

My dear aunt Ottilie,

①

Hope you got back to Hamburg all in one piece without shedding any more tears. I am so glad that I chose to depart from Bremen, leaving my beloved Hamburg was heartbreaking enough, without the accompaniment of the ~~custom of the~~ brassband playing. Must I now, must I now, leave my home-down, but seeing my darling Mutti + Pape getting smaller and smaller, waving their white handkerchiefs as the ship slowly sailed away, would have been too much. It was good of you to see me off, you, my confidante, my mentor, Mutti's best friend and my adopted aunt, how I will miss you. I really thought I would miss the boat, that handsome, cruel Nazi customs-officer gave me such a grilling, even had me body searched, God knows what he was looking for, as all our valuable had been confiscated months ago, he was just having his fun, they all are, without exception, sadists. I was in a panic, I can tell you, when the ship's sirens had gone three times and they were hauling up the gangways. In the last minute the bastard let me go, they lowered the gangway again just for me, everyone was staring at me, I felt such a fool.

It wasn't till I landed at Southampton that I felt free and alive again, but not really safe. I could not understand a word, although I came top at school in English, but one is never taught the dialects. Thank God cousin Friedel managed to get the day off ~~by~~ <sup>from her</sup> the hospital where she is

a student - nurse and was able to meet the train in London. I would never have found my way through the maze of the underground, which terrified me. At Watford I was met by a chauffeur-driven car to be taken to a big Mansion, apparently my employer, Mrs. Bryant, is houseminding for her sister who is lady somebody.

After our short correspondence I had visualised Mrs. B. quite differently, she is tall with red hair and hard eyes. I expected to be warmly greeted after my long journey, given refreshments, maybe even flowers, as we would do at home, but no, she shoved me straight into the kitchen and what greeted me, were stacks of dishes everywhere, all awaiting my arrival. I was so tired and shocked, I just wept, but there was nothing I could do but start washing up. After a while a helper arrived, a middleaged, kindly looking woman <sup>would you believe it</sup> who ~~is deaf~~ and dumb, so you can imagine what a lively conversation we had. It's a very grand house, but I was shown into a dingy room right at the top of the house and told to rise at 6 am and take trays of tea to Mrs. B, her niece and another member of the family.

Now it's 12 pm, I am so tired and miserable, but I had to talk to you before going to bed. I shall remember the lovely fare-well party we had, with darling Dimitry, looking so dashing in his Cosack uniform, playing the Balalaika & singing in "Russian" "Dark eyes", bringing tears into everyone's eyes

wasn't it wonderful how all my friends turned (3)  
up risking punishment for communing with  
jews. I know you have always disregarded  
any such danger. Please carry on doing so  
and see my parents as often as you can, they  
will feel so lonely and worried, on no account  
must you tell them what a bitch Mrs. B. has  
turned out to be. I have written to them that  
all is wonderful.

Good night my dearest aunt,  
Yours Inge.

31. Aug. 39.

Dearest aunt Otti,

Your letter reached me quite quickly, which  
is amazing with the declaration of war so  
threatenly close. I still hope + pray that it  
can be averted, as how will I be able to stay  
in touch with you all. Thank you for seeing  
Mutti + Papi as soon as you got back to Hamburg.  
What a relief to know that you found them  
resigned, even happy, about my departure,  
it is what they wanted. I am worried that  
the oppressions will get worse of course.  
They must never know how homesick I am  
and how I hate being here. Two days  
after my arrival, and we are still in the big  
house, I was told to prepare for a dinner  
party, as Mrs. B's sister, Lady Watson and  
her entourage are returning. I was given  
a menu but did not have a clue. I  
pointed out to Mrs. B. that I am not a cook  
and that she had engaged me to be a  
companion for her niece and to teach her  
German and do light housework. She was

really angry, that I dared to object. Fortunately  
Mutti's old cookery book was in one of the  
suitcases, as my boxes have not arrived yet,  
so I studied all the chicken recipes, followed one  
as closely as possible, although it was ~~for~~ ~~for~~ a  
Kosher dish, I used the pork stuffing available.  
The deaf + dumb woman came to help, she  
seems to be the Daily here. It was like a  
pantomime us trying to communicate in  
sign language, just as well, as I am sure  
my broken English does not stretch to  
Haute Cuisine.

Between us we managed  
to produce a dinner, Mutti, who is a  
renowned cook, would have been disgusted.  
~~The silver also had to be cleaned before~~  
~~that + the table set.~~ After the guests assembled  
round the large oval table, which Dummy, I call  
her that, as no-one had the courtesy to introduce  
us and she can't tell me her name, had beautifully  
set with my help, a loud bell started clanging  
on the kitchen wall, the signal to load the  
dishes + sauces ~~first course~~ into the dumb waiter to be  
hauled up. That's that, what a relief, we  
will get the left overs which was o.k. by me.  
When another bell started rang I looked  
puzzled at Dummy, she signalled that I  
had better go up and see what's wanted.  
Lady Watson, who had earlier introduced  
herself to me and charmingly apologised  
for all the extra work I had to do, asked  
me to bring a plate. In my confusion I  
had forgotten the word and thought, ah  
yes, a Platte and took a very large  
square dish ~~up~~. As soon as I produced  
it, loud laughter broke out among the

assembled company, I was really puzzled, but eventually understood my blunder, I was supposed to bring a plate on which my dinner was to be served up to be consumed in the kitchen. I fled in tears and refused the meal. I can see the funny side now, but I felt so humiliated, what a strange + belittling custom, I won't comply, I would rather go without. I have lost my appetite as it is, I am so homesick + miserable. To-morrow Mrs. B. moves back into her own house, I wonder what awaits me there.

I have written to Kurt, he is trying to secure a passage for me to come to Buenos-Aires.

Aunt Heidi uncle and my cousins have already found a place there, so I can live with them at first. First of all, I must get an entry-visa from the Argentinian Embassy.

Margot + I are hoping to meet in London on our day off, I am so looking forward to meeting my best friend again, we always manage to have a good laugh together.

Thank you again for keeping an eye on my dear parents, please aunt Oti keep your big mouth shut, if you offend and get reported, I won't be able to write to you, our letters <sup>would</sup> be censored.

lots of love

your homesick

Inge.

20. Sept. 39.

Dearest aunt Otilie

Now that war has been declared, we are officially enemies, I know you are on this side and won't see it that way.

The general feeling is that it will be a short one, hopefully a victorious ending with the defeat of Hitler and we can all return home to a normal life. You will be surprised to receive this letter, I am sending it through my uncle Max, Mutti's brother, who escaped to Rotterdam, I have his address and it has been agreed that he will forward my letters. So much has happened, life has become very uncomfortable for us, now we are classed as aliens. It seems, wherever I am, I am an enemy.

Mrs. Bryant has got the wind up, she is also convinced that I am really a spy. She is so scared of being bombed that she has decided to move further out of London to her son. That is where dear Margot is, she looks after Mrs. B's grandchildren and is part of the family, she won't be much longer if Mrs. B. moves in. She has put the house up for sale, it's a very attractive house facing a lovely park, I am not surprised that she has already <sup>had</sup> quite a few people interested. You will hardly believe this, but I happened to hear her offering me, more or less, as part of the fittings, to come with the house. I thought at first, I had heard wrongly, got out my dictionary to compose a proper speech of objection and confronted her. She looked aghast at me, her hard eyes narrowing into slits, 'Such impertinence!' I told her that I would find another job for myself. Actually, she is legally responsible for me, I could make things very awkward for her. I found an advert in the local paper for a maid and presented myself. I thought my luck was in, beautiful house, I was asked to wait in the conservatory

which was full of young people gathered

for a Dennis-party, they all gathered round me  
chatting in a friendly + interested way. Then I was  
shown the maid's room, beautiful, all chintz +  
light, not a bit like my cubby hole at Mrs.  
B's, which was entirely inhabited by huge  
spiders which scared me into a panic, I could  
not sleep for several nights till I got that small  
room<sup>up</sup> in the attic cleaned up, so I was delighted  
with the prospect of that charming room. It was  
all agreed I would start the following week.  
One of the young man, who was delighted  
that I was coming to his parents house,  
offered to take me home in his Swiss sports-  
car, I accepted of course. Half an hour  
later Mrs. B. answered the phone and  
gleefully informed me that the lady could  
not have me after all, as her son showed  
too much interest in me. What it is to have  
become an enemy, a spy and an undesirable  
underling all in a short space of time.

I was so furious and fed up, I did what  
I swore I would never do, that is to get in  
touch with that Wollenhaupt. Remember, he was  
going to get me to England about a year ago,  
he is the actor from Berlin, when I refused  
his offer to come + live with him in London,  
he sent me a permit for Shanghai,  
quite rightly Papi would not let me go  
there. In my desperation I phoned Wollenhaupt.  
He was surprised that I was in England  
and not China. I told him of my plight,  
he has already several young women in  
his flat in the same position<sup>as</sup>, but said  
I could doss on the floor. He came  
the following day in his car and collected  
me ~~and my cases + boxes~~. He is very tall  
and my chattles

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and good looking, Mrs. B's niece was quite jealous. we got on well together by the way, she was always very friendly when auntee wasn't around. Mrs. B. was incensed at the way I left and told everyone, so Hargot told me, that I had gone off with a man, proving that I was no good. The situation at Wollenhaupt's is quite impossible, a bit like a Harem. The other evening he had some friends in to play cards one of the men, old enough to be my father after chatting to me, offered me a home with him, to be a companion to his daughter. He is a Russian Jew, a Dr. of engineering + owns a factory, his German wife is still in Berlin, but his son + daughter are with him. I gratefully agreed to move to Wembley next week, hope this time it will work out well.

Hope to hear from you through Rotterdam. I did not tell Muttie + Papi everything, but they do know that I have left Mrs Bryant, I have not quite grasped that we are at war. It must fill you with horror having experienced the world war when <sup>and</sup> you lost your fiancée, <sup>was killed,</sup> there is a rumour that we might all be interned which will be ghastly.

Be careful, ~~you~~ keep your opinions to yourself.

All my love  
Inge



30/10/39 (9)  
My dearest aunt Otti,

Thank you for your longed for letter. glad to know all is well at home. You say the general opinion amongst your friends is that the war cant last long, we can only hope. Here everyone is expecting the first bombing raids, there are endless rehearsals putting on one's gasmasks + rushing to one's shelter. I expect you are all doing the same. When I read my parents and your letters, I had a feeling you are all keeping things from me, you all sound too cheerful.

Thanks for all your advice, I will try to keep my head, but my life is turning more and more into a cheap Romance.

Dr. Subkis collected me from Wollenhaupt, whom I never want to see again. I was so relieved and thought, here is this nice father figure who wants me to look after his daughter. You can imagine my surprise when she turned out to be a beautiful girl older than myself. His son is a student, a tall mean looking youth who eyed me with suspicion, not surprising as I began to wonder what my role in this household could be.

I soon found out. ~~As soon as~~ <sup>when the Dr.</sup> he found himself alone with me he started fondling me. I was too shocked and embarrassed to say anything, and <sup>away</sup> pushed him, hoping he took the hint - the whole family, as well as their friends, are all quite mad. The daughter insists on being called 'Peter' although her name is Anne-Rose, she is a bisexual nymphomaniac, between her + her father, I don't know where to turn. The son, Micheal, always wears a fez in the house, whenever

he passes me he raises it and belches thus showing his contempt for me. He is convinced that his father has installed me to spy on him + his sister.

I understand now why. The Dr. is incredibly mean, keeps his children very short of money, hence they steal from him when ever possible. None of my business. I get no wages either for doing the house-work, only half a crown <sup>a week</sup> pocket money. He never lets me out of his sight, but is very welcoming to cousin Friedel + Margot, takes us to the cinema, but always the cheapest seats. Dr. Subk's best friend is a charming Bulgarian whose daughter, my own age, has become my friend, poor girl, her mother is quite dotty. A huge german woman with a kind, vacant face, who has delusions of becoming a Ballet dancer, I have been asked to give her dancing lessons, it's hilarious, I try to teach her simple steps, she skips along like some demented Elephant, screeching that she is Pavlova.

I have had no luck at the Argentinian Embassy, although I ~~had~~ <sup>showed them</sup> letter from Kurt, stating that I am his fiancee + that he would pay for the passage. They refused point blank. But it was quite clear that £200 would have helped. The next move is trying to get married by proxy, they can't refuse a visa to a wife.

Making the voyage will be dangerous in wartime, but I am willing to risk that.

That awful Micheal is shortly going back to University, thank God, I don't think I can stand much more of his rudeness. Peter and I get along quite well, just as long as I remember <sup>to advise</sup> her beautiful boy, she comes across the nurse in

(M) we are quite a lot. Thank you for keeping  
Keeper

touch and keeping an eye on my dear  
parents. Now to bed, I shall lock my  
door firmly.

Lots of love

Your enemy alien  
Inge

5. sec. 39.

My dearest aunt Ottilie

It was good to hear from you, although  
as you said, you dare not say much, we will  
strictly <sup>stick</sup> to private matters. Sadly it's doubtful that  
we <sup>can</sup> keep our precious correspondence up much longer.  
Naturally I am devastated to think that my dear  
parents are having to go short of food, no ration  
books for them. Dr. Subkis has to go to Holland  
on business, he is going to post this. I have  
begged him to send Mutti + Papi a food parcel  
from Holland, which he promised to do, real  
coffee too, you will certainly share a cup with  
Mutti. No doubt, I will have to pay for it,  
but gladly, if I must. My name is now Ingeborg,  
that's what he calls me.

We all had to go before a tribunal, I have  
been classed 'A refugee from Nazi Oppression'  
and a friendly alien, but I am still restricted,  
can only do domestic work and can only  
move within a 5 mile radius. Dr. Subkis  
has been classed as 'Alien', not surprising,  
a Russian with a German wife still living  
in Berlin, not a safe bet. He is worried that  
he might be interned.

Kurt and I are going ahead with our  
marriage by proxy. I sent a telegram

to that effect, the really gorgeous Post-office clerk handed it back to me pointing to a grammatical mistake, I had left the 'will' out, so he corrected it for me "I will marry you. He wanted to know whether I was Danish, when I said German, he immediately asked me to give him German lessons. Now every-time I go to the Post-office and I am not in line for his counter, he changes quickly so that he can serve me, always ask~~ed~~ for a date I have given in, so we have met, I like him a lot. Just your type, you know how all your boyfriends have to be blond + blue-eyed, well he is. Subkis does not allow me to go out, his excuse is that he is responsible for me, but he does not mind Denis coming to the house, it's a ludicrous situation. Peter has taken a fancy to him and quite unashamedly flirts with Denis. She always has to be the centre of attraction with men and women.

Hope the parcel + this letter will arrive.

You said, not to worry about my parents, they have many friends who won't let them starve, but you and they might have difficulty visiting them.

With love and thanks,

Your friendly alien  
Inge.

(13)

Dearest aunt Ottilie,

3/1/40

Not really appropriate to wish you a Happy New Year, but I do wish you a Safe New Year. I have not heard from you for some time, but I know that you have seen Mutti & Papi and shared a real cup of coffee with them. I was so happy that the parcel arrived just in time for XMAS. So Sabki's had made a real effort, makes me almost like him.

I felt so miserable and homesick over XMAS, although Sabki's took me to a party, there were lots of young people there, I could have enjoyed it, if it had not been for Sabki's, (his name is Nicholas <sup>by the way</sup>, I call him, Nicholas the ridiculous, who always treats me like his mistress, which I am not.

That daughter of his brought home & slept with a man 20 years her senior during the time father was away in Holland. He is a rather interesting man, a Czech film producer, at present not <sup>secretly</sup> working. To my surprise they got <sup>secretly</sup> married and took a luxury flat in the West End of London, no doubt expecting father to pay the rent. Well was father furious! He flatly refused to pay for the ~~flat~~ apartment, especially as she married without telling him & whilst he was away. He has made them both live in our flat, cleared a room for them and put two simple iron beds & some old jumbly furniture in it, they had no alternative but to accept.

(14)

The atmosphere is thick with resentment. It's really quite funny, Peter having to live that way, it does not seem to bother her husband, Julius, he is quite nice, but as perverted as she is, now they both run around naked, not when father is about though. The fez-wearer is home again, his sport is making fun of 'Mc Blessed' my name translated into the Scottish, don't know how he manages to break wind whenever he passes me, he is a real pig.

I have not heard anything more from Buenos - Aires, only my aunt writes + hopes to see me there soon. I see quite a lot of Denis, ~~he says~~, he wants to marry me. He will be called up soon and wants to feel sure that I am safe and does not want to leave me in this mad-house. As I would need my parents' permission being under age, we applied to the Court for permission. They simply refused, advising us to wait, especially as I am German born and of a different religion. Looks pretty hopeless, I am not sure anyway.

I hope you can still write to me and that all is well. I don't think England will start any Bomb attacks, so far you have only had leaflets.

Take Care and be careful

love

Your Confused

10/2

(15)

Dearest aunt Ulli,

20/2/40

A letter from you' out last. You sound worried and depressed, not a bit like you. You will miss dear Dimitry, what an awful choice he has been given, the Army as a white Russian, or internment camp, he has chosen the latter.

Mutter writes that Subkis had enclosed a letter in the parcel and she is so happy that I am with such a nice + caring man. Let them keep that illusion! The situation is very bad here, Subkis has been interned, he has made arrangements to keep the flat going for his family and for me.

It puts me into a very vulnerable position, I was before but in a different way.

I don't want to be at the mercy of that crude son, nor his weird daughter + son-in-law. At present none of them are here, which is wonderful, Denis and I are making the most of it. He has proposed again and is taking me to meet his parents, who live in Hertfordshire. I have written to my parents begging them to give me their written consent to our marriage, uncle Max will forward it. Please aunt Otti persuade them to do so quickly, they always listen to you. They won't approve, won't understand about Kurt and especially not that I want to marry a non-Jew.

I have one alternative, I could live in a Hostel set up by Jews for girls in my position, they arrange them for the girls to be taken in by Jewish

families and the girls have no choice in the matter. Margot had to leave her happy job, when Mrs. B. moved in, the situation changed as I suspected, she is now in London in a job with a Jewish family but does not like it.

I would be so grateful if you work on Mutti + Papi, I know you will do your best for me, you always have.

Thanks

Your loving  
Inge.

10. March 1940

My wonderful aunt,  
thank you so much for putting wheels into motion, so Mutti thought I had to get married, no, I am not pregnant. I am glad you were able to explain the situation. Nothing can go wrong now that you have arranged with your boss, the barrister to draw up a proper affidavit. Denis and I are hoping to get married before his call up which could come any day now.

For now all my love and  
gratitude  
your Inge.

20. May 1940

My dearest aunt Oth,  
Thank you, thank you, what an amazing document! So beautifully done, all seals + red bows, in German + English



present, how thoughtful, I never of course already thanked Kutti + Papi. It cost them their last penny, I am so grateful. I have assured them that Denis is a good man who loves me very much and that he comes from a good family, very important to Kutti. The tragic thing is that the document arrived on the day Holland was occupied and I don't know what has happened to uncle Max, his family is still in Germany. One day later and I would not have got the Affidavit. You would say it's fate, meant to be!

As you see I am sending this through an address in Switzerland, I don't know whether we will be able to continue writing to each other. I just hope that we will all meet again very soon, although the war is not going well at all.

We are getting married on the 4. June. Den's call up papers have come, he enlists on the 7. June.

~~From~~ <sup>after</sup> the 4. June I will be British, no longer an alien, friendly or otherwise, but free at last.

This might be good-bye my dearest aunt + friend, for a while -

Please take care of my dear parents

In deepest gratitude

Your Inge

who will be MRS. LUSIK soon