

My mother, Marianne Levinsohn (nee Mosevius), was born in Berlin on April 2, 1923. She was an only child, and left Germany on December 1, 1938 as part of the very first Kindertransport. She may have been chosen for the first group because of my grandfather's position as head of the migrant welfare and passport office for the Jewish congregation of Berlin. It seem likely that his job gave him the opportunity to save his child's life, when many other parents did not have that opportunity. But I would have done the same to try to save my child.

Unfortunately, my mother did not live long enough to be involved in any Kindertransport reunions. She died in June 1975 (when I was 20 and she was 52), from injuries suffered in a car accident when she was driving me home from college at the end of my senior year.

One of the many things I've always regretted about my mother's early death is that I never had the chance to talk to her as an adult about her experiences in Nazi Germany and England. As a child, we had many conversations about her experiences, usually while we looked through the suitcase of old family photographs her mother had brought from Germany. But although I learned the basics, my memories of what she told me are less a coherent narrative than a series of disjointed stories: how much the Germans adored Hitler (whom she saw on several occasions); the time she was walking in the Black Forest with several younger children and a couple of Hitler Jugend tried to drown them by throwing them in a stream (she had to fish them out); the time when she was still in a regular school, before all she started attending a Jewish school in 1935, and a Nazi official who came to address the class pointed her out to everyone as a perfect example of Aryan girlhood (much to his chagrin, he was later told my mother was a Jew); disliking the food and absence of central heating in England; not being treated very well by the first family she stayed with after her arrival; being in London during the Blitz and getting so sick of running to the Underground when the sirens went off that she just stayed in bed and figured that if a bomb dropped on her head then so be it; and so on.

My mother did have a collection of several hundred pages of letters she wrote to her parents during the five years they were apart (which her parents had saved, and which her mother left to her), but I didn't read them until long after she died. I started having the letters translated as a kind of tribute to my mother's memory after my son was born in 1990, realizing that he would never know her. To do the translation, I hired a German graduate

student through the Columbia University Tutoring and Translating Service.

My mother lived in England for 5 years (with two different foster families and then on her own), until her "number" came up and she was able to join her parents in New York in September 1943. (Her parents, who had remained in Berlin, were fortunate finally to be able to leave Berlin in late 1941 and emigrate to the U.S. via Lisbon, only a few weeks before the German invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941, and only a few months before the Nazi government closed the borders to all Jewish emigration in September 1941, and then began to deport the Jews of Berlin to "the East," and escape became impossible. According to my mother, during the months before their departure, at least my grandfather, and possibly both my grandparents, stopped sleeping at home, because the Gestapo always came at night; this is essentially consistent with the statements my grandfather submitted in the 1950s in the course of his restitution proceedings.)

Whatever complaints my mother had about England, she always considered herself extremely lucky to have escaped Berlin when she did. Despite comments in one of her letters about many English people being anti-Semitic, I remember her being quite the Anglophile overall.

By contrast, my mother felt anger towards the German people, even after more than 30 years. She had lost two grandparents, seven uncles and aunts, two first cousins, and innumerable more distant relatives. The one time she returned was in 1972, when I was a teenager and we were in Switzerland on vacation, and took a side trip to Baden to visit Sulzburg -- the village in the Black Forest south of Freiburg where her own mother had grown up, where she used to spend summers with her grandparents, and where her mother's family had lived since about 1725. We went with her uncles Max and Bernard, and Bernard's wife Lily (my mother was seeing Bernard and Lily for the first and last time since 1938). I remember how difficult it was for her to be in Germany again: to have to speak German most of the time, to visit the house in Sulzburg where her family had lived, to see the old synagogue in disrepair, to have to listen to an old woman who leaned out a window when she saw us and talked about how yes, she remembered the village's Jews very well (or so it was translated to me).

Being in Germany wasn't easy for me either in 1972. I remember giving

dark looks to everybody over 50, wondering about what they were doing between 1933 and 1945.

Here are the excerpts from my mother's letters. My notes within the letters are in brackets, and in italics:

A translation of the first letter my mother wrote to her parents upon her arrival in England, dated December 2, 1938 (age 15). [All the letters below were originally in German, unless otherwise indicated]

Friday, 2:30 pm

Dear Parents:

I assume you must have received my postcard from Hanover by now. But let me start my description of the last two days from the beginning. The trip on Thursday was very nice. The kids in our train compartment were all first-rate kids, as are, by the way, 95% of all the kids. Dear Mutti, you gave me much too much to eat; like almost all the other kids, I was able to finish only about half the food I had with me. The border check at Bentheim functioned precisely and without problem for all of us. At about six pm we had a splendid reception in Holland. Huge train cars with warm, excellent food (a thick soup of beans, meat, and potatoes) with cold drinks and sweets were positioned right at the border. We were most cordially received by the committees. There were delegations at all train stations (Utrecht, Rotterdam), to force fruit and sweets on us, although we were already stuffed, and to wish us good luck. The people from the Dutch and English press kept pestering us during the entire passage through Holland, and even after that, with their constant flash photographs. In Holland we already had to set our watches back forty minutes. At Hoek van Holland, the Dutch checked our names, and then (at about 9 pm) we went on board. The ship was very nice (about 2000 tons). If we had wanted it, they would have served us another good dinner. We had two-bed cabins (second class). We left at 11.

And this is the start of our barfing tragedy ["Kotztragödie"]. The ship sailed for about 7 hours in very agitated water. During this time, only about three of the 200 kids did not get seasick. I wasn't one of those three. From 11 pm

to 6 am, I didn't get a minute's sleep, because about every eight minutes I threw up. Throughout the ship you heard nothing except the crying, groaning, and gargling of people throwing up. We threw up in sickness bags that were provided. I personally used up 6 bags, plus the floor, the chamber pot, the bed sheet, and I staggered to the toilet three times, where I alternately threw up and had diarrhea. In the morning we were all examined by a British doctor and were given number tags. I have number 6013. — By the way, the blue blanket is priceless; without it I would have frozen to death on the ship, and here in the camp, too, it's unbelievably cold. — There were English people and press people already on the ship. I had a conversation with a very upper-class British Jew, who stared at us inquisitively and didn't speak a word of German. He said he wanted to take a German child into his home to keep his 16-year-old daughter company. He said he'd love to take me. (He was impressed with my excellent English.) He wanted to know my age, education, plans for the future, my father's occupation, and provenance. He gave me his London address and told me to write a letter to his daughter, because he wanted to see if my written English was also good. I'll discuss the matter with the director of the camp today, and then, once I'm sure the man is honest, I'll write immediately. I asked this gentleman, among other things, whether he thought my plans for the Matric exam were realistic. He thought finishing my Matric by July 1939 would be feasible, but he didn't think I could become a teacher. Well, all right.

They had sent our suitcases to Harwich; we didn't even have to touch them. We were driven to the camp in a bus. First of all, my address here:

Marianne Mosevius
(room 16B)
Holiday Camp
Dover Court Bay, Essex
England

It's wonderful here!!! We arrived at nine o'clock, and we were immediately led to the living quarters (enormous, gigantic hall; kitchens; lounges). They had set long, colorful tables with flowers. There was porridge, bread, butter, jam, and a hot milk drink. After that we were assigned rooms, and then we were allowed to do whatever we wanted until 1 p.m. The sleeping quarters are delightful one-story rows of cottages made of corrugated sheet metal and cardboard (they are really meant to be summer cottages). The

bedrooms are on the ground level; you walk right into them as you enter. All the older people, including me, have little rooms of their own. [*A drawing of the floor plan follows.*]

Everything is very cheerful and colorful: there are red curtains on the closet and bedside table; green door, green linoleum floor, green broom; a washbasin with running water, electric light, a mirror, a pretty folding chair, an armchair with green trimmings, and a bedside rug. The bed is as wide as a double bed, with only two thin blankets on it. No heat. I'm terribly cold. Food is good. I must close — post is leaving.

Marianne

[PS:] They are paying for my postage.

December 4 and 5, 1938

Dear parents,

I assume you have received my three postcards and the letter. Please write and tell me if you have received everything. I really think you could write me too, you know. I am fine. Tomorrow, Monday, we'll have the second day of school. We are outdoors a lot, playing in the fields and going for walks on the beach. The food is plentiful and good. As for the matric, I have pushed all the buttons I could, and since everybody in the camp is really nice and helpful, I'm sure I'll get results. Didn't I write you about Mr. Easterman? I first made careful inquiries about him with the manager of the camp, and then I wrote him the letter he asked for, in my best English. He asked me again, through a lady on the committee, whether I wouldn't like to come stay with him. He has a sixteen-year-old daughter, and he'd also let me do the matric. It's a very upper-class family, I think, I talk a lot to English people here, and I have no problems with it at all. Everybody is amazed at my good English. Please send me a pair of scissors as soon as possible, and white buttons for underwear and eyes and hooks for skirt closures. Soap, too, I left mine on the ship. The manager of the camp is called Dr. Essinger. She is the same woman who oversees the former Herrlingen boarding school, which is now in Kent. Everybody is nice.

-Evening— I'm lying in my double bed with six blankets and two warming bottles. We just learned a dance called "Lambeth Walk." It's the popular dance in England. . . .

Good night. I'm turning out the light. Bye, mutti, bye, papa.

- Following afternoon -

Today we had two hours of classes. One lesson on English coins, one on foods (words like kohlrabi, onion, etc.). Well, I know the coins already. In the afternoon, there are always talks in English by English people who are nice enough to volunteer. We have also begun to make friends with the English kids. We aren't allowed to leave the camp, but they come to see us. Yesterday afternoon I went for a walk in the dunes with a very nice young Englishwoman. The dunes are still part of the camp. So we have plenty of space. In the evening an English sailor, who works in the house, teaches us English songs. That's a lot of fun. We all have running water in our rooms, and we get to take a bath every day. Just now we were told that from now on we'll get only one letter and one postcard a week paid for. So this is going to be my only letter this week. After this, I can only send you one postcard. But if you send me International Reply Coupons, I can write more often. . . .

I'd like to ask you to send me some stationery and ink for my fountain pen (Montblanc) soon. I have told you already that if there are customs duties on anything, you can pay it all in Germany already. But stationery and ink are not that urgent. The sewing supplies (buttons, darning needles, gray darning wool, etc.) are more important. For today I can't think of anything else, except that I'm happy and would be more so if I could finally get mail from both of you. Papa, please write clearly.

Kiss,

A letter from a few days later:

Friday [9 December, 1938]

My dear parents,

I bet you can't believe that I'm in London, but it's true! I must have told you that I wrote to the daughter of this upper-class Englishman. She replied promptly, in a very sweet letter, saying that they are all looking forward to seeing me, and that she is happy to have a sister. She's turning 17 this month, and she studies art at the university. Yesterday evening a telegram from the Committee arrived in the Holiday Camp, that Mr. Easterman had contacted them about me, and that I was to go to London the very next morning. He lives in just about the most fancy neighborhood in London, in a first-rate apartment. So I left for London early this morning, with all my kit and caboodle. After two hours on the train, I arrived safely in London. Mr. Easterman and daughter met me at the station. They are both very charming. He is a journalist and very rich. First of all, the two of them took me on a bus ride through all of London. Good god, what a city! I'm all excited about everything. Then we went to a restaurant. Very fancy, very expensive, very good. After lunch we went home. The apartment is fabulous. I live in a charming, huge room with my new sister, whose name is Joyce. There is an eighteen-year-old son, too, Leslie, who is planning to study history. Mrs. Easterman is very sweet, too. She sends her regards and asks me to let you know that they are all very happy to have me, and that she'll write you as soon as she gets a chance. They have an Austrian [inserted: Jewish] maidservant.

Mr. Easterman knows some German, and he's often been to Berlin. Tomorrow morning he's flying to Paris, Marseilles, and Tunis, to report from there. He'll call the Mops [*nickname for my mother's Uncle Bernhard Bloch, b. Sulzburg 1894, since he was little; it means something like "little pug dog"*] when he gets to Paris. They wrote me this morning, and they sent me one pound. The Eastermans are Jewish, of course. They are liberal, but they don't eat pork. Mr. Easterman is a Zionist. In March he's going to New York. So, once again, I've been luckier than I deserve, and I'm very happy. Within the next couple of days, they are going to talk to the teachers about my schooling. They, too, want me to finish school. Please write immediately whether you are happy, too, and whether you've gotten my mail. The camp is forwarding all my mail etc. Enough for today.

Kisses,
Marianne.

12 Dec., 1938

My dear parents,

I assume you've by now received the letter in which I told you of my arrival here -- It's wonderful here. The Eastermans are just delightful people. I don't remember exactly how much I've written about them already, so I'll start again from the beginning. Mr. Easterman is a journalist*. He is constantly traveling all over the place by plane. Prague, Paris, New York, etc. At the moment, he's in Tunis. He is a very courteous, educated, and nice man. His wife is also very nice and friendly to me. Thank God she's not an arrogant, rich Jewish bitch [*please don't judge my mother too harshly for saying that; she was only 15!*], but a very nice, competent woman, and although she wears a lot of makeup, like everybody here, she also does a good job in the kitchen. She and her husband are real big-shots (on a volunteer basis) with Woburn House and other organizations. This, of course, could come in very handy for me on your behalf. . . .

Now about English food. The food in camp [Dover Holiday Court] was revolting. When I wrote "good," that was only to reassure you; "plentiful" was true. The plates, as well as the silverware, were always very dirty. In the morning, there was porridge. It looks like puke, and that's pretty much what it tastes like, too (oat gruel with sugar and water). Here, everything is very good and appetizing. . . . [Although] the pink meat is a disaster, the blood positively streams from it. I always get queasy just from looking at it, but I always eat it!!!

*See Mr. Easterman's obituary: <http://www.jta.org/1983/09/07/archive/alexander-easterman-dead-at-92>

Alexander Easterman dead at 92

September 7, 1983
NEW YORK, Sep. 6

Alexander Easterman, a lawyer and journalist who, as the representative of the World Jewish Congress helped negotiate the Allied governments' declaration condemning the mass slaughter of European Jews in 1943, has died in London at the age of 92, the WJC reported here today.

In the late 1930's, Easterman accepted the invitation of Dr. Stephen Wise to take the office of Political Secretary of the WJC and became head of its International Affairs Department in 1941.

He was born in Scotland and after graduating from Glasgow University was admitted to the Scottish Bar. He took up journalism as a career in the early 1920's and, as one of Britain's leading political correspondents, he travelled extensively in Europe, the United States, North Africa and the Near East. Easterman served as foreign editor of the London Daily Express from 1926-1933 when he resigned because of his disagreement with the publisher, Lord Beaverbrook, over the newspaper's policy toward Hitler which he considered sympathetic.

He joined the Daily Herald as chief foreign correspondent and was its Paris bureau chief when war broke out in 1939. Easterman remained in Paris until the Nazi occupation, when he escaped to London.

ON CLOSE TERMS WITH EUROPEAN STATESMEN

Easterman was on close terms with leading European statesmen before and after World War II. His interviews with King Carol of Rumania and with Rumanian leaders, including fascists, created a sensation, as did his book, "King Carol, Hitler and Mme. Lupescu."

He maintained close personal contact with President Benes of Czechoslovakia and Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk. In the early 1950's he established close relations with Tunisian leader Habib Bourguiba and Sultan Mohammad of Morocco, then both in exile in France.

In 1943, Easterman played a prominent part in the negotiations with the British and Allied governments that led to the declaration condemning the Nazis mass slaughter of European Jews and announcing that war criminals would be punished. In 1945, he participated in the WJC's war emergency conference in Atlantic City.

At the war crimes trial of the Bergen-Belsen Nazis he joined the representatives of 12 Allied nations on the judges bench at Luneberg. Later he represented the WJC at the Nuremberg war crimes trials, along with British MP Sidney Silverman.

Easterman was a member of the WJC delegation to the inaugural conference of the United Nations at San Francisco in 1945 and to the 1946 Paris peace conference. He attended subsequent meetings of the UN and served as spokesman for the WJC at meetings of the UN Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Commission.

[Skipping a number of letters]

December 28, 1938

Dear parents,

I just received your letters, and, as I'm sure you intended, I'm furious. You can't be serious about [my letters being too] "short and succinct." I can't report on every fart I make. That can't possibly interest you, like whether I go to the toilet regularly or something. If I write that everything is o.k. with me, that I like the English food and that it agrees with me, that ought to be enough! Or no? Besides, it's not like you write frequently and copiously, either. And the headings are very revealing, too. In the first letters, it said, "my dear, dear child," or "dear little Marianne"; then it changed to "my dear child," or just "my d. child"; and now you're already down to "d. Marianne." Where's it going to end?

But I don't intend to quarrel with you in writing; instead I'll respond to your "trains of thought." No, we don't have central heating, but fireplaces. That is, there's a fireplace in the "lounge" (sitting room, in German), with coal and smoke and not much heat, just like it's supposed to be. In all other rooms, except the kitchen and the bathroom, there are electric fireplaces, with no smoke at all and a little more heat. You switch on these things as you enter a room. In the bathroom, my butt regularly almost freezes to the toilet seat, and this always makes me think of Mom's story about the outhouse in Sulzburg. [*I'm afraid I don't know the story!*] Pardon my language, but I have to let off steam occasionally. Besides I'd never noticed your question re central heating. So, sorry!!

Next, since the package from the camp with my orthotic things still hasn't arrived (there, too, they have a huge mess about transports of kids and accommodating them), I can't take gym. But I keep so straight that Mrs. Easterman always uses me as an example of good posture for Joyce.

The people I'm meeting are just like five years ago: [decorated?] clothes horses, with, by our standards, narrow horizons (balls, servants, toiletries, gossip). The Eastermans are, in fact, an exception. Joyce's friends are all heavily made-up young things who are interested only in amusement. Joyce is quite different, above all terribly nice and sweet, and, although she isn't very gifted, she's smart!!

Why would I be disappointed with the Eastermans? I certainly don't expect love from them, nor do I need it! Of course I'm always as nice and amiable

to them as I can, and I always give them your love. I know exactly that everybody likes me a lot!

I never polish my shoes!!! It's not customary here, for at home you wear slippers, and outside you wear overshoes. The nice leather shoes I polish once a week.

— As for requesting that a friend be evacuated, I really didn't want to show off or anything. It was like this: in the first few days of my stay there, Mrs. Easterman asked me if I didn't know any girls my age who I wanted to bring over; if so, I should have their papers sent to me immediately, and she would pass them on with a special recommendation to Mrs Bentwich (who is the top mogul in the operation), and that way it would all go very fast! Well, of course I was very happy, and I wrote accordingly. The papers have been submitted, but God only knows what's going to happen with them next, in this Jewish chaos!

Have I written you about the Christmas presents already? I spent, unbidden, 10 shillings in all! That's customary here. I got:

One pair of wonderful slippers from Tunis, a wonderful stationery set with tons of writing paper etc. , 3 sets of handkerchiefs, and sweets. English sweets are, by the way, remarkably bad. I've gotten sick from them lots of times. Enough for today [inserted: kisses], Marianne.

[P.S.] Joyce is learning German really well. She can say: aufstossen [burp], Scheisse [sh**], Stuck Malheur ["piece of misfortune," apparently an insult], Nase [nose], Auge [eye], Mund [mouth], Hund [dog], Bauch [belly], Magen [stomach], Salz [salt], Messer [knife], Gabel [fork], Loeffel [spoon], Pfeffer [pepper], Mostrich [mustard], Meerrettich [horse radish], Kopf [head], Psychologie [psychology], Schuh [shoe], denken [think], muede [tired], gute Nacht [good night], guten Tag [good day], Hunger [hunger], and she knows how to conjugate sein [to be].

Kisses,
Marianne

January 6, 1939

Dear parents,

I received your two parcels today, and I can really use both—so thank you very much. But the parcel from the camp still hasn't arrived. I've given up hope. I'll go pick up the umbrella tomorrow; they notified me that I'll have to pay only 3/- customs. . . .

Recently I went to Mme~ Toussaud's wax cabinet. It was fabulous. So lifelike that I was almost scared. All celebrities, from King Harold (d. 1066) to the British Chief Rabbi, Hertz—"from Aschloch to Zintloch" [*apparently a humorous expression for "from A to Z" - mildly vulgar, for "Arschloch" means "a**hole"*], everything is there. I also visited the "Chamber of Horrors," for 6d. extra. It was wonderfully scary. To top it all off, Mr. Easterman made the requisite horrific noises in the dark — well, I'll tell you, Mutti would have been scared out of her mind.

The vacations here are nearing their end, thank god; about one more week, and I'll get to go to classes. If I could pass the real Matric in July, instead of the "school certificate" (which you take at the Goldschmidt School [*the Jewish school that Marianne attended in Berlin after she left her public school because of anti-Semitic problems in 1935*]), that would be terrific. Well, I'll do my part — and apart from that, we'll have to wait and see.

Now for the things I'd like you to send me. I can't wait to see the pictures, send as many as possible, and soon. I

It's really sweet of you to offer to send books; let me tell you which ones I'd like to have, on the whole; you can then mail them over a period of time, at your convenience.

Jaeger's World History Thoughts and memories [Thoughts and Memoirs]
(Bismarck)

Poems by Stefan Zweig (sitting on the buffet, with a dedication from Tante Lilli. Thin and reddish.)

Buddenbrooks.

Im Schatten der Titanen [In the Shadow of the Titan]

Kreuzersonata

Auferstehung [Resurrection]

War and Peace

Goethe (your [Dora's] volumes)

Schiller (over time)

Heine (perhaps only *Confession Judaika*)

The skinny red book which I lent Elli Kroner ages ago; it's about a Jew in North Africa, written by a Christian; unfortunately I've forgotten the name. The title is the Jew's name, something with an "a" in it.

If you can get it, a little book by Rilke? Or Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, the title is something like *schichte des Kornetts??* Ruth Kapizky knows the exact title; please call her. The book is cheap, if you don't want to buy it, please have it sent from Sulzburg [*in Baden, where her mother's parents lived until they were deported to concentration camps in October 1940*]. I saw it there in the summer. It's wonderful, and I'd love to have it.

Grimm's Fairy Tales

Of my textbooks

1. Le Roman d'un jeune homme pauvre (a green booklet), with vocabulary book, if it's in there.

2. Deutsche Vorgeschichte [German Prehistory] (by Blücher). It's a grayish-brown booklet.

I'll talk to you tonight, so I'd like to leave something for our conversation. Apart from this, there's not much that's new. I can't find your last letter right now, so I don't know what you wanted to know; if it's something important please write again, and don't get mad. Could you kindly let me know what's going on with your English; I've "asked about it in my letters three times already, and haven't received a reply." [*I suspect that she was quoting back to her father something he had written to her complaining about a lack of response to his questions.*]

It's four o'clock now; at 7 or 8 I'll hear your voices. I've got a funny feeling in my stomach — I'm all excited!! Once you start thinking about it, in the age of the telephone, Berlin - London is really not much of a distance.

Kiss -- talk to you tonight

Marianne

[Of all these books, only three have survived the last 77 years and still sit on a bookshelf in my apartment: the book of poems by Stefan Zweig with her aunt's dedication, and two volumes of Goethe with my mother's -- and grandmother's -- names written in the flyleaf.]

[Undated - Jan 1939]

Dear parents!

.... Mutti, you must write immediately to this address:

Co-ordinating Committee for Refugees,
Domestic Bureau,
5 Mecklenburgh Square,
off Guilford Street,
London W.C. 1

Write that you're absolutely perfect in all aspects of housekeeping, which is, after all, true. Write that you've led a household for so-and-so many years, and that you're particularly qualified for work with children because of your training (nurse). Write, too, that you're a good dressmaker, and send all your school reports and recommendations (photocopies). It is best if you're placed by the Committee in London, for first of all, there is great demand there for really good domestics, and secondly, there is a house in London where all domestics can find temporary lodging when they are out of work. So you'll be taken care of when you get here. Pay here is usually one pound to 25 shillings a week if you live in; so you can save money right from the start, because you don't need much when you have free board. Free time is every other Sunday afternoon, and one free afternoon a week. We could spend that time together, and of course I'd come see you often and help you. So everything would be just perfect ! ! ! ! !

Just keep learning English really well -- Papa too. I'm so glad you're having so many English lessons; it's immensely important. I have absolutely no problems with the language, not even in conversations about abstract subjects, or in translations from English into French and vice versa (something I practice a lot, and I could pass the matric if I took it today --

French is so easy), or in talking to people who speak with thick accents (Cockney, Scots, Irish, American).

Yesterday I went to 69 Russel [sic] Street, i.e., Woburn House's branch for refugee children. With Mr. Easterman, because of my schooling. The tuition, which is horribly expensive (about 10 qu., or 300 marks per quarter), will be paid by the Committee up to the matric, "in my special case." In a few days I'll be notified where I'll be taking the classes for it. I think if I only cram the necessary history and math for three weeks, and throw in another three weeks for Shakespeare and Tennyson [sic], I could actually pass the matric. It's so easy. [Of course, it took her a lot longer than that!] I don't have time now, gotta go. A friend's house has been broken into.

Kiss,

Marianne.

[Next day, undated]

Thursday

I'm sorry I broke off yesterday's letter so abruptly. Friends of ours had burglars in their house, and I had to go there immediately. At the moment I'm at their house too, because their girl is so nervous that somebody has to keep her company during the day. At night, Joyce sleeps over, so we take turns.

Well, I don't think there is any point in Mutti's writing to Mrs. Easterman about finding a job in a children's home; she [Mrs. Ea.] doesn't do anything, strictly speaking -- she just thinks she's doing something. I think it would be best if Mutti came here as a maidservant, because that's apparently the easiest way, and you make the most money. Once she's in the country, she can always see if she can find a better job as a nurse. But in any case, send me all of Mutti's documents, curriculum vitae, etc., in English translation; I'll try, together with the Eastermans, to do what I can with them. . . .

I talked to Dr. Goldschmidt [of the Goldschmidt Schule, my mother's school in Berlin] on the phone. I'm going to see her tonight; tomorrow she'll come to the Easternmans, who are very interested in her plans and want to help her. Dr. G. is complaining terribly about the Committees here, like everybody here. She told me today she'd like to be in touch with me. Why, I wonder?? Well, it's fine with me. Monday or Tuesday she'll have to go back to Berlin; so call her sometime during the week and have her tell you how well I am and how nice everybody is to me. Perhaps she can give me some suggestion about what to do about you. But I'll only discuss your case with her if she brings it up. . . .

I hear that at G[oldschmidt] School, nobody has the energy to study anymore. So I couldn't have gotten my matric there -- just frayed nerves. I'm glad I'm here.

[Undated, Jan/Feb. 1939]

Dear Parents,

I just talked to the Easternmans about Mutti, and now I have to write you right away to tell you how beautifully I have arranged everything. In order to stimulate their compassion and their activism, I didn't say anything about the clearing camp [?], but only that Papa wants to go to South America, and that Mutti can't bear the climate there and would have to stay behind, and that this is why Papa can't go there. So I softened everybody up, first of all. Apparently I did a great job, for Mrs. Ea. will go to Woburn House tomorrow and send Mutti a household permit. Just so that Mutti gets out, first of all. Everybody says that once you're here, you won't have any trouble finding a job as a nurse, and if that fails, well, then, you'll work as a domestic. But so many homes for German kids are being founded now that you're sure to find something.

Dr. Goldschmidt will accept 130 children into her school to begin with (without the farm), and these are all children for whom there are high financial guarantees abroad. Mr. Easterman is of great help to her in the realization of her various plans, which I don't have time to describe in detail right now. When I told her [Dr. Goldschmidt] about Mutti's England plans, she said spontaneously that she wanted to take her in at the school (for child care), but you know her, she says one thing one day and something

totally different the next. At any rate, she's going back next week; give her a call. I'll call her before she leaves.

[Unfortunately, as is probably not a surprise, things with the Eastermans didn't end very well. The Easterman family "sent Marianne away" after 3 months. The main factor that led to the departure was probably a letter Marianne's father Ernst Mosevius wrote in English to the Easterman family on Feb. 4, 1939. Most of the letter expressed gratitude for the family treating Marianne "as your own child," which is "the best comfort for parents abroad, who cannot help their daughter anymore," while another part of the letter emphasized how "totally necessary" it was for Marianne to start school as soon as possible, and within six days, since school had already reopened for the new term and Marianne hadn't started yet. Why that was the case isn't clear to me. Marianne's response to her father is excerpted below. She was soon sent to a Gentile family, Mr. & Mrs. Williams, who, while not as "well off," were considerably nicer to her.]

[Undated, Feb. 1939]

Dear Papa, . . .

Well, just now, Mrs. Easterman called me in and told me, with a face that showed that there was trouble, that she got a letter from you which upset her very much. And then she read me your letter, which of course I knew already, with a furious voice. And I don't know why, but when she read the letter, suddenly all the words got turned around, and the letter didn't sound nice anymore at all, although it did sound nice when I read the copy. She said that I must have complained about the school business on the phone, and that I was ungrateful, etc. Well, of course I was flabbergasted; I really didn't complain, and I always write you how good I have it at the Eastermans, and that everybody is doing their best to get me into school, and now this! She also had said that if she were in your and my situation, she'd be happy that her child is in good hands and that everybody is trying to get her into a good school, instead of writing schoolmasterly letters. She said that the letter was very impudent, especially the bit about the "six days" underlined, and she wasn't going to take that kind of thing from you.

— Now, by sheer coincidence, the school called this morning and said that

they were taking me, and I should be there at 9 tomorrow. Mrs. E. said that if the school hadn't called today that I should come, she would have sent me away — six days indeed! — and would have had me put up somewhere else, in a boarding house or something. — Well, I must say, you got me into a bad fix there! — It's not only that you have lost the Eastermans' favor for good, but you have made me look bad, too, and I don't think that I'll ever be able to break the ice that's now piled up several feet high between me and the Eastermans. Well, you got us into a pretty kettle of fish! Of course I won't be able to do anything at all for Mutti now, either. [*Namely, to try to enlist the Eastermans' help in getting Marianne's mother out of Germany, perhaps as a domestic.*] Then again, Mrs. Easterman didn't lift a finger for Mutti anyway. She also said that Mr. E. would be very upset about the letter when he got back. That's very bad, because I like Mr. Easterman very much, I look up to him, and he used to like me a lot too, but of course now he won't like me anymore, either.

For God's sake, never write any letters directly to the Eastermans again. Always send it to me first so I can see what's suitable for the Eastermans and what isn't. And moreover, you should get a decent translator for English letters, so you don't write such a faulty letter again. Your "full of gratitude" didn't please Mrs. Easterman either; she said she didn't need gratitude. Of course that's only a cliché, but you can see from that how mad she is at you and me, and how moody she is. You have to treat her like a raw egg. — Now, don't get unnecessarily upset over this letter; I'll be fine, as far as food, sleep, health, and clothing are concerned. As for my intellectual needs, school will take care of that starting tomorrow, and love I get from your letters. Of course I'll continue to be as nice, amiable, helpful, and smart to the Easterman's as I can, and I'll work like crazy to be somebody soon and stand on my own two feet, so that I don't have to depend on strangers. You can learn something good, and make something good, out of every disappointment if you want to, and I do want to! I've learned to pull myself together and always seem friendly on the outside. That, plus first-rate English and some Hebrew, is the net gain of two months. So, although I didn't go to school, I didn't waste my time.

Kiss,
Marianne

[Undated, Feb. 1939]

I'm joining a class of 26 kids, who are all about 16-17 years old. So I'm once again much younger. So much the better!! It's the school of the City of London, very old, very famous, very expensive (more expensive than the Goldschmidt School). All kids study German there (which is very unusual), so I'll have to "study" German, too, whether or not I want to. At any rate, I'm in very good hands there. Now to you. Today I went to Mecklenburgh Square because of Mutti, which is where they sent the documents from Berlin. They told me it could be 2 or 3 months before they found a job for Mutti, and that they could do it only if it's certain that the husband will come to England, too. This means that Papa needs to get it in writing as soon as possible that he's coming to the camp. Mrs. Easterman can vouch for Mutti only if she will give her a job, too, but she is neither able nor willing to do that. I talked to her today until she promised to find a job for Mutti in her circle of acquaintances. Mrs. Easterman is very lazy; you have to keep bugging her until she actually does something. But I worked on her long enough that she's definitely going to vouch and find a job. The question is only, when! In the meantime, I wrote to the English Nurses' Association today. At Woburn House, I was told that it's not very hard to get a nurse's permit. I sent them the transcripts, too. Apart from that, nothing new.

Kiss Marianne

Friday [also undated, Feb. 1939]

Dear parents,

I got your card today. I figured that you didn't think of the effects of your letter to the Eastermans. But nothing has straightened itself out yet. Everything's as cold as a dog's snout, especially Mrs. Easterman, who carefully avoids speaking any superfluous word. Mr. Easterman is still out of town, so I have no idea what position he'll take. And—something which is very unpleasant—I haven't gotten any pocket money for ages, and I spend a lot of money on transportation (7-8d. per day). I'll last another four days exactly, then that's it. But I don't have the guts to ask for money. Besides, I've lent them about 3 shillings on various occasions, and I haven't

gotten that back, either. I'm not allowed to take money from the two kids I taught English (Mrs. Easterman vetoed it). It's true I have one pound from the Mopses, but that's going to be spent on the book box. Couldn't you please write to Paris, that they should send me one pound? That'll last a few months, and at some point Mrs. Easterman is bound to realize that I don't have money.

You can read all about the school in the letter to Dr. Gutman. which you should forward to Dr. M. Gutman, c/o Aschenheim, Berlin-Grunewald, Hohenzollerndamm 55.

The bit about the six days at school is a lie. Please write the Mopses immediately, and write me soon, too. I have to end because otherwise the letter will be too heavy. I'm really very happy at school. [The City of London School for Girls.]

Kiss,

Marianne

[Undated, Feb 1939]

Dear Parents,

. . . . Why should I want to leave the Ea's? That's ridiculous! How do you imagine that would work? Do you think I'd be better off elsewhere? Definitely not! I really can't expect more, can I, than a decent school, good food, a good bed, etc. Do you really imagine that with another family it would all work out? Most of the girls my age were placed in families where they do housework, and the others have been put into housekeeping schools (for two years) by the Committee. . . I'm really an exception in that I'm allowed to do my matric and am in a good family. The "yoke of oppression" [*obviously she was quoting something her parents had written to her*] consists simply in Mrs. Ea.'s being very moody, and having to be treated like a raw egg. (That's generally true of everyone here in England.) But do you really think that I'd be better off elsewhere? Sure, the Ea's are a little too elegant for my taste; I never know exactly whether

I'm behaving right or not, but that's still much better than it could have been if I'd been placed in [another family]

Once again, to make myself perfectly clear: the people I'm living with here are fundamentally different from our circles. You have to deal with them very differently than I was used to and you are used to. Please get that into your heads! For God's sake, never write letters that I don't see beforehand to anyone around here. There's just no way you can guess from Berlin how to deal with the different types of people here. If you try, you'll produce nothing but nonsense.

Kiss,

Marianne

[Undated, Feb. 1939]

Dear Parents,

I'm terribly busy at school, but I like it better every day. Everybody there (teachers as well as students) is especially nice to me.

I received your letter. I read the letter to Mrs. Easterman [obviously a new letter] very carefully and then sealed it; I'm going to give it to her within the next few days. She is already beginning to be nice to me again; this is because I don't bother her with anything. She is quite approachable as long as you don't "trouble" her, but if you interfere with her convenience in the slightest, she immediately flies off the handle. It's in part because she's had too much money all her life. I just received 1 pound and a letter from Uncle Mops. That's a blessing, because although she [Mrs. Easterman] has given me the underground fare for this week, I can never be sure that she won't forget it next week (it really is just absentmindedness), and you can bet our last penny that I'll never ask her for money. . . .

At school, we have exams every day this week and next in all matric subjects. That is, we are given the matric papers of previous years as in-class tests. It's a kind of pre-matric. I'm already taking part in most of

them; in a few weeks I'll be fully involved. My commute to school is 30-35 minutes, about 10 minutes of it on the underground.

Morning.

I just received your letter and am very happy, although I cried a little. I know that you always think of me; I always think of you, too. . . .

Right now I'm writing at school, between lessons -- I have no time at home. I take sandwiches to school for lunch, because the food there is so bad. In the afternoon, we have classes until 4. Next week we have no classes at all, but exams from morning to evening. But I no longer get upset about things like that. In the evening I usually work till 9:30. Then I take a bath and sleep from 11 to 6:30. At 8:20 I leave the house, and at 8:50 [I'm] at school. The real classes begin at 9:20. On Sunday mornings I study Hebrew. That's about all the studying I do.

Enough for today. Talk to you Friday.

.

Kiss, Marianne

[Undated, Feb 1939]

Dear parents,

Today is Monday, and we don't have classes because it's half-term. I assume you've received my Friday letter in the meantime. I'm always going to write you on Friday for sure, and then one more letter in the course of the week. Because unfortunately I don't have time or money for more letters. Please tell Grandma and Grandpa that that's why I'm not writing them. Can't you get reply coupons at the post office anymore? And please, if it's possible, send me a reply card once a week, which I can use for Paris or America or some other unavoidable thing. For I really can't spend more than 5d. a week on stamps. Now I regularly get [from the Eastermans] (or so I hope) 4 s. every Monday morning, of which I spend 3s 6d. on fare and 5d. on stamps. That leaves me 1d. for emergencies. Plus I still have 1 pound from Paris and 7d. saved from the last few weeks. --

Since the Ea. children don't get more, either, and I can get by, I hope that the money question is solved once and for all. If there is another row and I don't get money, I'll have to write to Paris. -- The Easterners and Easterners have been very nice to me again for the past seven days or so. I'll just have to see to it that such rows don't happen too often; they really wear me out.

Now to Mutti. You wouldn't at this point get a job anywhere in England, everybody is so fed up with Jewish maids that it's hard even for the maids who are here already to find a job. . . .

When do you think you can go to the U.S.?? And what's the story with Sweden? Is there nothing that can be done for Papa through B.B. [B'nai B'rith]?

Friday afternoon I always play hockey at school. From 2-4. It's great fun. In summer they play tennis and swim at school. . . . The weather has been wonderfully warm and sunny here for a few days, very spring-like already. What a shame there's nothing like a Grunewald here. . . .

Kiss, Marianne

March 2, 1939

. . . [S]ome of the exam results have been announced, and I really didn't do too badly. In English -- get this -- I'm the third best with 55%. Good, isn't it? In German, naturally, the best, with 87%; in French, with 55%, also one of the best. More isn't known yet. But if this had been the Matric, I would have passed with "credit" (i.e., distinction). . . , and I'd be matriculated in a university (50% and up, which nobody has done yet at the Goldschmidt School). And the test papers were the ones that had been used as Matric papers in December 1938. What do you think of that.?. . .

. . . .The "C.K. Hört Zu und Rät [*C.K. Listens and Gives Advice*] -- presumably an advice column from a magazine] was great; if you like, you can always send it to me, but these things are already too far away for me, and I'm somewhat indifferent to them.

No, really, don't send my bike. Look, when the Ea.'s moved from the country to the city two years ago, the Ea. kids had to sell their bikes because there was no room in the flat for a bike, and besides people don't bike in London, honestly. I have brought up the matter a few times with the Ea.'s, and all I ever saw was the most icy, negative faces. It would only cause me all kinds of embarrassment; why don't you put it with the other things in the elevator? That's the best place for it.

[Undated, the following Friday afternoon]

At school there is tons of work for me right now, because, although I finished first in various exams, I have great gaps, which I can fill in only through constant repetition. That's why I always have a lot of work to do, even on my free days. On Friday afternoons I play hockey until 4:30, then I write letters and help in the kitchen, and, depending on how much homework I have, I work after dinner or read. Saturday morning I do my real school work, i.e., the assignments they give us at school. In the afternoon, we either have company, or we all go to the movies, or I review my lessons; Sundays I sleep until nine, then I work until lunch, and in the afternoon I sometimes go for a little walk, or else we have company, or we are invited somewhere, and then I work 2-3 hours in the afternoon or evening. Then I have a bath, and then the week starts all over again. School from 9 to 4; I get home at a quarter of five. I study from 5 to 7, then from 7 to 8 there's dinner and polite conversation, etc. From 8-10 it's studying again; at 10 (since at the moment we don't have a maid) we prepare the breakfast for Lesley [the son in the family, who had not yet gone up to Oxford]. and then I sleep from 11 to 7:17. I'm going to bed now -- it must be 10:30 already, or something like that. Good night. . . .

Friday afternoon I had tea just now, and now I have time to continue my letter. This afternoon I played hockey for two full hours in the gorgeous spring sunshine that we have at the moment. It was wonderful. Mrs. Ea.'s blood pressure is still low, so she's still lying in bed looking like a martyr. I'm convinced that there isn't the slightest thing wrong with her. Next Monday she's going on a trip with Joyce to recuperate. I'm looking forward to that. The boy will be going to Oxford on Monday and

stay there all week to take exams for a scholarship. So I'll be as good as alone, because Mr. Ea. is gone pretty much all day. Isn't that great? . . .

I don't have the school uniform yet, because the Ea's seem to have forgotten about it, and of course I don't want to remind them.

March 11, 1939 [still age 15; turned 16 on April 2]

Saturday evening

Dear parents,

Well, you're probably going to be surprised to get another letter from me already, but there are special reasons for that. Tonight, Mr. E. called me to his study with a very serious face. I immediately sensed trouble ahead, but I really didn't anticipate what followed.

Didn't I write you already that Mrs. Easterman is "ill"?

Now on Monday she's going to the country for an indefinite period of time, with Joyce to take care of her, and Leslie [the Eastermans' son] is going up to Oxford. So Mr. Easterman told me that, much to their regret, they were forced to send me away. For Mr. Easterman himself is leaving later this month for a three-month trip to America. So they contacted the Committee about me, and they suggested a Christian family in London. Monday I'll find out whether these people, who live a little outside London, are prepared to take me in. I'd have to take the train to school every morning, but that would work out fine. At any rate, it wouldn't affect my schooling-. And that's the most important thing! ! ! !

Of course I don't know what the people I'll be staying with are like; I might get lucky, or I might not. The only thing is that I'll have to make another complete change; I'll have to adjust to strangers for the second time and to subordinate myself to them. As soon as I am at my new address, I'll let you know. I suppose you won't be able to phone Friday.

Tomorrow morning I'll pack my bags and get all my things ready! Please God let the new family be nice to me, and let me be happy there! It's not

very pleasant to be pushed around like this, but it's all going to work out fine. The most important thing is that I can continue in school and do the matric.

The Easternmans said, of course, that I should always feel free to contact them if I need advice or anything else, and that at any rate I should always stay in touch. But in three weeks they'll have forgotten me. Of course I'll stay in touch with them, because for one thing I do have to be grateful to them for having kept me almost four months, and, secondly, they may still be of use to me one day. All this is weird, like a dream. I hope it doesn't turn into a nightmare. But please write to [family in] Paris [Bernhard & Lily Bloch] and Lörrach [Sepp & Toni Bloch], etc., so that they don't send things to my old address anymore. Well, that's life!

Kiss,

Marianne

[Moving forward, to a March 16, 1939, letter, five days after my mother's letter at the end of the previous installment, telling them that the Easternmans were sending her off to another family.]

[March 16, 1939] Thursday

Dear parents,

At the moment I have a free period, and so I have leisure to write you. I'm assuming you got my letter and my card. I got your letter, too. On Tuesday afternoon, the Williams's came to the Easternmans' house with their car to pick me up. Mrs. Ea. was in bed and therefore didn't talk to the Ws. Of course I had packed everything on Sunday and Monday evening, and I managed to fit everything into my several suitcases. Mrs. Ea. said she hoped I'd be very "happy" with the new people, and I should stay in touch and always let them know how I was. I promised.

Then we crossed London by car, from N.W. to S.W. Finally we arrived. Then we immediately had tea. The little house is very charming, it's an old villa that has been converted, and the ground floor now belongs to Mr. W's

sister, and the two top floors belong to the Ws. Everything is tiny and compact, so they don't need a maid. There's a dining room (very cozy and a little larger than our study), a study (very elegant, and also about 18' by 15'), and kitchen, bath, toilet on the lower floor; a bedroom for the Ws; a small child's room for their little daughter, Sheila; another mid-sized room, which used to be Sheila's play room and which I will get (they have to put in a few more closets first) , and a fabulous guest-room, where I'm staying at the moment, on the second floor. It's all brand-new and built-in. The residents are:

1. Mr. Williams

A man of about 38. He and his brother have a firm which buys plots of land with old houses, converts them into apartments, and sells them. (They seem to be doing very well.) [*Note: it's clear from later letters that the Williamses really struggled after the war began.*] He is very nice; he gets up early in the morning [*translator's note: double underline beneath part of "morgens," presumably because Marianne had occasionally misspelled that word occasionally in earlier letters, and her parents had pointed her mistake out to her*], makes tea for the entire family, and starts the heating. He's a real goy, who does sports, wood working, and gardening in his spare time.

2. Mrs. Williams

About forty. Very tall and strong. Very lively and funny. [*The words strong and funny are underlined.*] She used to be an elementary school teacher. She's very well educated, reads a lot, and does all the housework by herself. She's a good seamstress. She's always laughing, and she's very concerned about me. (On Easter I'm going to the dentist.)

3. Sheila

Sheila is very sickly (11 years old); she used to have a lung disease, and she's very delicate. At the moment she's in bed with a cough and asthma. She's very cute, and she plays with dolls a lot.

4. Sarah, the cat.

Sneaks into rooms and beds at night, and is very young.

The Williamses are charming, natural people, who are absolutely sweet to me. I like it much better here than at the Eastermans. The whole atmosphere is happier and healthier and more natural. The Williamses belong to a camping club; this means that every weekend from Friday afternoon to Sunday they go to the country with their car and a trailer. (This is very common in England and America; these trailers are very modern, with kitchen, bath, living rooms and bedrooms.) Sometimes they'll go to Southern England, sometimes as far as Scotland. This weekend we're going to Devonshire (that's in the South, and it's hilly.) They also go camping in all school vacations.

Last summer the Ws spent two months in an international camp in the Black Forest. This summer they are going to Zurich, and they'll drive through all of France on the way there. They are going to take me! [*"me" is underlined.*] They are already in consultation with the Committee about what should be done about my passport.

At school I'm making good progress; yesterday I got the best grade on an English composition. I still have a lot of work; if I work until 10 pm, I work from 6-7 am, and if I work until 11 pm, I get to sleep until 7:15. I'm so used to 7-8 hours of sleep by now that I'm feeling very good. After all I have two nights a week to catch up on my sleep. I'm looking forward to the weekend; it'll be a lot of fun to work outdoors.

--Well, you see I'm doing fine; I only hope I'll never do worse than this. I'm beginning to think that Mrs. Ea.'s "blood pressure" was a great blessing for me. ---You can give the sanitary pads to Annemarie [*Annemarie Seelig, a school friend of hers, see below*], toothpaste too. I got one pair of stockings. I'll write about telephoning the next time.

Kiss, Marianne

[*Added in smaller handwriting, between lines, upside-down*]

Please write my change of address to Paris [my mother's Uncle Bernhard & Aunt Lily], Sulzburg [in Baden; my mother's maternal grandparents], and Annemarie.

[My mother's school friend Annemarie Seelig later escaped to England herself with part of her family, although not, I think, on a Kindertransport. See <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/vha43537> and <http://www.thejc.com/community/community-life/115199/kingston-educates-young-shoah>.]

Letter from Mr. Williams, in English, to my mother's parents:

66, Wimbledon Park Road
Southfields, S.W. 18

[Sun] 19 March 1939 [in English]

Dear Herr Mosevius

I thought you would like to hear from the house where your daughter has come owing to the illness of Mrs. Easterman.

We are a quiet family and feel sure that Marianne will settle well with us, we like to get away into the country at week ends and for our various holidays, we usually travel with our car and trailer caravan to many places of interest. We have found that spending as much time as possible in the country away from the impure atmosphere of London is beneficial to my daughter (now 11) who had chest troubles when she was younger.

Marianne works very hard at her lessons and we are sure will make excellent progress at school.

Yours sincerely,

J.E. Williams

[See two attached photos of my mother, Marianne Mosevius, taken on a camping weekend with the Williamses in March 1939 -- perhaps the very same weekend she refers to in the above letter, although this trip wasn't to Devonshire -- in Reigate, N. Downs, Sussex, England. My mother is almost 16 years old, and looking very happy and grown up. I don't know if the planned trip to France entirely worked out in the Summer of 1939, but I do recall my mother telling me that she was able to be there with the Williamses for at least a little while, and was able to see her Onkel Bernhard and Tante Lily and their two children, who traveled from Paris to meet them..]

[no date; still March 1939]

[top right hand: Stick different stamps on your letters to me, because Mr. Williams is a passionate stamp collector.]

Dear parents,

At the moment I'm on the train home from school. I got your letter, with contents, as well as your card yesterday evening. I'm doing fine! The people are really very nice and sweet. She *[Mrs. Williams]* is similar to what one would imagine a South German to be like. Very lively and funny and nice. The child is very cute and seems to like me a lot; she comes running every five minutes to hug me and say, "let me love you!" Please excuse the shaky handwriting; the train is very bumpy, and I don't really have anything to write on. Of course I'm as nice as I can to everyone. --- The whole thing is of course not as upscale as it was at the Ea.'s, but then you can move freely here and don't always have to be afraid that you might do something wrong. Did I tell you that the woman used to be an elementary school teacher? She comes from a real family of teachers: her

sister is a teacher, and about five of her father's brothers are, too. So she is predisposed to be interested in my career.

With my matric, everything is moving smoothly. I registered today at London University. I had the committee give me my birth certificate for that, but I have to give it back. Papa, couldn't you get a second copy of my birth certificate from the registry, which I could hold on to? Who knows if I can always get the certificate from the committee when I need it. I called the Eastermans twice tonight but there was no answer; I'll try again tonight. The Ea.'s must also still have the originals of my last school report cards [*from the Goldschmidt School in Berlin*]! This is the story:

When I entered the City of London School, I sent them my last two report cards. And the school returned them immediately, for I saw the envelope a week later in the Ea.'s hall. But this was around the time we had a row, and I didn't want to take anything from an envelope addressed to the Eastermans. So I left it with all the other letters that had just arrived, and figured that of course they'd keep the report cards. Now recently I asked Mrs. Ea. to please give me my reports. But she knew nothing at all about them, and since Mr. Ea. was out of town, she promised me to check, before I moved out, where they were. But she did not. At any rate, she told me that she couldn't find them. She no longer was interested in me, of course. I asked Joyce [*the Ea.'s daughter*], whom I know to be reliable, to ask Mr. Ea. for the report cards and mail them to me. She promised she would do this for sure; I was, of course, very upset about the reports. But I haven't heard from her. Funny!

Wouldn't it be possible to get the last two reports again from the Goldschmidt School?? How is the old sweat shop anyway? [*Note: In an earlier letter to her parents from January 1939, which I didn't include, my mother says "I hear that at the G[oldschmidt] School, nobody has the energy to study anymore. So I couldn't have gotten my matric there-- just frayed nerves. I'm glad I'm here!"*]

And you have a chance to come to England? How, through whom, when -- write everything in detail! That's absolutely fabulous! --- I just called the

Ea.'s again. Leslie [*the Eastermans' son, about to go to Oxford*] answered the phone, and everyone else is out of town. Of course I couldn't ask him about the reports, he doesn't have the faintest idea. [*I got the impression from my mother that she was beneath the boy's notice, and didn't exchange more than a few words with him during her three months' stay with the Eastermans.*] And how is your (pardon me, our) America deal coming along? How is Paris [*her mother's brother Bernhard Bloch and his wife, Aunt Lily*]? Do you know whether I can send a reply card that I got from Germany to Paris or New York? [*Another uncle, her mother's brother Max Bloch, had emigrated to the U.S. in 1936 and was then in N.Y.C.*]

Speaking of telephone: call me next Monday evening between 9 and 10 your time, for from Friday to Sunday we're probably not going to be in London. By the way, we didn't go away last weekend because Sheila (pronounced "Schila") was sick. The vacation begins on March 30. Enough for today.

Kiss, Marianne

[*Letter from Mrs. Williams to my mother's parents, undated, but from early April 1939. In English.*]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mosevius,

Thank you so much for your letters, I only wish I could reply as well in German but I only know a few words and Marianne says that no German would recognize them as I say them! I am afraid that we English are very lazy as far as learning languages is concerned.

We are so glad that Marianne is settling down so happily with us. She is certainly a good girl with her lessons and has a good report from the school [*the City of London School for Girls*] this term. We hope she will pass the matriculation, she deserves to do so, and if hard work will count she has every hope of success.

As you both remark she is not a model of tidiness but one cannot have everything and no doubt she will improve in that direction as she gets older. At her age most girls will cheerfully use a safety pin instead of sewing on a button. I had a lot of study to do when I was Marianne's age, as I was preparing to be a school-teacher, and I do not remember being very careful of my possessions! In the case of the missing school reports, of which you have since sent copies, Marianne is not to blame. They were returned, with other papers, from the City of London School to Mr. Easterman with whom Marianne was staying and although she has written for them to be returned to her, so far, her request has not met with any response. So you see she is not to blame.

I am so pleased that Marianne enjoys our week-end excursions with the car and caravan. Between the holidays and the exam we shall not go very far afield as long journeys are apt to be rather tiring. We have a few very pretty spots quite near London where we may camp in quiet and beautiful surroundings. I think it very necessary for the children to get out in the country for some good clean air especially as Marianne's school is right in the city with no playing fields or garden nearby.

We do not go to the cinema or theatre very often but we do enjoy the countryside and have many friends and we feel that Marianne will have a very good idea of England and the English people by the time she rejoins you. We shall do our best to ensure that her memories are happy ones. She has been with us only three weeks but she has fitted in to the family circle and Sheila is very fond of her "big sister." It is so unfortunate that Sheila has been so poorly but she seems very much better again and Doctor says there is nothing much wrong with her and that a good week's holiday in the west of England will do her a lot of good.

Marianne was very happy to be able to see her special school friend yesterday and again today. Perhaps later on we may be able to go and see her in Sussex. *[I don't know who this was.]*

It is true that I have plenty of work to do, but if I had to have domestic help we should not be able to have the car so I choose the work! I cannot

pretend to like it but as long as everyone keeps well and happy I feel it is worthwhile and there is always something nice happening at the week ends. Marianne has promised to show me some German dishes. At present we have three dishes of sour milk on a shelf in the kitchen which she assures me will be delicious when they have been left long enough. I have promised to try it when ready. I must say Marianne is not at all faddy over her food and although she has had to eat all sorts of dishes strange to her, she tries them all and even manages to eat those she doesn't like. It makes it so much easier for me for there is nothing more worrying than a child with a finicky appetite.

It is late and I must stop now as we want to get to bed at a reasonable hour.

With kindest regards to you both from Mr. Williams & myself.

Yours sincerely,

Ivy Williams.

[No surviving letters from April 1939 to March 1940]

[After the War began in September 1939, until Marianne's parents were able to emigrate from Germany in May/June 1941, she exchanged letters with them by using first cousins of my grandmother's -- Julius Springer and Hedy Springer geb. Rothschild -- who lived in Basel, Switzerland, i.e., in a neutral country, as intermediaries.)

Re Marianne's school exams: I was recently looking at my mother's official British Kindertransport file, which I obtained a couple of years ago from the

World Jewish Relief organization. That file mentioned that in July 1940, when my mother was 17, during a time when she had been evacuated from London (where she had been staying with a host family, the Williamses) to Woking, she took her "Higher School Certificate" examinations at the Putney County Secondary School for Girls. She had taken her "School Certificate" exam(s) a year earlier, at the City of London School for Girls -- which I already knew she had attended, since she saved all her report cards from there!

According to Wikipedia, the "Higher School Certificate" exams were the predecessor to the later "A-levels," and the School Certificate exam(s) preceded the "O-levels."

In any event, I came across a letter my mother wrote to her parents in late May 1940, while she was studying for her Higher School Certificate exams and taking practice exams. She described her exam schedule as follows:

"Let me tell you the exact days on which I have my real exams so that you can keep your fingers crossed, and I will be able to think, as I sweat through the exam, oh good, my Mutti and Papa are thinking of me right now and hoping that I'll do well. So: on June 28 I'll have two history exam papers, all day long (three hours in the morning, three in the afternoon), about a special period that I've worked on. On July 5 I will also have two three-hour exams all day: the history of this country in the morning (9:30 to 12:30), and general European history in the afternoon (2-5). On July 8 I'll have Latin exams all day: a paper on Caesar and Virgil, 9:30 to 12:30, and grammar and translation from 2-5. On July 12 I'll have French from 9:30 to 12:30, i.e., a writer (prose) and one poem (both really hard) from the French; one writer into French (all these passages about 1000 words), and one French composition. In the afternoon from 2-5 an exam about French literature. On the 18th we'll have German exams all day. Well, you can see they're keeping me busy."

That adds up to 30 hours of exams, on five separate days, on five (or more, depending on how you count) different subjects. Rather impressive under any circumstances, I think -- never mind that she was somehow able to focus on exam preparation, in the middle of a rather significant war, when she was not only an evacuee but a 17-year old refugee in a foreign country, who hadn't seen her parents for a year and a half and didn't really know if they would ever be reunited. And was writing exams mostly in a language

(English) which was foreign to her and which she had been studying only for about four or five years. Plus, one must remember that even though she was Jewish, because she was German she had nonetheless been classified as an "enemy alien" since the outbreak of war in September 1939. In fact, a few months earlier in 1940, after the fall of France, all or most male German nationals from 16 to 60 -- including Jews, and including Kindertransport refugees -- had been interned in camps on the Isle of Man, and/or sent to internment camps in Canada or Australia (many were killed when one ship to Australia was torpedoed). So that's where my mother would have been had she been a boy; I'm sure she considered herself lucky to be studying for exams at the time instead.

Her next surviving letter mentioning the exams (there are major gaps) was in late August 1940, by which time she had returned to London and, after staying at a youth hostel in Highgate, had taken a job as a trainee pediatric nurse, "after finishing my exams (results won't be available till next month, but it was really easy)."

Then, in her next letter:

October 12, 1940 [age 17]

Well, today I got a big, wonderful surprise for you: I passed my exams with distinction! Isn't that fabulous? Although it doesn't help me much at the moment and I still have to wipe the kids' behinds [in her job as a trainee pediatric nurse], it's still a great achievement for me, and I'm very proud of it.

I do hope that you've been getting mail from me, but I haven't heard from you for several months. But even if you aren't hearing from me, you mustn't worry about me. I'm fine at the moment. As you know, I'm training as a pediatric nurse in a children's home here and I like it here, although I don't love my work. I have a nice room and good food Apart from that, I read a lot in my spare time, specifically foreign language novels and literary works. And I hope I'll keep being lucky as I've been so far. And even if we're separated for another year or two, we're going to get together

again eventually, in some part of the world. And please, please don't worry about me. Look, if you worry I'll have to think all day long that my parents are uneasy because of me, when there is really no reason at all to be concerned. Well, my dear parents, I guess that's it for today, because there is nothing else I could write you about. Stay healthy, dear Mutti, and you too, dear Papa, and don't work too hard. Say hello for me to our garden and the entire Grunewald, and all our friends and relatives. With the fondest hugs and kisses,

Marianne.

[Note from Hedel - Dora's first cousin Hedy Springer geb. Rothschild] My dears, our best wishes will presumably be late, but they are nonetheless sincere. The best gift for you will be Marianne's letter. Yours with best wishes, Hedel.

October 15, 1940 [excerpts] [age 17]

My dears,

How are you? I haven't had word from you in ages. I hope everything is still the same for you and you still live in the old apartment and Papa is working as always. I'm fine, as always. I have written you dozens of times that after I passed my exam (everything with distinction) I worked this summer in a home for infants (something like Niedsch., where you were once, Mutti [= *the Jewish Babies' and Infants' Home, Niederschönhausen, Berlin, where Dora worked 15 Oct 1917 - 1 Apr 1920*], and that I like it there. . . .

Now, dearest Papa, I want to wish you a happy birthday [22 Dec.], although it is of course much too soon. I only wish, for all three of us, that we can spend your next birthday together, no matter where, even if it's without my

plans to study; I won't be a financial burden to you. But I can guarantee one thing: after this damned war I'll study history, even if I have to finance it by working night shifts! . . . Well, these are all daydreams! First of all the war has to end, and that won't happen for a while, I'm sure.

How are Mops [Uncle Bernhard], Gustel [Uncle Gustav], etc.? Are you in touch with them? When you write grandma and grandpa, please send them my love. Well, my dears, please take care of yourselves and don't worry unnecessarily. . . . Stay healthy -- that's always the most important thing! Perhaps we'll see each other again soon, my dears, and then all three of us will be so happy and relieved. I always think, "if only I could be with Mutti and Papa again, I'd never quarrel with them anymore, and I'd always behave myself." But presumably I'd soon be "fed up with you" again.

Many kisses and caresses from
Marianne.

PS: Give my love to Aunt Hedel, Uncle Julius, Eva and Lilli, and many thanks.

[No surviving letters from March 1941-October 1942. All letters thereafter written in English unless otherwise noted; her parents were in U.S.A. since June 1941.]

As I mentioned, I was able a couple of years ago to obtain my mother's official 4-page Kindertransport file from World Jewish Relief. I find it fascinating for obvious reasons, perhaps especially because although my mother's parents saved many of the letters she wrote to them during their nearly five years apart, there were two major gaps -- from March 1939 until April 1940, and again from March 1941 to October 1942 -- for which I have no letters (I don't know if that's because none reached their destination or they were later lost), and the WJR file fills in those gaps with details I didn't have before, although of course I had a general idea from things she had told me.

For example, I was able to find in the file some more details than what my mother had told me about her time (from about April 1941 to March 1942, according to the file) as a student nurse at the notorious Severalls Mental Hospital in Colchester (see <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article->

2415036/Severalls-Hospital-Edwardian-mental-asylum-Colchester-patients-held-50-years-demolished.html and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Severalls_Hospital).

What she told me was that she hated her time there (partly spent scrubbing floors and doing other menial tasks), that the supervisors treated her and other young women very badly and were very unkind, and that it was like something out of Dickens. She also told me that she ended up running away from the place by climbing over a wall to leave in the middle of the night, even though she was technically required to stay there for the duration because of the wartime mobility restrictions in place. She took with her the 1914 (but still applicable in 1941/42) "Manual of Duties for the Asylums of the County of Essex and the Borough of Colchester" and I still have it; she wrote in the flyleaf "as a memento of Severalls M. Hospital 1941/42."

Well, it seems that what she told me about her abrupt departure was basically true: on p. 2 of her Kindertransport file, there's a note dated April 8, 1942 stating:

Letter received from the Matron of the Severalls Mental Hospital, Colchester . . . stating that Marianne resigned her post as a nurse at this hospital on the 27th March adding that the Medical Superintendent did not know if the "Stand Still" order applied to her and was writing to the Board to find out. In the meantime Marianne "absconded." It thus appears that Marianne left against the wish of the Authorities and very suddenly.

Fortunately, however, she was not made to go back. (Perhaps especially fortunately because on the night of Aug. 11, 1942 -- just a few months after my mother ran away -- the Luftwaffe dropped a bomb on the Female Working Ward of the hospital, apparently thinking it was a factory; 38 women were killed and 23 injured.) I did enjoy reading a comment someone placed in the file after a meeting with my mother on March 4, 1942, when she was almost 19, stating that she is a "very charming and intelligent girl; speaks perfect English." Of course, that doesn't surprise me! After my mother ran away from the mental hospital, according to her file, she was placed at the Heinz Factory, Waxlow Road, Harlesden, N.W. 10,

labelling bottles and boxes as a "part-time dehydration plant worker," for 11 pence per hour, 4 hours a day, every day except Saturday. That factory was bombed twice during the War, but -- again fortunately -- not while she was there. Next, and until shortly before she was able to leave to join her parents in the U.S.A., she worked at Johnson & Co., 32 Foley St., W.1, as a "fixer - Govt work - tailoring," for 2 pounds per week. (Her rent at a boarding house was 35 shillings -- I don't know if that was per week or per month.) She described that job to me as sewing pockets on soldiers' uniforms, and expressed sympathy for any soldier who tried to put anything in the pockets of a uniform she had worked on, given how substandard a seamstress she considered herself! Her final job (she was released from war work shortly before her departure) was a "very easy" one, working in Bond Street preparing cosmetics, involving putting cold cream in jars.

[My mother's letters resume]

October 4, 1942 [age 19]

My beloved parents,

. . . . Have you heard from Grossmutti yet about the Mopseus [Bernhard & family] etc.? It is really all very terrible, and we must be grateful not to be in their position, although we have been separated for so many years now. After all, one day we will be together again and everything else will just be a bad dream. I have not really altered a lot, only I have grown up; but I think when we are together again it won't take you long to discover the old Marianne in me.

Have you heard about the visa? Every morning when I wake up I am wondering whether it will come today or not; and every evening I go to bed disappointed.

I shan't mind coming over by boat. Of course I should prefer to come by Clipper, but if I can get a boat before the aeroplane then I'll take it with pleasure. After all, 90% of the passengers crossing the Atlantic arrive safely, and I don't see why I should be among the unlucky 10%. Besides whilst I am waiting here for a safer accommodation a bomb might drop on me & kill me, so really I think I'll take whatever accommodation I can get. . .

Papa, if you can get a job in the clerical line, I think it would be better suited to your natural abilities [than the job he then had -- I'm not sure if he was still working in a hospital]. After all, what you want is a job that gives you a good salary & as much leisure as possible. The leisure you need to prepare yourself for a better position in America and to get used to the country you are living in, its language, the mentality of its people, etc. Besides you are getting old and want to take things a little more easy. Are you going to be 49 or 50 this December? My Pappilein, I hope I shall soon be with you both again.

Mutti must not work at all, or perhaps only in job where she can get every week-end off. But please don't think that I am still a child and that Mutti has to "provide" for me as you put it. I am used to looking after myself now, I even sew on my own buttons & mend my stockings, that is, only when the holes are getting too big or when I have no more safety-pins.

What kind of cemetery is Woodlawn cemetery? [*My mother's parents had just moved to an apartment on Wayne Avenue in the Bronx, across the street from the Woodlawn Cemetery.*] I don't really think it is very cheerful to live opposite corpses, do you? However, apart from having a green vis-à-vis [sic] & giving you some fresh air it will provide you with a daily reminder of the ultimate end of all human toil!

My work is going on as usual [in a factory by then]. I am working with very nice German refugees and we are doing all we can to make a lot of jokes & fun & thus break the monotony of daily work. There is one very intelligent boy from Frankfurt a./m. and we hold a great many conversations. I am a little in love with him, but only a very little, and I am sure dass es bei ihm nicht auf gegenseitigkeit beruht [that it is not mutual]. So you need not worry.

With all my love,

Marianne

Dec. 20, 1942

Thank you so much for your letter of Nov. 9th. I was so happy to get it because I had not heard from you for a long while. I expect you received my answer to your telegram. I have been to the American consul and been medically examined. Everything was alright. I have got my Certificate of Identity and now I am waiting for my shipping-coupon and my Exit Permit. I applied for both 14 days ago, i.e., as soon as I knew my visa had been granted. It usually takes 3 weeks to get the shipping coupon and as soon as one has got that, one automatically gets the Exit Permit. Then one has to wait for a ship. There are ships going now, but it still takes about 2 or 3 months until it is one's turn to go. The Emigration Dept. of Bloomsbury House is seeing to everything for me but I am always going there so as to keep them reminded of me and to speed things up if possible.

My dear parents I am so very happy to be able to join you at long last. [In fact, it took another 10 months.] It seems such ages that we have seen one another. It will seem quaint to see each other again, for the first week, I suppose, but then we shall be used to it again and it will seem as though we've never been apart. I have grown up you know, after all, I was 15 when you saw me last and now I am almost 20. I wonder if you will see a great difference in me. I don't really know whether I have altered much, the Ws [the Williamses] always say I have not changed at all since they first saw me. Sometimes, when I look at old photographs of you Papa, for instance the one when you were a soldier, I feel that my face has grown exactly like yours was when you were about my age. . . .

I have had a very nice boy-friend here [named Sally Reiss I have known him for about 10 months now. We work together at the factory [Johnson & Co., 32 Foley St., W. 1], and go out together every week-end. We go to the theatres very often and we go for walks in the evenings, because we don't get much fresh air during the day. He is 29 and comes from Frankfurt a./m. After the war, he will also come to New-York. His brother and sister are there. They live in Brooklyn. When I am in America I want to go and see them. He is of Polish nationality, so he is considered a friendly alien and cannot get an Exit-Permit during the war. I expect he will have to join the army soon. We are very fond of each other, but it is nothing serious. I have no intention of marrying anybody for a good many years yet. He knows that, too. We are such very good friends that we can talk together about everything. He is very clever indeed, he was a commercial traveler at home, similar to what Uncle Max used to be. He comes from a very good family and has been extremely well educated. He is earning a lot of money

now as a cutter, and he is saving every penny he can so that when he gets to America after the war he need not start from the bottom again. Anyway, it is a good friendship, we help each other a lot with advice, etc. and we spend all our leisure time together. Unfortunately he is strictly orthodox, and I am quite the opposite. I suppose I shall forget all about him, once I am with you, my dear parents.

I am so looking forward to being with you again. You must make Citronencrem [lemon cream] when I come Mutti! And I want to eat a lot of fruit and butter and cream, all the things I haven't been able to eat since the war. I never get anything from the parcels you send to the Ws [Williamsses].

. . . .

Jan. 24, 1943

My beloved parents

Thank you for your letter of Dec. 5 which I received this week. I have already acknowledged your letter of Dec. 25th which I got the week before. Dear Papa, you hit the nail on the head when you said I must be either very unhappy or else I must be in love. I am afraid I have been in love very badly for the first time in my life. Now it is all over, so I can tell you. But you must promise not to laugh about it and you must listen to me quite seriously until I have told you all about it.

You see, there is a young man working opposite me in the factory. He is 29, and comes from Frankfurt a./m. As he is very intelligent & seemed a very well-brought-up, decent sort of chap, we used to sit next to each other when we ate our sandwiches & talk about all sorts of things. We obviously took very great pleasure in each other's company, and I could feel myself fall in love with him. But I did not show it of course and always remained very aloof. Well, things went on like that for quite a few months, and I noticed that he liked me very much and wanted to go out with me, but as I was so aloof he didn't know how to ask me. Anyway, he did ask me, and after that we spent all our spare-time together & went for walks & for excursions in the country & to lectures, & to the theatre etc. etc. And we were both very happy. We had no secrets, we could talk about anything & everything, he is very educated, and writing & talking with him always reminded me of the the time when we [Marianne and her father] used to walk in the Grunewald & talk for hours. Anyway, I always told him quite

frankly what my plans were, that I hoped to go to America to my parents & study & make a career for myself & that I did not intend getting married before I was about 25 years old, & that I would not really mind if I never got married at all, because I want to become a lecturer on history one day & write books. He told me various times that he loved me but that he also had no intention of getting married for years to come yet, because he might be called up & anyway he wanted to save money & get to America & start business there with his brother. So we knew each other ever so well & we were real good friend, and I am sure we both profited very much from being together every Sunday. -- It is needless to say, isn't it, that our friendship has always been purely platonic, we did kiss each other of course, but that is as far as we ever got -- he knew that I was very much in love with him, and that I had never been out with a man before, and I knew all about his previous life, and he also had told me that 2 years ago he had fallen in love with a great-cousin was a nurse in England. He had asked her twice to marry him, but she had refused and after that they had not seen each other anymore.

Then, on Christmas-Eve, we were out together as usual, and he said all of a sudden, "Marianne, there is something I want to say to you. I intend to get engaged to Henny (that is the great-cousin) very shortly. I met her at some relatives and she was willing to marry me, and as you are going to America very soon in any case, I got engaged to her. So that was that. He cried very much about it and begged me to go on going out with him, as he was not going to get married to her until she had taken her exam in 1½ years. Anyway, I was dreadfully upset, not because he was not going to marry me -- that, after all, I had honestly never wanted -- but because I realized that if he could tell me he loved me one day, and at the same time think of another girl & ask her to marry him, he could never have loved me at all. I had been just a play-thing for him. -- You see, the other girl had refused him previously because she thought something better might come along, and she is not very young and very sophisticated, so when she had waited another 2 years & seen nothing better come, she wrote & told him she would accept after all. He is very naïve, and let himself be caught. The nasty thing about it all is only that knowing so well that I am going away & that I was very young & did love him truly & thought the world of him, he might have waited another few months until I had gone & then get engaged to her.

He admitted all that & said he had asked her not to get engaged for another 6 months, but she would not wait. The funny thing is, that he begs me to go on going out with him & that he says he still loves me just the same. Papa & Mutti, I don't understand very much about men yet, do tell me whether a man can love 2 women at the same time. I don't think that such a thing is possible, unless it be that he loves neither of them truly and only himself well. Anyway, on Christmas Eve he said he would not announce his engagement officially until I had left the factory & I promised him that I would go on going out with him occasionally but not very often. We made a date for [the] next Thursday, and he did not come. For 3 weeks after that he avoided me like the plague in the factory, was very polite, etc., but kept out of my way. So I wrote him the following letter:

Dear Sally:

As I mentioned to you the other day, I don't know now when I shall be able to get away from Johnson's owing to the bad shipping situation, etc. etc. In view of these facts I want to relieve you of your promise to me to keep your engagement secret until I have left the factory. Now that my leaving is so very uncertain I cannot expect you to postpone the open declaration of it any longer. As for me, it seems that I shall have to go through with it at the fact in any case so I might as well go through with it straightaway and get it all over & done with. I am sorry that "War & Peace" should have caused you so much unpleasantness & laid you open to malicious falsifications. My intentions when I gave it to you were absolutely above suspicion and you know that it had cost me a great deal of inner struggle to part with it at all. But I realize now that this act shows up my complete ignorance of human nature. You will understand that your behavior to me in the last 3 weeks has been inconsequent and has naturally somewhat influenced the good opinion and trust I have had in you as a gentleman. It has shown me that you lack something which is far more essential to a man than any of your superficial good manners, namely, common decency, sincerity and strength of character. You will tell me that I should not judge because I don't know the motives and circumstances which were at bottom of your inconsequence; but whatever they may have been, you should have informed me of them without my having to ask. If you want to see me & speak to me personally, you may do so next Saturday night. If you would rather clear things up by letter or leave them as they are now, I shall quite understand, etc.

I remain, yours sincerely, [Marianne]

So we met and he was very upset & said I was quite right with everything I said & he explained to me that the girl had made the engagement official with his relatives & his relatives knew about me of course & everything was in a muddle & he just had not found the strength to face me. A lot of silly nonsense, which is what I told him. I told him what I thought of his character, etc., & that now I had nothing but contempt for such a weakling. I finished with him of course. But now, as we still see each other every day, he keeps on making advances, saying he loves me & asking me to go out with him. You know my dear parents, although I know him so thoroughly that I know his every movement before he makes it and although I know him for what he is, not a bad boy & not superficial, but a vain and selfish weakling, lacking as I said, in common decency sincerity and strength of character I cannot but love him, the same as I have always done, and long to be with him. I cannot go out with anybody else, the very thought of it makes me ill, and I fret & fret & I cannot eat & cannot sleep properly. . . . There is only room in me for one thing at a time, and my love to Sally filled me out completely & now I know he never loved me but only had me for a pleasant pastime occupation.

Well, I suppose in another month or so I shall have got over it and very soon I shall laugh about the whole episode. If only I did not have to work with him every day, I should feel much happier. If only I could get to America soon & be with you & return to my studies. Anyway, there are bound to be disappointments in everybody's life, the great thing is to learn from every disappointment and to emerge from it wiser, and to adjust oneself anew to the circumstances. This is what I am doing. Unfortunately, to see things clearly as they are, does not prevent us from still being hurt by it all. What do you think. Shall I go out with him again or not? It would never be the same again & it would make our eventual parting so much more difficult. Besides it goes against my pride. . . .

Write & tell me about it soon.

All my love & I do hope I'll get a ship soon.

Marianne

10 Canterbury Mews
Lymington Rd., N.W. 6

Feb. 22nd 1943

. . . . Well, I suppose you have had some of my letters telling you about my first love affair. I daresay you must have been very amused about it all, and I am also laughing about it now. I have got over it all quite easily, so easily indeed, that I doubt very much whether I was in love at all. There must have been a great deal of vanity in it, as I suppose there is always where you are in love. Anyway it has been an interesting experience, and has taught me above all that I have no real knowledge of human nature yet & that in order to obtain it I must mix more with people of my own age. -- Rather a difficult proposition, when one has not got much time to spare.

Every Wednesday night I hear a French lecture, every Thursday night a historical lecture, Saturday morning a philosophical lecture, and Saturday afternoon a course of special lectures on India. So this keeps me pretty busy. In French we have a course of 19th century literature and discussion groups; the lecturer is a Frenchman. I like it very much. . . .

Now I daresay you know that a lot of people who went to America recently have not arrived there. Consequently, no tickets are released for women travelers at the moment. But I do hope that very soon the situation will have changed for the better & I can get a ticket. I don't need any money thank you, I shall be so glad when I have the chance to come to you. I shall be only too pleased to risk my life in order to be with you again & live a normal & peaceful life & have a satisfactory occupation.

Well, I hope I shall soon hear from you again. Tell me a little about your everyday lives so that I can be with you in my thoughts.

All my love,

Marianne

10 Canterbury Mews

Lymington Rd., N.W. 6
March 1st 1943

My beloved parents

Thank you for your letter of the first week in January; no! I am certainly not going to have a baby, good gracious me, what do you think I am! It is very kind & touching of you to want to forgive me for everything and bring the child up, but I am afraid I have not got one for you to bring up Muttichen, nor am I likely to have one. You see I am still a very old-fashioned & innocent girl & I intend to remain so in spite of the fact that a great many girls think it the fashion to be otherwise. No, my dear parents I am still Marianne Mosevius, who is mainly interested in history, philosophy & modern languages, & although in late years circumstances have temporarily forced me to turn my attention to the practical side of life, such as looking after myself & mending my stockings, buying my clothes, keeping them in order, nursing, factory work etc. they have not changed me fundamentally.

Of course I have grown up both physically and mentally, but I am far too cool & level-headed to forget myself in any way. Do you remember Papa, on the last day I was at home you took me for a walk in Wallotstrasse & said: "You must always fight against your passions as long as it is humanly possible, but when you feel you cannot fight any longer, remember there is a way to save oneself from the consequences." I did not understand then what you meant, but I have never forgotten what you said. I have not had to fight much yet, after all, I am not yet 20 yet & I have led a very secluded & "solides" [respectable] life in every respect; besides I am not inclined much towards passion, but if ever my powers of resistance should weaken or else if ever I should think it practicable & ethically right not to fight, I shall know how to prevent any consequences from arising. . . .

All my love,

Marianne

March 22, 1943 [age 19]

. . . . [Y]ou will no doubt be interested to know that there exists in this country a very real feeling of anti-Semitism, especially amongst the working class. It is nothing unusual to find English equivalents to ["Jew, die"] scrawled on the walls & shop-windows. In our factory, although the owner is Jewish & 60% of the workers are so, the 40% are as anti-Semitic as you could wish for. This anti-semitism has risen greatly in recent years & is still rising steadily. The "English" Jews here are also very nasty to us refugees. I put English in inverted commas because there are no English Jews or only very few; the vast majority have come from Eastern Europe in the previous generation & still know a little Yiddish. . . . Nevertheless, they consider themselves "British to the backbone & look down on us; although we German Jews have a very much higher cultural standard But enough of that.

Well, my dear parents this must be all for today. Oh, by the way, I can only take 70 kilos of luggage with me, so I shall have to leave some of my books with the Williamses & they can send them to me after the war. I am very sad about it but there you are. Clothes are of a greater immediate practical value so I shall have to take them first. . . .

All my love again

Marianne

May 8, 1943 [age 20]

. . . . I cannot think of anything except coming over to America and seeing you again. I have been to a palmist & a soothsayer (please don't laugh) & they all prophecy a very happy future & a big journey. So my prospects of seeing you again very soon seem quite good. The Shipping-Company, however, are a somewhat more reliable source of information & they just say that there will be a transport, that I shall be on this transport but that they are not going to tell me when that transport is going. . . .

I do not know whether I have told you that I have joined the so-called "Free-German Youth" group (Freie Deutsche Jugend). [*Later the official Communist youth movement in East Germany*] They are Communists &

have discussion-groups, sport, theatrical performances, etc. They seem a group of very intelligent young people, roughly between 20-30, formed mainly by Jewish refugees around a nucleus of old political refugees from 1933-34. They are pledged to try and uphold the old pre-Nazi German tradition & culture amongst our own generation & I must say, they are certainly endeavouring very hard to uphold it & to improve their knowledge of it. *[Discussion of her opinion of F.D.J. follows.]*

They do not worry about getting on, & having a profession that will help them to get on after the war (after all, these youngsters are spending all their time doing war-work & really have no peacetime occupation). They are Communists & have merged all personal ambitions to their one ambition, to help win the war. That is my ambition too, of course, but to have it as one's sole ambition seems rather a dangerous course & unwise to me. I can foresee [that] after the war, . . . these young people will . . . not have any employment or money, they will pride themselves on being the bearers of German culture & not realise that having grown up abroad, they will be completely alienated to the German people whom they hope to re-educate.

Therefore I can never be a true member of the F.D.J. I also want to uphold German culture, for though I hope to be a good American one day, German is my mother-tongue & you were German and I have spent my childhood in Germany. I love Goethe, Heine etc. & the superb German culture before Hitler, but I do not love Germany as a country or the German people, . . . & I should rather spend my spare-time getting on with my studies & learning things that will be useful to me in my career, than joining in all these endless disputes that lead to nothing. This must be all for today my dear parents, take all my love & let us hope for a speedy reunion.

All my love,

Marianne

[A number of letters skipped, including letters about my mother's quarrels with her parents about the man-- a Jewish refugee, named Gunther Berg -- whom she met and fell in love with and wanted to marry; her father forbade it and insisted she come to the U.S.A. She obeyed her father, but it took her a long time to completely forgive him.]

May 16, 1943 [age 20] [portions in italics translated from German]

. . . Well my dear Papa & Mutti, *it's been quite a while since I've heard from you, and I hope you're both in good health and good spirits and write me often. Please do tell me exactly what our apartment [in New York City] looks like and what furniture is in it. Do you still have any furniture from the Niersteinerstrasse? [Their address in Berlin was Niersteiner Str. 6, Grunewald.] It would be too bad if it were all gone; all these years I've been hoping so much to see our cupboard with the wood carvings and our kilim rug again. But when all is said and done, these are all things that can be replaced, and the most important thing, after all, is that the three of us are healthy and safe, and aren't rotting in Poland but will be together again in the foreseeable future and will have a nice future together. You wouldn't believe the hunger for life that's in me! One day I'll want to put the whole world upside down. But this is only by the way, and just to let you know that I haven't forgotten my German yet, and in general that I don't forget everything immediately, as you said, Papa, it's just that I have the gift of getting over everything ugly in my life with ease.*

How is Uncle Max [Bloch]? You know, I often think of him now; as you know, I'm sewing bags, and I get 1 s. 2 d. for twenty-four finished ones, and when I come home in the evening everybody always asks me, "well, how many bags did you sew today, and how much did you make?" And then I always get mad, just like Uncle Max used to, when you asked him on the phone how many sacks of flour he had sold.

[Note: Uncle Max was from Sulzburg, but lived in Berlin for a number of years, working as a salesman, before he emigrated to the U.S.A. in 1936.]

Have you heard anything from the Mopses etc.? Perhaps one should try to get in touch with the Springers [*Dora's first cousins in Base*] and get news from them.

Now take all my love & 1000 kisses.

Marianne

Don't forget, when I come *I want spätzle with veal ragout, and strawberries with milk, because you can't get these things here.*

17 July, 1943 [age 20]

. . . I now regularly read *Der Aufbau* [*German-Jewish newspaper for refugees, published in New York City*]. It's always five weeks old by the time it comes on sale here, but nevertheless it is still better than the local refugee paper. Right now I have the June 4 issue in front of me. The articles on Moshe Giberi and the Hias Ha organization are interesting. I'm always so amused when I see the advertising section: all the things that are for sale, and the job and housing ads! You must still be living like in peacetime, over there. To us, this is all very remote today, as from a vanished world, and reading these ads, one finds oneself smiling first incredulously, then dreamily; and one thinks back to the days of the *Israelitische Familienblatt* and the couch and the green easy chairs and the floor lamp; back to when one was still a child and had no responsibilities except to get good grades.

Well, never mind. It's no good looking back; after all, we are among the few chosen ones for whom the present is bearable and for whom there is a future in store. A future, when we shall all be united . . . & when life will be normal again & perhaps when there'll even be new green easy chairs and another spinning wheel. Has it ever occurred to you that since I have been grown up this world and our lives have been quite abnormal, with everything rationed & only labour permits for war-work. It will be quaint one day to view a normal life for the first time from the perspective of a grown-up. May that day be soon.

With all my love to you, dear parents & hope to have a letter from you soon.

All my love

Marianne

20 August 1943 [age 20]

. . . If we open up a second front soon, there is a good chance that Mops etc. will have survived the Nazi ordeal, which is more than one can hope for a good many others.

14 Sept. 1943 [Final letter]

My beloved parents,

Thank you for the parcel. The frock is lovely and fits me perfectly. I have never had such a lovely frock. Mutti, did you make it yourself? The blouse is very nice and so are the stockings.

Now, my very best wishes for the New-Year [*Rosh Hashanah*]. I have no doubt that next year we shall be together on the holy days. The shipping company is much more hopeful & so is Bloomsbury House. There are ships going continuously, but at the moment they are only taking married couples, boys & women born in Poland. But they hope that there will be a possibility before the winter. I do hope everything will come right at long last, it is just about time too. . . .

All my love, Marianne

[Marianne arrived in U.S.A. at the age of 20, on Oct. 27, 1943, on the S.S. Ruahine, which departed from Glasgow on Oct. 11, 1943, and was finally reunited with her parents (who had escaped to the USA in June 1941), after a separation of nearly five years.

By that time, her education had been interrupted for more than three years, since July 1940 -- i.e., ever since she was 17 --, while she did war work in various factories, the Severalls mental hospital, etc.

But she always wanted to go back to school, and was finally able to after she arrived in the USA in late October 1943, and was able to obtain scholarships enabling her to go through college (Sarah Lawrence) and law school (Columbia Law School, where she was one of three women in her

class and where she met my father) in a total of only about 4 1/2 years -- from January 1944 to September 1948 -- instead of the usual seven.

She never worked as a lawyer; she had the triple handicap in finding a job of being a woman, a Jew, and a refugee. So she worked as a money market analyst at the Federal Reserve Bank until my older sister was born, and then went back to work as a NYC public elementary school teacher about 10 years later, when I was 7.

Tragically, as I noted at the beginning, after everything my mother went through to escape the Nazis and make a new life and family for herself in a new country, she died in 1975, at the age of 52, from injuries suffered in a car accident we were in while she was driving me home from college at the end of a school year.