

STUDENT MOVEMENT HOUSE I WORK AS A FARM HAND JEAN ARRIVES
THE WORLD DRIFTS INTO WAR FEBRUARY - SEPTEMBER 1939

I returned to the Bloomsbury guest house where I stayed the previous summer. The first thing I did was to write to Cosmo Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury. I knew his name because of his involvement in the abdication of Edward VIII. He was a fair and liberal-minded man and helping Czechoslovak refugees. Equally well known in Czechoslovakia was William Temple, then Archbishop of York who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1942. He was a member of the Labour party and had tried to help settle the General Strike in 1926 when bishop of Manchester. He had supported Czechoslovakia against Chamberlain's policy of surrender.

So efficient was the post then that on the third day I had a reply - not from the Archbishop but from Mary Trevelyan, Warden of Student Movement House (SMH) whom Lang's office had informed about my arrival. Mary received me with a cup of tea and introduced me to some members. This is how my long connection with SMH started.

I didn't want to spend more of my precious money than was absolutely necessary. I visited the office of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia at 5 Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1. The British public had collected large funds to support Czechoslovak refugees. I was registered as Refugee No. 796 on 3rd February 1939. See exhibit 114. There I learned that the only gainful employment I was permitted to take up was on a farm. In fact they had just received a request from a farmer, Mr. Rex Paterson, to take on some refugees as farm hands. That suited me well. I spent another day or two in London, walking through the now familiar streets again: Tottenham Court Road, Oxford Street, Piccadilly, Trafalgar Square ending up at the Tower. I lunched (off a roll) sitting on the parapet in the thin wintry sunshine watching the river, and the boats unloading in the pool of London.

Houghton Down farm is near Stockbridge in Hampshire about half-way between Winchester and Salisbury. I was met by Rex Paterson's bailiff, Mr. Collis, taken to the farmhouse and shown into a small and exceedingly cold bedroom on the first floor. The terms were two shillings and sixpence (12.5 new pennies face value) a week plus full board. It was my first paid job and I was delighted.

There was a great wave of sympathy among the public for us refugees. Letters appeared in the press chiding Chamberlain and the Government for letting

Czechoslovakia down. Churchill and a handful of other MPs warned the country of the consequences of the Appeasement policy. This was music to my ears and my hopes rose that before long my family would be able to join me. I celebrated my 22nd birthday quietly in raw wintry Hampshire. On entry into England my passport had been stamped giving me permission to stay six months but it expired on my birthday. I had it extended at the Czechoslovak Embassy. I kept on good terms with the Embassy. I did not want to become stateless and in any case I had every hope then that I would return to Czechoslovakia. In Czechoslovakia I would have been due for compulsory military service so I presented myself and on 6th March 1939 I was passed fit and accepted into the Czechoslovak forces. See exhibit 115. However, at that time there were no Free Czechoslovak Forces yet in England so my recruitment was in abeyance until May 1942, when I presented myself again.

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I received a letter from my sisters, dated 7th February 1939, exhibit 116

attached. I am quoting from it in parts. Jean writes:

"First of all I would like to congratulate you on your birthday and I wish you all the best and good appetite for the sweets.

But now I must tell you that I was utterly surprised by your last letter and postcard and deeply disappointed. Don't you think its comical and even inconsiderate to let Mother simply know that you have gone to a farm and given up your studies. All Mother's struggles to enable you to continue your studies have been in vain. To become a farmer there was no need for the financial and physical (I mean Mother's nerves) sacrifices. I can say honestly that I have no explanation for your behaviour, except that you are far too lazy to undertake the tasks which await you by studying there. Mother has given you a chance to complete your studies and she has moved all wheels to enable you to travel there and to resume your studies and I find it a bottomless inconsideration ~~for you~~ to leave everything instead ~~of~~ making the best use of your situation, for which many are certainly envying you; and instead ~~of~~ studying diligently you are only meeting old Bratislava friends to chatter about the bad times.

I now hope that Mother's and my letters will knock some sense into you and that because some Jewish emigrants can't find any other chance but to work on a farm, you are destroying your whole future. Mother, who just now has lots of worries in connection with Anni's forthcoming wedding, is in complete despair about you. Even if you lack the understanding of the value of a degree, then do it for Mother as she is very disappointed....."

Anni, after wishing me a happy birthday, writes in part:

"You have never been unreasonable. I am, as you know, a really "happy bride" and we have real hope to emigrate to Kenya and to create for ourselves an acceptable existence. I hope that you too will be able to do so."

Houghton Down was one of several farms belonging to Paterson. The son of an English small farmer, he had emigrated to Canada where he worked on a farm and had returned recently. He had acquired sufficient money to start farming on his own. He bought farms that had been neglected for years, cheaply. Most of them had buildings that badly needed repairing. With the exception of Hatch Warren, near Basingstoke, where Paterson lived, all the farms were under grass. Only in Hatch Warren was there arable land. He bought non-pedigree heifers (cows in first calf) mostly from Ireland for grazing. He spent no money on repairing byres since the heifers and cows were out all the year round grazing. Instead he had milking bails. There were two in Houghton Down. These were timber constructions on a steel frame on 4 wheels. They were movable stables with room for 6 cows each and a roof but open on one side. A cubicle was attached on one side which housed the vacuum mechanism for automatic milking, an electric motor, a milk cooler and equipment for filling 10-gallon churns. There were two herds of 60 to 64 cows each and one bail per herd. In addition there was a smaller herd of heifers and cows in calf or at the end of their lactation period. Any cow that had dried up was transferred to this third herd. The milking herds were replenished from it with cows that had calved. There were two men per bail. A young man called Cyril and one farmhand served one bail and I was paired with a young fair-haired farmhand with a tiny moustache for the other bail. We wore proudly white milking hats. My mate lived in a farm cottage. He was quiet and meek, not as rough like the other hands. He thought out things for himself which usually took a long time. If he could find no answer to a problem he asked me. Once he said: "why is it that my wife never undresses completely when we make love?". I was of no help on that occasion.
We got up at 6 - 6.30 am. Mrs. Collis made me a pot of tea. I met my mate in the farmyard. We harnessed the horse, which had spent the night in the open in the paddock, ^{to a cart.} We loaded 10 - 12 empty churns and drove, in the dark, to the bail in a corner of the field. There was a heavy hoar frost throughout February and our clothes felt damp and cold. I wore my elegant riding boots. When the cows heard us approaching, they got on their legs and moved en masse towards the bail, waiting patiently until it was their turn to be milked. We let the first 6 in and started the engine. In front of each cow was a feeding trough. On the previous evening we had filled the hoppers above the troughs with meal.

BRITISH COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA
5, MECKLENBURGH SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1.

Telephone : MUSEUM 1971

Registration No. 796 Date 3. 3. 39 By L. Hermann
Name Mr. MATĚJ KARL SCHWITZER

Please notify us immediately of any change of address.

Bitte geben Sie uns umgehend jede Adressenänderung bekannt.

Prosím nezapomeňte udati změnu vaší adresy

Keep this card.

114. My registration as a refugee

Vzor **25**

k § 57

Vyslanectví ČSR v Londýně

(Čs. zastupitelský úřad)

K č. 4079/39-26.

POTVRZENÍ.

Jméno a příjmení Matěj Karel SCHWITZER, povoláním
(zaměstnáním) stud. chemie, narozený (dne a roku) 12.2.1917
ve Vídni, politického okresu Něm.,
příslušný do obce Madunice, politického okresu Hlohovec (Slov.),
byl podroben dne 6. března 1939 u shora uvedeného zastupitelského úřadu
lékařské prohlídce (odvodnímu řízení) s výsledkem „Odveden“ — „~~Odved~~ — ~~odročen~~“
— „~~Neodveden~~“)



Poučení při odvedení.

V Londýně dne 6. 3. 39 19...

Přednosta zastupitelského úřadu neb
jeho zástupce

Kromě
ppl. J. Kal... voj. att. ČSR v Londýně

115. My confirmation from the Czechoslovak Embassy in London that I was
enlisted in the Czechoslovak Armed Forces in London on 6th March 1939

A pull of a handle let the meal run into the trough. The beasts tucked into it eagerly. We each washed three lots of udders with a disinfectant solution and then fixed the milking teats which hold on by vacuum suction. The last drops of milk had to be stripped by hand into a pail. This done we pulled another handle which lifted an upwards sliding door in front of the cow. We used our boot on the back of the cow to signal to her to move on. Her place was taken by another one and so on until the lot were milked. It took 2 - 2½ hours to do the lot. The machine was stopped, all equipment washed and made ready for the afternoon session. The full churns were heaved onto the cart and our homewards journey began, now in daylight. There was a little competition as to which of the teams would deliver the churns first on to the platform by the main road, where later a lorry from the Milk Marketing Board would pick them up.

Breakfast was a big meal and most welcome. A couple of lamb chops or 2 - 3 eggs, bacon and sausages, fried potatoes, bread, butter, marmalade and several mugs of strong tea. By that time it was about 9.30 am. I had a shave and wash at the kitchen sink and a short rest.

The next job was to pick up the empty churns, left by the lorry, mix the meal in the barn and fill bags with it, pick up disinfectant and petrol for the engine and load it all on to the cart. The barn was of the type that was built on stilts with concrete mushroom-shaped supports, to prevent rats climbing up. There was a short wooden ladder to go up. We returned to the bail, filled the hoppers with meal and "mucked out" the place.

In the winter there was not much else to do except cart hay into the field for the cows. There were odd jobs such as repairing fences. To place a new post a hole was dug and the post eased in. The cart was positioned close to it and with a heavy sledge hammer, while standing on the cart, we drove the post home. To fix the barbed wire - a nasty operation - there was a special tightening tool which gave leverage to string the barbed wire tightly from post to post. The wire was then nailed in. We also helped with calving if necessary but Mr. Collis preferred to do that himself.

About once a week we moved the bail as the ground got very muddy with all the cows moving in and out. To move it we used the horse. This was often quite difficult when the steel wheels sank into the mud. We also moved the makeshift fence which served to keep the cows out in front of the bail. There was a gate in it for them to walk through.

The evening milking was at about 5 pm and the same routine was followed. The cows were milked twice daily seven times a week. On Sunday afternoons some of the other farm hands did the milking to give us a half day break and there were no odd jobs to do on a Sunday.

Most of the buildings were in poor repair except for the farmhouse. Exhibits

116 - 118 show the house. (The photos were sent to me on 12th November 1984 by John D. Wood of 3 St. George's House, St. George's Street, Winchester SO23 8BG, estate agents. On the death of Rex Paterson his son Geoffrey inherited the farm and he had put it up for sale. The lawn in 117 was part of the farm yard in my days. (There was no tennis court then). In front (exhibit 116.), between the house and the road was a large lawn with roses and flower beds and a few old trees. From the road a drive led to the main entrance door (which was hardly ever used) and out again round the lawn. My bedroom was, I think, the second window from the right. The french windows in 117 was the kitchen door and was the entrance door generally used. The kitchen was large and filthy. The bailiff, his wife and a niece all washed in the sink and there were dirty combs and chewed tooth brushes about the sink. Mr. Collis was almost bald, had a grey bristly moustache, small, keen eyes and always wore breeches, a tie and greasy tweed jacket. Except when eating he constantly had a short pipe clenched in his front teeth - even when he spoke. He was a good farmer and loyal bailiff but narrow-minded and conceited. He always spoke with great respect of the "governor" rather like my school teacher Mr. Reiner spoke of President Masaryk.

His wife was fat and moved slowly. She always had a dirty apron and talked in monosyllables. She was a keen cook and did what she could for me including laundering my shirts and underwear. The younger woman, always referred to by Mr. Collis as his niece, was a plain creature and normally rather sour but if she thought that something was funny, she laughed like a horse, showing all her front teeth. Every Saturday she and Mr. Collis went shopping by car. Mrs. Collis was left to look after the house.

The other lodger I have referred to already was Cyril. He was English, about my age and from a middle class family. He was being trained to be a farmer and he paid a little for his lodging and food. He too wore breeches and had a matching brown flat hat with a large brim, and a silver cigarette case. He was a good and intelligent talker and had good manners. We became quite friendly. Of an evening or at the weekend we would walk to the pub in Stockbridge where he introduced me to "gin and it". He left the farm before I did, volunteered for the RAF and, I learned later, was killed in action.

From time to time other refugees appeared whom Paterson got from various organisations. They were mostly Austrians and all were "townees". One I remember was a short dark-haired fellow of about my age. He had a broad grin that revealed a gold tooth. He, like the others, was afraid of going near a cow, and seemed too weak to lift a full 10-gallon churn. They never lasted long, and left. In the summer months a B & B board appeared beyond our drive by the roadside.



116. Houghton Down Farm near Stockbridge, Hampshire
 where I worked from 4th or 5th February 1939 to
 just before Christmas 1940. View is from A 30
 entrance. Stockbridge is about half way between
 Winchester and Salisbury



117. View of farm house facing the yard. When I was there there was no lawn but the farm yard



118. Farm house and farm buildings and fields. There was no tennis court when I was there. Photos 116 - 118 supplied by estate agents John D. Wood, Winchester, while I was writing this.

Occasionally one or two people stayed overnight, mostly salesmen. On such occasions the niece put on a black dress, white apron and frilled head band to serve the breakfast. She fancied herself in this outfit.

The spring and summer were slow in coming. Once the grass started to grow the milk yield increased and we ceased to spread hay in the fields. The cows didn't have the whole run of a field. We ran electric fences across and kept them in narrow strips. From time to time we moved the electric fences, so that they always had enough to graze on. The parts of the field on which they were not to go was allowed to recuperate. In the summer we made hay. The grass was cut by a tractor-drawn cutter. Cyril loved to drive the tractor; Mr. Collis also drove it and I did on a few occasions. Horse-drawn rakes were used to turn the cut grass and rake it into long heaps. When it was dry a huge wooden "fork" was fixed to the front of the tractor. This fork was an invention of Paterson's. One could push about a ton of hay in one go to the corner of a field, where we built a rick. The tractor lifted the fork to the appropriate height and with pitchforks we distributed the hay. When the rick had reached a certain height, tarpaulins weighed down by bricks were used to cover it up. It was a dusty job on the rick. We often worked till sunset and in a good week I earned up to £ 4 extra for haymaking.

We had a bull who generally grazed with the cows. Sometimes we had two bulls, one per herd, and that caused some trouble. For some reason, only known to bulls, they coveted cows in the next field, rather than in their own entourage. Not only did they break through the barbed wire fences but the two herds got mixed up in the night and we had to sort them out again and mend the fence as well. At certain times of the year the bull was kept in a small stable. Access to it was through a split door, with an upper part left open for air and the lower part bolted from the outside. The bull had to be taken out for exercise and water. This was a tricky business and rather frightening. Armed with a long rod with a hook at the end I remember unbolting the door and very quickly engaging the bull's nose ring with the hook. That was relatively easy when the bull faced me but when he offered me his bottom I had to lock the bolt which meant that if the beast was going to attack me, I had no ready means of escape. Once the hook was engaged the bull was easy to handle and followed me docily out. I would march in triumph with him to the water trough and back again into his stable.

Apart from my milking mate, all the other hands were very "rough". One, an older man called Joe, short, fat and dirty with all his front teeth missing, shaved only at the weekend. He lived with a pretty 16-year-old daughter in another farm cottage. Another man with shifty blue eyes, about 30 - 35 years

old, was the strongest. He walked with fast firm steps and was up to all sorts of tricks. I did not understand them, because of their accents, initially, but gradually learned to converse with them. Every other word was a swearword and I became adept in using English, foul language. They all seemed to dislike Mr. Collis. They complained about low wages but didn't have the courage to take their complaints to him. I fancied becoming their mediator but I don't think they quite trusted me. But I had nothing to lose so I said I would do my best. We discussed their demands in some detail and one day I broached the subject with Mr. Collis. He was rather surprised but not sympathetic. The whole matter was reported to the "governor". Some days passed without any news from Mr. Collis and the men got a bit restless. Cyril knew about all this, but kept out of it. I didn't know what was going on at the time but I now think the men split into "hardliners" and those who had become nervous, perhaps even afraid they might lose their jobs. We had a heated discussion in the barn while mixing meal. In the course of this the strong man with the shifty eyes pushed me down the steps from the barn floor. I nursed my bruises in bed for a couple of days but no bones were broken. I don't know how the whole affair ended but we all made it up and continued to work together. That was the first and last time that I acted as a shop steward.

On Sunday afternoons I went nearly always to the Winchester cinema. My weekly wage was sufficient to pay the bus fare, the cinema ticket and a packet of cigarettes (10 for 6 old pennies) which lasted me the week. Later, when I earned extra from hay making I felt rich. I didn't have to touch my own money as the only other expenses I had were stamps for letters home.

Stockbridge was only about 2 m away from the farm. One could go by bus, or get a lift in a car or walk across the field, which was shorter. It is a pleasant little town, its houses fringing the main road, with shops, a hotel (later Joan and I once stayed a night there), church and a pub. Cyril knew some of the young people in Stockbridge, including two daughters of the vicar. On a summer evening or before Sunday lunch we foregathered at the pub and once or twice were invited to the vicarage. There was also a rich family, part of the local squirearchy, who lived nearby in a large house in a park. They had a small one-engined plane and used one of our fields to land. One evening I was invited there to dinner. The invitation said "black tie" and I was glad to have brought my evening jacket with me. I had a hot bath, scrubbed myself clean, washed my hair to get rid of the cow smell, changed into clean underwear and was ready when the chauffeur arrived.

On arrival I was ushered into a big drawing room and was received most graciously.

ously by the lady of the house, dressed in a glittering evening gown. She told me that she had heard of my arrival at the farm and knew where I came from and how sorry they all were about Czechoslovakia. At dinner I sat on her right. There was no table cloth on the polished table but little individual mats with fine porcelain, silver cutlery and expensive wine glasses. There were perhaps a dozen at table including two young officers in their dress uniforms. They belonged to a cavalry regiment and on their shoulders over their dark blue tunics was draped fine mesh chain mail, as worn by medieval knights. Their regiment had only recently been changed to tanks which they greatly lamented. Mercifully they were able to retain their horses so they still went out riding every morning. The regimental forms had not yet been changed, however. These forms had to be filled in every day by an officer. It went something like this: number of draft horses: nil; number of horse-drawn gun carriages: nil; number of stallions: nil; number of fillies: nil; and so on. At the bottom there was half an inch left for "Any other Store", in which they had to write: 6 tanks, 6 motorised guns, 100 gallons of petrol, 12 gallons of oil etc. etc. I sincerely hoped that by the time war broke out they had been issued with proper forms.

It was a lively party and though I didn't understand everything that was said, I enjoyed it. At one stage we had a serious political discussion and they all listened to me with great interest. When the ladies rose the men stayed at the table and there were cigars and port. We joined the ladies a little while later in the drawing room where we had coffee. After this visit my reputation rose amongst the young people in Stockbridge.

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At the far edge of our fields were some concrete floors, partly overgrown, where some buildings had stood. During the winter months a travelling circus was allowed to stay there. There were several caravans in which the circus folk lived and carts that were travelling cages for the animals. There was a lot of gear around, which was being repaired and painted. Little children played and dogs ran around. I went sometimes to see these people and they invited me into their cosy wagons for cups of tea. They told me about life in the circus and I told them about Czechoslovakia. One morning, before Easter, they had gone, without leaving a trace. Jean arrived sometime in May. She had been a medical student in Bratislava. Through the British Consulate she got a job as a student nurse in an LCC teaching hospital. While she was waiting for her appointment she spent some time

with my friends the Wiltshires in Bexhill. (see photo 112.) In the summer she started to work at St. Alfege's. I gave her half of the money I still had from home, nearly £ 20.

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Exhibit 119 was taken in Košice and is dated June 1939. Soon after Jean had left, Mother had gone to Košice where Ernó's mother lived and I assume that they went for a summer holiday. This is the last photo I have of Mother. Košice was in the part of Slovakia which was ceded to Hungary. It is conceivable that they explored then a move to Hungary. Ernó must have expected to be sacked by the bank in which he worked. May be he had already lost his job. In fact they did move later to Hungary and for a while lived in Košice. (Kassa in Hungarian).

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While I was at the farm, relatively happy, the world moved closer to war. Chamberlain, still pursuing his Appeasement policy, visited Mussolini in February and publicly recognised the weak Italian King as Emperor of Abyssinia - while the deposed Emperor, Haile Selassie, lived in England. Shortly afterwards, on March 13th, The Times had another pro-Hitler editorial. Two days later Hitler occupied the whole of Czechoslovakia bringing in its wake teutonic anti-semitic terror. The Slovak autonomous Government seceded on March 14th. Tuka, who was once in prison in Czechoslovakia, became Vice-President under Tiso's presidency. Within 24 hours of Hitler's occupation these two placed Slovakia "under the protection of the Great German Reich". Already in the previous week, on March 7th, the paper SLOVAK had declared that " the new Slovakia has sincerely taken its place by the side of those great nations which have began the struggle against Judaeo-Marxism". The Hlinka Guard, an inferior and an undisciplined imitation of the Nazi SA, launched their anti-semitic campaign.

Ruthenia also seceded and Horthy was allowed to occupy the southern parts of Slovakia - much to the chagrin of Tiso.

The English press, some politicians and many people now spoke openly about war. Nothing else could stop Hitler. On 22nd March Hitler occupied Memel (Klaipeda), a coastal town in Lithuania on the Baltic sea. This had been German until 1919. It had been transferred to the French for temporary administration after the First World War; they vacated it in 1923, since when it had been part of Lithuania. Chamberlain and Appeasement were no longer supported by large sections of the public, but the Prime Minister hung on. Hitler had now the whole of the Czechoslovak arsenal of tanks, guns, aircraft and so on. Except for her navy, Germany had now probably more weapons than Britain. Churchill and a few other clearsighted politici-



119. The last photo I have of Mother. It was taken in Košice in June 1939

(exhibit 120 on p. 239)



121. Katka, Karel and I in Seaford on 28th August 1939 a few days before War broke out

ans demanded immediate re-armement and indeed judging from press reports the UK was calling up men and set a large armament industry in motion.

I saw England now as an insider. I had to revise my views which I had about England while still in Czechoslovakia and also some of the impressions gained on my first visit in the summer of 1938. I wrote to Mother on 3rd August 1939 setting out some of the problems which beset England in its preparation for war. This letter was in a bundle of papers which Pali Adler handed me after the war. Exhibit 120 is a photostat of this letter. Below is a translation. I have not attempted to render it into perfect English. Some of the views expressed are exaggerated, others are still correct today. Current comments are in parenthesis.

Dear Mother

At home we have a completely false image of England. One sees it as a very wealthy imperial country with thoroughly good and democratic characteristics. What has remained of it all I have been able to observe over a total of 8 months.

Above all we all seem to hold the view that England's living standard is on a high level and its social services too. Indeed potentially England could have a high living standard but in fact a large part of the population lives under deplorable conditions. For instance 4½ millions spend on the average only three shillings a week per head on food, whereas I as an ordinary farmhand consume about 16 shillings worth of food per week. A large part of the population is undernourished. More than twice the number of young men had to be called up for the number required by the Government because about half of them were physically unfit. Of 1 million volunteers during the last 14 years, 650,000 were rejected for this reason. Wales, known for its coal mines, is a particularly poor province. For instance: 80 % of the women who had died in childbirth could have been saved had they enjoyed a normal diet. It goes without saying that TB and infantile paralysis are rampant there.

The social institutions are well below the prevailing standards in continental countries like Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy and Switzerland. The health and pension provisions are intolerable. Taxes are very high. Only about 2 months ago the price of a packet of 20 cigarettes - approximately equivalent to our Egyptian type - was increased by 1.20 Czechoslovak Koruny despite of the fact that it already carried a high duty. Milk is a monopoly. The producer obtains about one shilling per gallon, the monopoly organisation sells it at 2 shillings and fourpence a

gallon. One could be prosecuted for giving a beggar a glass of milk. - And yet thousands of gallons of skim milk are poured away every day, whereas one could turn it into milk powder, Galalit (a plastic material that at the time was made on the Continent from skimmed milk) etc.

Just now a strike is threatened by locomotive drivers. The reason is pay. The number of unemployed is relatively low - $1\frac{1}{4}$ millions - but that is misleading as hundred thousands (I don't think that was correct) have already been called up and another hundred thousand (probably also exaggerated) are now working in the armament industry. Incidentally the profits from the armament industry in England in the last months amounted to 160 millions pounds - c. 22.5 milliards Koruny. 54 % of public opinion suspects Chamberlain but 64 % would like Churchill in the Cabinet. Chamberlain, however, simply said no, without consulting Parliament. Where is democracy ?

A general election is expected in November. It may be assumed that Chamberlain will go. However, many of his opponents are insignificant men and one wonders whether they would do much good - which makes it easier for Chamberlain to keep the upper hand.

Apart from high taxes the Government borrows hundreds of millions of pounds from the country. Private enterprise is waning because of the political situation. It is well known that the financial market here is totally unregulated. (Since then there were some minor reforms; it was only now in 1986 that a major reform of the city is coming into force). This gives rise to a colossal uncertainty. Inflation and wage problems are acute. Indications of general inflation creep serpent-like into the subdued stock exchange. The picture of internal weakness is reflected in foreign affairs. In Germany the English are not popular, in the Tirol they have been expelled (there was a minor incident there but I cannot remember what it was), they are withdrawing from China, in Japan their windows are smashed, in Palestine they are sitting on two chairs and are falling between them as the Arabs and the Jews are pulling the chairs apart to the accompaniment of gun shots; in India too the problems and shooting increase. A friend told me " an English sailor carries his head low these days in every port".

Propaganda is increasing in both external and internal political matters. Irish terror acts were a dangerous plague throughout the country, though recently the brakes have been put on; but for how long ? Anti-semitism is increasing (an exaggeration) But there is no political ferment in the country as would be the case in a robust young country (under those circumstances). An old wine has ceased to ferment. It either keeps its quality or it becomes cloudy and breaks.

Man macht sich gewöhnlich bei uns ein ganz falsches Bild über England. Man sieht gewöhnlich ein sehr reiches, weltbeherrschendes Land mit durchwegs guten demokratischen Eigenschaften. Obwohl davon übrig geblieben ist, habe ich mich nun insgesamt 8 Monaten Betrachtung erfahren.

Insallum ist bei uns weitest verbreitet, dass England's Standard der höchste ist u. die sozialen Einrichtungen auf hohem Niveau stünden. Dazu ist zu bemerken, dass die Möglichkeit gegeben ist einen hohen Niveau Standard zu erreichen, dass aber ein Großteil d. Bevölkerung in einem geradezu deplorablen Zustand sich befindet. So verbrauchen z.B. $4\frac{1}{2}$ Mill. Ew. 3 sh. wöchentlich für Nahrung, während z.B. ich, als gew. Landarbeiter, ¹⁶ sh. verbräuche. Ein Großteil d. Bevölkerung ist unterernährt. Mehr als 2 x soviel Buschen, die sich zur obligatorischen Asseutierung stellten u. als die Regierung erwartete hat, musste wegen Körperschwäche zurückgestellt werden. Von 1 Million Freiwilligen, die sich in den letzten 14 Jahren gemeldet hatten mussten aus obigen Gründen 650.000 zurückgestellt werden. Dabei, eine besonders arme Gegend mit Kohlenminen zeigt z.B. folgendes: 80% der Frauen, die im Kindbett gestorben sind, hätten bei normaler Ernährung erhalten werden können. Der Proz. unter diesen Zahlen wütet u. Kinderparalyse ist selbstverständlich.

Die sozialen Einrichtungen ^{stehen} ~~stehen~~ den meisten Kontinentalen Staaten, wie etwa Deutschland, Österreich, E.S.R., Italien Schweiz etc. nach. Kranken- u. Pensionsversicherung unmöglich. Steuern fürchterlich groß. Erst vor etwa 2 Monaten hat man z.B. für eine Schachtel Zigaretten 20 St. u. 8 / (etwa Ägyptischen Gleichnam) im 1900er erhöht, dabei sind

schon Steuern darauf geweren. — Milch ist monopolisiert
Der Produzent bekommt für 1 Gallon Milch etwa 1 sh. Das
Monopol verkauft es für 2, 4 sh u. behält sich den Profit.
Gibt hi einem Bettler ein Glas Milch, so kommt hi da
eingespart werden. — Dagegen werden hi. gl. Tausend
Gallonen Magermilch weggeschüttet, obwohl man daraus Fruch
milch, Gelatine etc. erzeugen könnte. —

Jetzt droht ein Generalstreik der Lohnempfänger.
Der Grund sind Lohnfragen. —

Die Arbeitslosenquote ist verhältnismässig niedrig 1 1/4 %
bedeutet aber nichts, da ja hunderttausende eingeworben sind
u. andere hunderttausende in der Rüstung arbeiten. 4 %
ganz verdient man an Rüstungen in den letzten Monaten
in England 160 Mill. Pfund / rund 10 Mrd. Mark 22 1/2 Milliarden
Chamberlain wird von 54% der öffentlichen Meinung
gehalten. 64% dagegen wünschten Churchill im Cabinet.
Chamberlain sagte aber ganz einfach nein, ohne d. Parlament
zu befragen. Wo bleibt Demokratie?

Im November sollen Wahlen sein. Es ist erwünscht,
dass Chamb. gestürzt wird. Seine Gegner sind aber so in
bedeutende Männer, dass von ihnen auch kein Glück
erwartet ist — deswegen ist es ihm ja so leicht, die
Oberhand zu behalten. —

An der grossen Steuer wurde riesige Anleihen in die
Hundertste von Millionen Pfund! gehende Summen in
Lande aufgenommen. Dagegen ist privater Unternehmertum
geht wegen der Zeit. ... zurückgegangen. Bekanntlich
ist die Finanzmarkt ... unreguliert. Das führt nun
zu einem riesigen ... Finanzierung und Lohnfragen
sind akut. Anzeichen ... Inflation schlängeln

sich in die abfläussende Böhse. —

Dieses Bild unserer Schwärze spiegelt sich auch in der
Aussenpolitik. Im Reich sind die Engländer höchst unpopu-
lar, in Tirol werden sie ausgewiesen, in China zieht man
sie aus, in Japan schlägt man ihnen die Fenster ein, in
Palästina haben sie sich auf 2 Stühle gesetzt, die Araber
u. Juden u. fallen, da diese auseinanderwischen, mit viel
Gewaltgeheul durch, in Indien nehmen die Schwie-
rigkeiten u. Schwierigkeiten zu. „Ein engl. Matrose muss
heute in jedem Lande den Kopf hängen lassen“ will
mir einlängst jemand.

Aussenpolit. u. Innenpolit. Propaganda nehmen zu.
Trische Terrorakte waren eine lebensgefährliche
Landplage; allerdings wurde sie jetzt gebremst; aber
auf wie lange? Antisemitismus ist auch stärker.
Trotzdem aber gähnt es in Lande nicht wie man das
bei kräftigen jungen Staaten gewohnt ist. Genau so wie
ein alter Wein nicht gärt. Entweder er erhält sich
oder er wird trübe u. bricht.

Unter den gegebenen Umständen kann England wahr-
scheinlich nicht an Krieg denken. Ich glaube nicht, dass
sie einem starken Gegner gegenüber ihr Empire aufrecht
erhalten können. Ihre Propaganda, ihre Moral, ihre
Militär ist zu schwach. Sie sind zwar materiell kolossal
aufgerüstet. Was nützt es aber, wenn für die zu
verwendenden Piloten zu wenig Piloten sind?
Die schnellsten u. feinsten Tropenkreuzer alleine

und wußt real. Überdies kommt die weitere Erklärung hierher. Ich kann mich auf alles was ich will. Ich bin ein Befindlicher Mensch. Sie.

Keine Siege erheben.

Es ist das alles sehr häufig u. sehr wahr. Von Kultur u. allg. Bildung spr. ich überhaupt nicht, sonst wäre der Vergleich mit einem kontinentalen Staat zu fürchterlich. Tröstet es, dass es für 46 Mill. Engländer eine permanente spr. gibt? Aber nein, ich will über Bildung hier gar nicht beginnen.

Es gibt natürlich Ausnahmen, die rechnen aber nur nach Bruchteilen von Prozellen.

ob sich England noch erhalten wird, oder ob das der Anfang des langen Endes ist, weiß ich nicht.

Es werden Hoffnungen auf eine neue Regierung gesetzt. Ich weiß keine Regierung ^{- geben} die in einer 4-Jahre-Sitzungsperiode alles gut macht was da an physischem u. psychischen Elend schlecht ist.

So viel traditionelles Fingern, so viel Klassenhaß, so viel Unverschämtheit, so viel falsche Moral, so viel Unwissenheit, so viel reaktionärer Kapitalismus, so viel Verachtung des Kindes, so falsche Agrarpolitik etc etc etc, läßt sich nicht so schnell gut machen.

grüße u. Kömme an alle von

Mat

Bitte best. ge mir den Empfang dieses.

3. Aug. 39. 39.

Under these circumstances England can of course not contemplate war. I don't think that England is able to keep the Empire in the event of a conflict with a determined adversary. Its propaganda, its morale and its armed forces are weak. Its material armament is now colossal (an exaggeration). But what is the use of it if there are insufficient instructors to train air force pilots? The fastest and best aeroplanes cannot win without pilots. All this is rather sad but true. I'm not even mentioning culture and general education in comparison with Continental countries. Do you know that there is only one permanent opera house for 46 millions English (should be British)? But no, I mustn't start talking about education. Of course there are exceptions but these account for fractions of a pro mille. Whether England will re-new, or whether this is the beginning of the end, I don't know. - There are great hopes for a new Government. But no Government can in a span of 4 years make good all the physical and psychological misery. So much traditional lying, so much class hatred, so much lethargy, so much false morale, so many hungry children, so much stupidity (I don't know what I meant by this), so much reactionary capitalism, so much wrong agricultural policy etc. etc. cannot be put right quickly. With greetings and kisses to all

Matyi

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Just as I was at the post office with this letter, your "personal" letter of 31st July had arrived. All your worries are unrealistic. In the meantime you will have had my letter. I shall revert to it.

- - -

On August 23rd Germany and Russia signed a non-aggression pact. This was a bombshell. It was totally unexpected after Hitler's years of fulminations against Bolshevism and Russia. It gave Hitler a breathing space and a free hand to launch an attack anywhere in the West at the moment and place of his choice. France, the Netherlands and Belgium were in peril.

About a week before war broke out I had a cable from Judy that she was arriving the next morning by plane at Croydon (which was then London's airport). Flying was then a rare thing to do and Judy was obviously in a hurry. The problem was how to get there in time and have somebody standing in for me over milking. Fortunately a man who stayed for B & B that night was driving to London and offered me a lift; and one of the other hands would do the milking. That was my first long car trip in England. I remember driving through the cobbled High Street of Guildford and noticed the splendid gilt clock. It was a joy to meet Judy and to have personal news of the family.

The same evening I took a train back from London.

My first short holiday was coming. Katka and her husband Karel were staying at some sort of summer school in Seaford and they asked me to join them. We were lodged in a school. I arrived on 27th or 28th Aug. and on September 1st Hitler occupied Danzig (now Gdansk) which since the first World War had been a free, independent city. He marched into Poland on the same day.

From the shore we watched the cross channel boats sailing nearby to New Haven. They were packed with thousands of British holidaymakers returning home before it would be too late.

We bathed and sunbathed while conflicting thoughts raced through my mind. What was going to happen to my parents and Anni? World War II was about to break out; what would it mean for them?

Photo 121 was taken in Seaford on 28th August 1939.

On September 3rd Britain and France declared war on Germany.