and everyone visiting was a part of that including me. January 39 I was able to go to Paris and make some oversea contacts. I used our belongings and took what I could and worked there. When I returned, I found a newborn baby, Jan. 30/39. Lawfully we had to pick a name and "Zillya" was the nicest name we found. In the Spring - March/April the "En-gross messe" was held. Our friends came. I introduced our "Molly" to Onkel Adolf. Uncle

Adolf was able to send some valuables to America. I know that these valuables arrived because I received a response from America at Koppolds address. The code was "Uncle arrived at 4:00." Kappolds, believing they had a basis for leaving the country, were very happy. Uncle Adolf was a citizen of Poland, so leaving was put off since this brought about difficulties. Hope was left for summer. When summer finally rolled around, other reasons to postpone came. Sometimes, homes were searched. If that was the case, we would have Uncle Adolf and other Jewish friends at our house for guests. It wasn't easy because as Jews we were marked and often visited by the Gestapo. We were always lucky though, we were often called to police headquarters. Afraid? No, we weren't afraid, because we were doing what we as humans should do. War clouds came closer together and our good Yette was sent to Poland. We decided to bring the Koppold children in safety. I can remember when Aunt Clare would do the shopping and Uncle Adolf would sew the children's clothes. When all was finished, Aunt Eva helped sew names into their clothes. We all were at Koppolds. It was then that Aunt Clare began her painful journey up to the Holland border. She had to leave her dear little children. We were all so sad, but the thought of bringing the children in security gave us new courage. For the Koppolds - the hope of leaving here diminished. Exactly on Oct. 25/1939, Yette, who came from Poland, stood at my door. I was so happy, I could hardly believe it. She was able to get permission to come for a visit. On top of all that, she had no exact date written out as to when she was to return. We were at war and had food stamps, so Yette had to report to the police her whereabouts. Everything went fine. In the meantime, Uncle Adolf was arrested. One day he received a card stating he must report to the police station (court-house). - he never returned. Because this happened to other families this matter was looked into. In the work establishment building on Riebeckstreet, (not far from us) is where they were being held. I hope you'll save me from giving a description of their treatment there. Grandma & Yette had to give up the apartment on Lohrstreet and lived on Emilienstreet. And there too, according to law, all apartments had to be given up. The whole family, (Clare sold her

furniture to a butcher family that still lives there today), moved into the rooms on Humbold Str. 4. It was a large floor in a corner house which they shared with two other renters and with Mrs. Issachson, whom I'll tell you about later. They had 3 rooms. It was enough and they did decorate them nicely. There was a nice small kitchen, but more important of all a door of wallpaper in the hallway that led into a small alcove where one could hide when guards came. The door was hidden by a chiffarobe. I must tell you, it got harder for everyone since these houses were known as Jewish houses. You couldn't find any more excuses for living there for the isolation area continued to grow larger. In December, they brought Uncle Adolf to the camp in Sachsenhausen. We saw him here in Leipzig when Clarchen would bring him sewing materials. But with the overtaking his also became impossible. You can imagine what an effect it had on Clarchen who was always being hurt (she was always so sensitive). The thoughts of the children, and the husband, the happiness of a sign of life from Adolf, to be in contact with him, being able to send him things - things he never received at all - these all were comforting moments and small rays of hope. Grandma Schmulewitz began sewing. I was a customer. The kitchen remained the meeting place - (Jews were allowed to go out from 6:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.). The women were brought to cheap work areas, Yette worked with smoking necessities (cigars, cigarettes, etc.); Clare in a print shop where she injured her hand. Mail was always under control. Work picked up in the Humbold Street because there was always someone who needed workers. Since Yette and Clarchen were known as "good help" and were associated with Christian families many of their situations were eased. They were able to help those in need on both sides. My dear Yette, for example, took over my Jewish correspondence while I took over her Christian one. Therefore, I was able to help my friends in foreign countries, before the war began, with the "Pound packages" that you are familiar with. They almost all got there. And so we all were entwined with each other, even more than sisters. We celebrated all holidays and took part in all family occasions. Letters continued to flow. It was hard to live, but we survived, and the worries over the relatives were settled. So far, this is the life of Grandma, Yette and Clarchen. Now begins another section.

In the year 1939, I looked for relationships in Budapest. One didn't need a visa to Hungary if you were German; and you could take plenty of money with you. With good friends I took an advantage of this possibility and went there. We had the intention of transferring this money over to France in case of any danger. A sum of money was still with Doctor Klein in Budapest, at my disposal. I put it at the disposal of "Trude and Otto." (that's how we called them). Grunbaums crossed the border to Hungary illegally before the war, and arrived safely after many hindrances. The mail system was pathetic, and Grunbaums got in contact with you. Grunbaums intended to go into Palestine. Soon after, Leo and Eva followed their path. They met there and both families sent for their belongings. It was packed in the Humboldtstr - and they did receive it. We believed them to be well taken care of for the time being. The threat of war forced them to move on and all traces of them were lost when war broke out.

During the war, I found out, after Yette and everyone had left here, that Uncle Leo and Eva lost their lives during a bomb attack in Kolomea. It was told in Jewish circles, but nothing further could be found out. And since no news has come to this day the story must have its truth. But that it happened in such a way will never be known. In any case it can be believed. In the year 42-43 many circles (friends, families, etc.) parted since most close friends weren't around anymore and no one heard anything anymore from them. We who stayed together were so sorry. The rage and murdering on the daily agenda was pathetic with all that happened. But now, I must include another friend of your loved ones who was also friendly with Grunbaums. He was a soldier at

this time near Saloniki. Through a transport passing through the mountains and which was delayed by a bridge bombing, we saw that a group of people were being herded on foot by S.S. Troops. He heard well and noticed that it was Jews that passed at a distance. As always, when something like this happened he paid attention and is positive that he saw Trude in the group. To do something, or to show himself was hopeless, but he reported it immediately and stayed with his story. Otto was not among them, Trude was alone. That was the last we heard from Grunbaums. No one has answered as of yet and it is assumable that they were deported. Where to? A question mark - what happened to them - unknown. That's all that I can report from Leo & Eva, Trude & Otto - mostly things I've heard. Now I'd like to return to the Humboldtstr in the year 1940.

1940

The year began with even greater limits for the Jewish society. Yette & Otto worked and Oma sewed at home. In May 1940 our dear ones received a telegram from the camp in Sachsenhausen saying that Uncle Adolf had died of bad circulation. The pain was indescribable. The fear that the news would come one day was always there since the ones captured were all dying one by one. The death announcements came to the courthouse and were made known to the relatives there. After a while a wooden box with the ashes of the dead one arrived at the same place. Then the funeral was held. This was unallowable for only one person at a time. If more boxes than one arrived, a single funeral was held for all. It was terrible to have to think that those ashes were to be Uncle Adolf. I really can't describe the mental agony that went on then. Clarchen

saw nothing left to hold her up, and it was difficult to get her over the tragic situation, since no one believed Uncle Adolf's death to be a natural one. The reasons were all so obvious. Telegrams came from all camps and then the ashes followed. We carried the pain deep inside us. We couldn't show our feelings especially in front of Clarchen. We covered our feelings up with lies and tried convincing Clare that the death could have been a natural one. And second, who anyway was interested in the death of a Jew? Just us, who daily fought against this inhumanity. The daily anxieties and exaggerations caused 99% to become blind. They were compelled to believe the human criminals; that the past couldn't be made good anymore. In the meantime, through mail, I found out that the Red Cross was involved, and as you know everything had to be told in 25 word letters. I know with how much love, hope and wishfulness these 25 words were written on paper. I was always there when messages were sent. Always the one thing... "the kids live, they are healthy, they are fine". And with all that a spark of hope of seeing one another again. Everyone always hoped for a miracle. One saw the war as a crazy affair. Dear God, is there no one who'll end this? No, there was no one. Every day the war machine rolled on, deceived; cheated continually more. That's how the year 1940 went and ended. 1941 began. Everyone grabbed for goods and belongings. Gold, silver - anything worth something was taken from the Jewish folk. Furs, wool cloths, musical instruments, radios, grammaphones, electric appliances (all sorts), house pets, even the bird in his cage. Work could only be found in the worst places, with only little pay. The streets beautifully planted with trees were made legally impassable. Jews were banned from parks, benches, streetcars, trains - this left the

poor people imprisoned. Enduring all, our meetings were the same as before, and then in the fall, the wearing of the Jewish star was implemented so that people everywhere could be easily identified. All situations became more complicated. The Jews avoided many of their Christian helpers out of fear. It was forbidden by highest law, with extreme consequences, to even speak with someone Jewish. Even during working hours everyone worked separately and spoke only with their supervisors. The star, a yellow piece of cloth, the Star of David outlined and in the middle, printed "Jew" had to be sewn on so that it couldn't be switched. Various streets were only Jewish populated and it wasn't easy walking through these streets because anyone else really had no business there. So not to be conspicuous we also wore a Jewish star, and if anyone Jewish came to our house they would always leave with a purse or briefcase to hide the star with. In all our miseries we always found great opportunities. In 1941 we heard from officials that our Yette was leaving for Poland. This was investigated. Aunt Yette was brought before court and was able to prove that with her visa she legally entered German territory, and that there had been no return date stamped on it at the time of issue. A "mild" judge sentenced her to 4 weeks in jail. She tried changing the sentence to a money fine. It was allowed and she paid 150. D M fine. She complied happily and we were glad that she had gotten off easy. We expected a higher sentence especially in those hard times. Besides other episodes this was another stone we stumbled over. With always caring and fearful hearts the year ended and 1942 began.



1942

Jan. 1, 1942, the day that I'll never forget arrived. One Sunday morning a messenger arrived and asked me to come to the Humboldstrasse. I didn't expect anything good. It was cold, very cold. I still remember small details. I found the whole apartment building floor like a beeswarm, excited, everyone mixed-up, confused. Transport - that world drove me crazy - I continually heard - Transport - today all had to be packed for the Transport scheduled for Monday. It was the first one to Leipzig. Clarchen and Oma were part of it all. Aunt Yette was to stay back. My dear girls save me from explaining; I really can't describe it to you even though I still retain it all in my memory. - No, I can't! My heart aches - each word is much too impersonal to even tell what I experienced. It was so horrible that the actual fact of it was impossible to grasp. Coming! Going! Searching! Asking! Saying good-bye! until evening arrived. Everyone that knew Yette and Clarchen and Oma was there - and since other families were involved in this - and everyone ended up sharing one room and the floor was crowded - I still don't know to this day how to describe this day or which category to put it in. I was there until evening - this and that advised. Helmuth Schroeder later joined me, who was also a good friend, and a Miss Wagner, also a close acquaintance. I believe it was 11 P.M. as we left the apt., how, I don't quite remember. I only know that the three of us parted not saying a word to each other - it was the only way we could express the last wishes of Oma, Yette & Clarchen. Constant kissing, handshakes, hugs & tears. It was too much for one day. We still discussed all possibilities.

They were no longer thinking of themselves, only of their children - this brought on a good-bye from everyone. With little desires, leaving their furniture behind standing where it was, these poor people were robbed of their last possession; their home, the roof over their head. They were the first taken from us in that way, but not the last. That year 1942, was considered the wave of Transports. One of the most faithful friends of the house was Bernhard Issacson. His mother lived with your loved ones. He had a Christian wife and therefore was spared for a while. He lived with his family in the basement of the same house. It was impossible for us to return to the apt. on that following Monday for the house was surrounded with defenders of the Reich and the Gestapo. The last opportunities for helping anyone were only permitted for Jewish people. However, we always received account of what was happening. Bernhards concern was with your loved ones. They were transported to the Uferstreet school and from there were brought to Riga for two days. Bernhard pleaded with me to search for you. I got very close to Bernhard who also now was my personal "care child." In the beginning we heard nothing of the transport. - Not until mail was smuggled, but that was pitifully little. We only knew for sure that they arrived in Riga. In the Fall, Schroeder became a soldier and was stationed in Norway. His desire was to go to Riga. He accomplished his will. I received mail from Yette through soldiers. Schroeder wrote me carefully, and then he came for a visit and told me yes! he had met everyone. He even was in the Ghetto where they all were staying and visited with them for days at their jobs. Our good Yette worked at the train construction site, our good Clarchen washed windows, and Oma had to sew. Under all circumstances, they

were all doing well; and still they were full of hope. Schroeder a courageous - risk-taking fellow discussed with them that the next time he came he would bring papers and take them to Sweden with him. They agreed, but the next time was far off. For us here there was now more concern for those that were still living here. The torture and embarrassment and harrassment, continued here too! In the Fall, on Oct. 1, 1942 - exactly - I was forced to work in Poland for four months. I had to leave my family, also my almost 90 year old, invalid father-in-law. I left, heartbroken. Our son was in Woronesch/Russia, fighting. My father-in-law died Oct. 26, I never saw him again, three weeks after I left. Except for mail, I was separated from everyone and everything. In Jan. 43, I returned, but was sick. In March I started working again and in May I was to be sent to a repair workshop on the Front in Athens. I fought as hard as I could and stayed here because of my sickness. My courage was unbroken and the old acquaintances came in sight again in January. Schroeder came for a visit and on his way he went through Riga. He came upon completely different situations. Everything was run more strictly. It was hard finding meeting places. He found them anyway. Oma was very sick. Yette and Clarchen were still working. The intention of taking the two girls with him was possible, but both of them did not want to separate themselves from their mother. - for one simple reason - if one Jew escaped ten others within the Ghetto were hanged. They couldn't & weren't going to risk their mother's life. The escape plan was dropped. Both girls remained full of hope and were healthy. They sent greetings home - which really wasn't home anymore, and greetings to the kids - that was all.

In August I had a major operation, but I recovered, grievously. From Aug. 1943 the air raid alarms increased. On Dec. 3, in the morning, shortly before 4 A.M. we experienced the first "terror attack" that ended terribly. All of Leipzig was in flames and almost 50% of the city was destroyed. For days and nights Leipzig was a sea of flames. We thought the world was going under. In May or April of '43 there was a second transport from here to Poland; and in September one went to Theresienstadt. With that a nice clean-up of Jewish people was accomplished.

Outcasts among the folk were left behind; with them - Bernhard and those who were sick. These transports became more secretive towards the public. Our Yette went to Riga only because Oma and Clarchen pleaded with her to go. After the attack in December, Schroder again visited. He could not return to his home; he lived in the Packhofstr; and his family had fled. On his return trip he went to Riga again, but with no luck. He found no connections. From there on, we also were left without any news. In 1944 we went through continuous attacks. All around us everything was being destroyed - a gracious God protected our house. Though things were destroyed our house remained standing. Still I watched and helped my friends that were here, for they too weren't saved from the attacks. After every attack we looked for each other, and found each other. The situation became completely comfortless, and still the war didn't end. We were without light, water, gas, or decent living materials. Doors and windows were broken. Everyone was desperate for a roof over their head - and for everything they owned - for laying on the streets was bitter. So started the year 1945, and the last transport was Feb. 13 to Theresienstadt.

Our last friends were on the transport. Among them, Bernhard with his 10 year old son. The vision that the war would only last for a few more weeks brought some comfort, but not a definite one. We knew that no long proceedings were held for the Jewish, but to give up all hope?? No, that meant giving up yourself. Feb. 27 was the biggest bomb attack. Noon, at exactly 12:40, the first bombs were dropped, in a terrible manner. In front of us, behind us, beside us, everywhere, they fell; and we didn't expect to see daylight ever again. It was horrible. My husband was drafted into the Army a few days before, and my son in Sept. 1944, wounded, found himself on his way home from South Germany due to an overfilled hospital. Not healed, and one day later, he arrived here. Oh yes, our house still stood, but we were badly ruined. Our son had to leave 8 days later, not healed, to a division used in case of emergency. My husband stayed in Leipzig, to my relief. From then on we had not one minute of peace. Continual alarms. Dresden, Chemnitz, Plauen, everything was bombed. Though they just flew over us that time, no one knew if we were to be exempt. The invasions started across the German borders. It all went very fast and we waited everyday for the end. April 18, 1945, Leipzig was taken over by the Americans, on the 20th it was yielded to them. With that the fight was finished for us. My husband was taken captive. I was left alone. The reactions to the stressful situations that had been overcome became evident. People were exhausted and still nervous - needless to say. Our son was taken captive in Russia but was set free because he was wounded. There was no trace of my husband. I searched everywhere. I didn't find him among the dead and there was no organization for the wounded or captured. End of May our

boy returned, looking like a laborer, but he lived. In June, my husband returned from Kreuznach in a much worse condition. Bodily, he was completely decimated, worse than a laborer. The only clothes he had were rags - but he lived. We fixed our house a little and began rehabilitating and helping those back up that were in worse shape than us. In September, my husband began working again at his business; and soon thereafter our son began working also. End of June, Bernhard returned with his son and our joy was great. Most of the last deported lived through Theresienstadt. He stayed as before, a true friend of the families, but also the only one. In June we became Russians - according to zoning laws. Things became easier and mail communication started up again. That's what I had been waiting for. That meant starting my search. I had much success and am endlessly happy - I did, however, receive some sad news. My mail to Vera came back and I continued my search. You know I found our Paula and with this I had accomplished one mission. Many others still waited for an answer. Inquiries from England, America, France, Switzerland and Palestine came. My dear girls, few could save themselves, many were sacrifices of this crazy Regime. Now I always waited for who came back and who knew what, and that's when I learned of a Mrs. Besser who was also in Riga. To find the woman is my next task. She said, (but I must hear it for myself because I put little on stories), that she knew Yette and Clarchen from Riga. The Ghetto Riga has been dissolved and the prisoners were sent to Sudhov. (If it is written as such I am not sure). Aunt Yette was supposedly group leader and well known. It is in this camp where Yette and Clarchen were supposed to have died of Typhoid. Hearing this, I almost lost all courage to believe.

I still wait for news, for information, but it has been such a long time, and to answer would have been the first thing they would have done. Should one believe Mrs. Besser, or her story? No, I must know where this woman lives; she was only here for a visit as I was told. I must see her and speak with her so I might become familiar with what I have heard. This, my dearest girls is the worst I could inform you of. I wrote everything according to the truth, the way I know it - but I still hope. I beg you will hope with me and I plead with you to inquire from where you are since mail doesn't go from here to Riga. There must be a place where information can be obtained, something like a public courthouse would know, where the camp Sudhov is and most likely may still have reports and files on its prisoners. It seems to be the only way. No, I don't want to quit yet, until positive evidence is found that our dear ones are among the dead, unless time or the future would let us anticipate such. My dear girls, I write you these lines and my tears stream endlessly for my dear, dear girlfriends that fate so cruelly let them be sacrificed. One should despair over oneself and humanity, that these cruelties could actually be carried out; where was the reasoning? A part of my heart went with the family; deeply hurt I stayed back - lively they are with us daily, not one day passes where we aren't reminded of them. Mrs. Wagner, who also was a true friend of your family, has been living with us in our home since May 1946. Miss Wagner, who always was our "Hans" because her name was Hanni, has become a dear friend of mine since we met in the kitchen of your loved ones. She and her mother lost their home in bomb attacks 3 times. And guess what? It was possible for us to give her mother and her brother and her an apartment in our home.

We still live in the past because our "Hans" also lost someone dear to her in Theresienstadt. She had a business with Mr. Hageno. This was our Uncle "Max". And as the situations became more complicated they had to give up their business relationship. Onkel "Max" could not stay in the apt. anymore, so he went into an old folks home in the Gustav - Adolf Str. The meeting point for Uncle Max and Hans was the Humboldtstr, where he also was lovingly taken care of by your loved ones. He also was sent to Theresienstadt and probably also died there. We had communication there, through a Mrs. Hahn, with Jdl Kohn, and one day she wrote that Uncle Max went to Laura, we knew though that Laura had already said good-bye to this world. That's how Hans was tied to us all - she shared our fate. Since the future for us isn't complete, we only speak of the past. Hans and I become sad as we live through the frightful, horrible, time. That I could get in contact with you made her happy for she also yearned to learn about you as I did. You'll find a few lines from her also - of our Yette, Clarchen, Oma, and the children. Do you remember how they were? What they looked like? What pictures do you have of them? Clarchen, our dear Clarchen, really fitted her name. Fragile and small like a flower out of a different world. Good and loving, understanding of everyone, always helping with a soft still hand. Wise thinking, smart handling, carried pain until she could no longer, she carried herself through this world of viciousness. Prideful until she was broken, hateful to anyone mean to her, all without compromise. Sundays became painful to her when it rained from heaven, that's when she felt her world most of all. Sadness is what almost ruined her health. She was always the soft one in fights, always giving, always making someone happy. Dreaming, that's



how I often found her, always tastefully dressed, and always with the simplest. We often spent quiet hours philosophizing, in candle-light, she seemed peaceful. Her heart beating softly, she tried picking apart the word "Why" - always trying to bring an answer together. Giving up the children; the death of her husband - this took everything from her. Softly she whispered the names, Harold, Sigmar, Zilla, and my Adi - gentle and small, the deep black hair, parted in the middle, huge dark eyes - this is how she remains in my memory. "My children, my husband." -----

Yette, or Yette, carried the sorrow deep within her, energetic, helpful, even laughing when her heart was at the breaking point. Never blameful, ready for anything, without thought, always impulsive, full of life. Goodness, love, balanced in every way, readiness; this was all hers. Full of temperament, her circle closed itself to completeness. Sun, Rain, Snow or Storm, she always remained Yette.- always giving advice, never letting down, always helpful, always friendly, even in her deepest sorrow. - making other happy. This was keeping her alive. She thought of herself last. First came Oma, and Clarchen. Then herself? No, a few others came first. Making something out of nothing - only she could do that. A band, a bow, a flower - her hands never empty of doing something. Harmonious, true, completely giving up herself, never a traitor to a friend. She <sup>h</sup>gone through all shadows, and all sorrows were stilled by her. Always optimistic in situations, always finding more energy, who only cried for and by herself, worrying about her children and for all poor souls. Yette, the fresh stream for all who needed a place to turn; always friendly, laughing even when pain and sorrow hurt her. Blond, light-eyed, youthful, a little idle, a curl here and

there, a necklace, a flower - chic and charming, never able to be brought to her knees, always on top even if it hurt her - but never to show anyone, not letting anyone see how difficult everything got for her; that was our Yette - Proud of her girl, full of plans, happy when mail arrived from England. From a distance you could hear her cheering - "Vera wrote, my big daughter,"- - - - -

Between both girls, Oma dangled - who always took care of daily chores. Still she had daughters, grown-up daughters, independantly fighting for life - but she was the mother, she reigned over her small Regiment the way she learned to as she grew up. Strict and systematic in belief she accomplished much, which sometimes was possible. At times the daughters kept things from her because it couldn't be avoided, especially because of her health. She carried the worries deep within her, not always able to understand what was happening, working, cooking, taking care of all business. Like magic, old became new, and tastefully made, too. Nothing was too much for her. A button here, a stitch there, a bow here; something new from house to house - pitiful and also happy things - these were all her additions. Always ready to help. My mother and Oma, in the right words, always full of worries and love for their children. An hour alone with her always ended with her reminiscing of her childhood years, her marriage, she never wanted to understand that there was a world full of sneakiness, nastiness, dirt and viciousness. So lived a one of a kind woman in the midst of viciousness and cruelty. A mother and a grandmother. That's how I see them in front of me - unforgettable. Each in their own place; one they kept until that painful good-bye arrived. Heroines, who fought and took everything for their belief and life - still and

courageous in their fight for life, in their fight for their children - followed by hate and envy. Cursed at, marked, brought to their knees, undressed of any human characteristics, tortured, murdered, emotionally destroyed, all for only a principal. Game for everyone who wanted to cool their mats, - that's how far a man was brought down. And that was supposed to be a Victory? No, my dear girls, what your loved ones experienced is enough. You should be proud to have such fathers and mothers who understood it was better to sink than to be parted from their families and homes. Thinking of the torture they went through you should fight for life with all your might, to witness and fight for that what was to be destroyed, Judaism. Cry, yes cry, but shown in your tears, courage and hope. Let your loved ones be amongst you and live with you, because they were good and whoever is good has won heaven. Wind and clouds always brought their greeting and wishes; and their thoughts built bridges on which you were never forgotten and aren't to this day. It would be good to raise the Koppold children in the way the parents thought and wanted to. Into hard working people who are to continue where the parents left off - with the will and decision to finish what has been started.

To you my dear girls I speak of hope. Be and remain strong and brave and live in the way of your loved ones. I knew that one day I would write you and that I'd find you, but I wanted that this could have been a different chapter. And now I have brought you so much sorrow. My heart wants to break because of it. How can I help you? Patiently the paper, automatically the fingers, but the heart sad. Won't you promise me to be brave and strong? I beg you for that, remembering your loved ones, who would be unhappy if they

knew they had caused you so much sorrow against their will. Be proud of them, very proud, and build them an altar in your hearts, an altar of quiet heroism. On this day, I end my report. (it is the 16th of Oct. '46)

In order to try to find out if Riga was the End I will search for Mrs. Besser. Would you please write to Riga as I suggested before? Try it, maybe you'll find something out. Oh, how happy I would have been had I been able to write you happy news. I always had such hope. My girls, what was I to your loved ones? In all hardness, such a tiny flicker of hope, a short guide along the way. I'm 47 years old today. I had a good harmonious marriage, without worries, well situated, always visited by guests; we had friends with whom we shared happiness and sorrow - yes, life was OK. As the year 1933 came, I knew why I lived. I knew I had a mission to accomplish. But I didn't know that fate would play your loved ones into my hands. In them I realized the most valuable thing a person could carry with them. Being human to one another - and that filled me with such satisfaction. That we had to part from each other is still unbelievable to me. Within me and in my heart they still live as if they never had gone away. In you I find my continuity of my loved ones, and to you I also want to be a good friend, as I am to my good Yette, Clarchen, and Oma; with true inner thankfulness. You should know that I was for yours as well as other good friends never a "Martha," since I still retained the name "Yuliane" I became a "Marjane" (Mariane). Everyone knows me and of me when you mention the name here in old circles. Should we continue to leave it at this? I am your Marjane and you are my dear, dear girls. And if I may ask you, if I am a friend, then please without

"Sie" (formal you). Isn't it amazing how friendships can be made through such a distance from home, which never was a homeland to you. And with such faithfulness towards your loved ones, we'll leave it at that. I am always and forever,

Your old thankful friend,  
Marjane

Thurs. - 3 PM afternoon

My dear Vera, my new friend!

I received your letter at the same time as Paulas' - and to take dear Paula's advice I beg you, in relationship of our new friendship to use that small word "du" (informal you). My dear girl, I think it will be your desire to continue what your dear ones began and I am glad to have found the same understanding kind of people in you. I thank you for the sweet lines and for your trust. It is a hard task to let this mail reach your hands, but I hope you'll be a real tough girl. I only wish it could have only been the best and good that I have to report to you. In answer to your plea to also want to find out the worst, I wrote this terrible letter. Can I curb your sorrow? My dear Vera, probably not. You are 21 and understanding, but even this doesn't help against that inner pain. It is so hard for me, and I am with you in my thoughts. We can't reverse anything, can't cancel all that's happened, against this horrible time we were all helpless. Otherwise we would have done everything we could. My God keep you safe, dear Vera, we'll always be your good friends.

I wrote everything, as wished, on a typewriter - many mistakes, many corrections, my thoughts always running ahead of me

and my fingers unable to keep up. I had to write everything out of my heart and then came the day I had long awaited. To find you was my duty, because from you I still had the "Norwich" connection. It was bad luck that I didn't find you the first time, but then it happened anyway. It makes me so happy that you are still with the good Staff family, and so filled with joy to know that the earth still inhabits people with hood hearts. The biggest joy for your loved ones was to know that you were well taken care of, knowing that you found each other. Of course they didn't want to leave you alone; there was a plan, to reunite in America. Now it becomes truth that you are going there. A long distance will be between us but every way can be bridged. Sorry that it isn't possible to get to know you anymore, unless I came to America to visit you - or perhaps you'd find the way here. You would always find a home with us. Let's wait and see what the future brings us - life can still be long - as long as we stay healthy. I also wrote Paula and am delighted to hear that you both have been doing so well. I am also very happy to know that the Koppold children are in such good hands. I wish you, with all my heart, that you'll stay in contact. I know the grandparents in New York from stories and by their names only. Your dear mother herself believed to find refuge there. Now grandfather is dead? Oh, how painful, it would have made them very happy to be able to see you. You wrote once that you wanted to become a beautician (learn hairstyling)? You were 14 then, and know I hear you are working in an office. How did you wurvive the hard times? Norwich was also bombed, wasn't it? We thought of you often and hoped that you were healthy. Do you still have the coral necklace from Oma? Oh, she was so happy to be able to send it to you.

She spoke of it - that it was to keep you in good health. I hope it has been going well with you. Of course I understand your lovely letter, when I read it I always see Vera's mail to home - all small details were always mentioned - a new dress, a new coat, and every line began "My dear mother". Oh, how happy we always were to hear good news. All our love and worry was always for the children.

Dearest Vera, one plea I have. Would you please send me a picture of you? I would love to know how the grown Vera looks. I only remember her with her mother when she was small.

Dearest Vera, since you are so big now, and Paula also, I beg you with all my heart that you would carry your sorrow together. No, the Koppold children are too young to know how cruel the world could be, don't leave the Koppold children. Continue to be a crutch for them so that the last won't get lost. I ask that you would do this for your loved ones. As soon as I can I'll send a picture of us. I'll send one to Paula at least, so you'll know how we look. We are not doing so good, the war has retarded our health and still we are hopeful that different times may come where we'll be able to live (rise-up) again. Right now we are satisfied that it's peaceful and that we still have our home. If I can help you in any way I'll be willing anytime - (so don't forget your addresses). Considering the situations, we are doing well so far. That's why we don't ask for much and are satisfied with even the smallest. It's a little difficult sometimes, but a person can get used to anything. We have been living off the past, but that's over now. Provisions are the minimum, often barely enough. Living among the other people isn't nice. Someone always thinks that the other one has more. The still closed zones also create more difficulties. Still we think that

with time things will get better. We've gone through so much, and yet it has to continue like this. The war only brought misery, grief and sorrow to humanity. Dearest Vera, I hope this letter reaches you in good health. I'll complete everything in 3 letters since only 20 grams are allowed at a time. I truly believe that you'll go to Paula, and I know it will be your saddest day. May God give you strength and courage that you may be able to take everything you know courageously - always with your loved ones in mind. I hope to get an answer from you real soon; and I will be thinking of you. Wishing you well, I want to be your friend in memory of your loved ones. I send you greetings and remain faithfully, your old friend,

Marjane



Schmulewitz, Rose (Oma) (Grandmother) (Mother of Leo, Yetta, Clara and Trudy)

Schmulewitz, Leo and Eva

Grünbaum, Otto (Abraham) and Trudy- (Mother of Paula and Edith)

Koppold, Adolf and Clara (Clärchen)-(Father & Mother of Harold (Zvi),  
Siegmar and Zilla)

Ribetzky Pietrowsky, Yetta- (Mother of Vera)