

APPENDIX: MOTHER'S TESTAMENT

Mother writes an excellent German and uses many abstract terms which are sometimes difficult to translate. She uses, however, an unusual punctuation of her own: a comma followed by a dash , - which conveys a sort of breathless urgency. I have not tried to render the letter into perfect English but have used her own words in the hope that this conveys the spirit of her message best.

She uses often the words BEAUTY and BEAUTIFUL. I have not tried to translate these into their proper meanings which she has in mind. Beauty in her letter stands in most cases for something like spiritual values. See also Webster's dictionary where one rendering is "A particular grace, feature, ornament, or excellence".

Soon after she had completed the letter, she wrote to us in June 1944 that she was going to Slovakia, which must have been a considerable achievement in view of the fact that foreigners were not allowed to leave Hungary. On 20th August 1944 she wrote a Red Cross message from Hlohovec see exhibit 142 on page 316. This was her last communication. Quite soon afterwards she went into hiding.

My dearest beloved children

These lines are for you, and also for Matyi and my little Mucki (pronounced mookee), in the hope, that you will see them again and that you will all be together again in joyfulness. - My heart is unspeakably heavy, because everything, that has kept me going for the last 5 years, everything that gave me strength and endurance, - has become improbable in the last few weeks and is in danger of collapse. Throughout that whole time there was the hope to see you three again, happy with your spouses and family, - which had helped me to withstand all difficulties. - I prayed and pray every day to God to be merciful to me and to let me live the few years which I still have in your and your childrens company, - together with uncle (Ernő Weiss), - and to share in your happiness and wellbeing, - standing only quietly in the background. Before I die I would like so much to see your homes, to meet your spouses and to be able to help to look after your children and to help to bring them up! - I also have much to tell you! - When we were still together, we had a beautiful but all too active life! - I wanted to offer you so much, to teach and show you! - I wanted to ensure your future position in the world, in the community and in the wider society, to be

strong, unassailable and utterly beautiful. I have largely succeeded in this , but of course not completely! - But I do feel today that in this active, busy and changeable life something had been lost, - your youthfulness and your joie de vivre (in the original Lebensdrang "eagerness for life") were an additional cause of this! - We had too few hours of leisure together to get to know what had happened before you had grown up and had become more mature. I could tell you very little then about us and our innermost thoughts. You were, - as I said - too young and jolly and always busy with a thousand things to be interested about that old rubbish, - But since then you have grown up and no doubt you are now more receptive to reminiscences. - For years I have built up and painted a dream to make up for all that. - I hoped that this interminable war will stop one day! - Then all of us, who were left here, will fly to you, to my dear children far away. Then we will tell each other everything what had happened before and after your departure, - you who have been away for so long! And you will tell us what you have experienced, suffered, lived through, learned and accomplished! - And your tales will take months and even years to relate and still something new will come out and the most important thing will be, - we will never be separated again from each other in our whole lives. - I hope you will allow me to look after your children and to help to educate them and to have the pleasure to tell them about you when you were young and about all the apparently trivial things which are unforgettable and very dear memories to me. - If I live to see this and thus my travails on earth are accomplished, after we have told each other everything, and if I can help you just a little bit with my experience and when I know, that you are truly happy, - then I would like, - so I have always hoped - to die in your presence and near to you. I have dreamt to hold your hands in my cold hands and to take with me the sparkle in your beloved eyes as provisions for the road to another world; to be able to watch you from over there and never cease even there to ask the Good Lord for your happiness.

A great many things have changed for the worse in the last weeks! Only my confidence in God, in His Universal Power and His Benevolence have remained unchanged. I have not yet given up hope, that the dream which I have just told you about, may yet be fulfilled. But God's ways are unknown and we human beings can only believe in Him and hope. - For weeks we have been surrounded by a thousand dangers. Bombers are diving on the town, though up to now only the suburbs have suffered, but

can one know how this will develop ? - There are new decrees every day and people are being deported daily and imprisoned. - Well, - you know these things ! - I trust God, He will protect us, we are in His hands ! - Nevertheless I do not want to have anything left undone and want as far as possible put things into good order ! The thought of death would not be so difficult if I knew not that this would fill you with sorrow and if I had not an unexpressible longing to see you all once more in my life. - I have, more or less, accomplished my tasks. Whether well or badly - but I have done them ! The success is certainly wonderful, - you have grown into good, honest and believing persons with a thirst for beauty. This is not just my merit; your own good senses and lives, which are an education in themselves posing many difficulties, have strengthened you. But I feel so terrible, - because it would cause you such sorrow and because I would love to see you again, caress and kiss you just for a little while and to enjoy you and only then can I die in peace. I don't know, whether all this will still be given to me and to see my grandchildren ? But if the Good Lord in His infinite mercy gives me all this - then I will not ask for anything more. Do not be sad and in despair, but think lovingly of me and do thank the Lord for all the good things He has given me in my life. Pray for me and think of me daily just for a few minutes in affectionate and deep remembrance. I shall always be with you with my whole soul, to protect and to help you and to share in your pleasures and your sorrows. Even over there I will pray only for you and the Good Lord will help me to deflect from your heads any dangers and sorrows. - Do forgive me everything, what I have not done well, where I have erred or for having caused pain to you. I am sure I have done many things wrong and in my excessive zeal I have expected the maximum from you in every respect. This was no doubt often very difficult for you to understand but - as it has turned out - has led to good results. All three of you have gone through difficulties at various periods of your lives and you had to fight many battles. I know that it was not easy, but you have fought victoriously and you have happily succeeded in maintaining your place in life. - Perhaps my severity and what may have appeared to you as senseless nagging had played a small part in all this, as it has made you more resistant. If that is so - than my life was not wasted. There is I'm sure no need to tell you that the reason for all this was my great love for you which wanted to fashion you in accordance with my highest ideals. - So forgive me everything that you have felt not to be right in my life -

but I would dearly hope that you have found nothing that has caused you any damage ! I can assure you again in all conscience and after repeated self-examination that my divorce took place for your own wellbeing and if I had to chose again I would act in exactly the same way - because that was the only possibility to provide you with a quiet home and a beautiful youth. If you knew the details - you too would arrive at the same conclusion, - but it is of no importance any longer for you to know all the details; the principal thing is that I have succeeded and hope that you have become contented and happy individuals. May God give this ! - I have only one excuse if I have failed in anything; I always wanted from my whole heart and with all my energy and with all my capabilities, under all circumstances - to provide you and also for your Father - so long as it was possible - and for uncle and for all who are close to me, all that is the most beautiful for a happy life; after your Father had gone out of my life; - I have helped him much more than he had a right to expect in view of his behaviour. I have always been imbued with the feeling of loving you more than any other person is capable of loving. - With every fibre of my body I am connected with you and the terrible years of separation cause me physical pain - I long terribly to be with you and to hear your voices, your laughter - to look into your eyes, to kiss and to embrace you and to be with you in infinite love and unimaginable joy.

Now - that I am perhaps standing at the end of my life - I can only state, that I have wanted only the very best for you and only did what I considered to be my duty. As far as my strength has allowed it I have nothing left undone but have done everything that I considered necessary for your happiness, your future and your enjoyment. If I was, to some extent, discontented, then this is not due to a lack of trying or a lack of my sense of duty but due to my inadequacy of strength and capabilities. Please do forgive me all this and keep me lovingly in your hearts. If the Good Lord will let me have the chance then I might perhaps be able to make good. If not, then I must depart this life having accomplished all and relying on your love and your kindness of heart. - Nothing would make me feel happier and would let me die in peace if I could hear from your mouths that you love me and that you have forgiven my shortcomings which I have committed unawares and that you will keep my memory deep down in your hearts. But today this is unfortunately no longer possible. I can therefore only repeat the examination of my conscience and to hope that you have understood and judged me correctly, and that you love me deeply and carry

my memory in the deepest recess of your heart, even though your love for me may only be a small part of the infinite love which I have for you. In that case my life had a purpose!

But love can also be very painful yet it is also the only thing which leads to happiness. Even when I have departed this world, love each other even more intensively! - Even if you are separated by great distances, even if your views, ideas and circumstances differ, never cease to love each other deeply and with a full heart and even if it is necessary to make a sacrifice for each other. - Love your spouses and help each other even if life conjures up temptations which appear lovely to you and apparently worth a sacrifice. Even things that may appear to you dull due to continued close contact should not lead to break a union which is based on love and mutual confidence, unless there are some extremely serious reasons.

Love your children with devotion and all your heart is capable of - because there is the greatest happiness on earth and tell them sometimes about me, so that I don't disappear without traces from your families. - Love also uncle and be good to him and loyal! - He has done a great deal of good to me and for you. He has sacrificed his whole life for us and has given up his own independent life completely in order to adjust himself to our family. He has grown old without ever having become master in a home of his own. He remained a guest of ours without any rights. - The two of us have taken upon us great burdens, - in order to spare you a stepfather - without your agreement - in which case he would have had some rights - and things might have become more difficult. - I always had this worry - whether justified or not - which cannot be judged until after the event. - So he remained for you always the good uncle spending with an open hand, - yet he never claimed any rights whatsoever. This dichotomous (in the original zwiespältig is used; it means something like double or double edged) has brought us sometimes into the wrong light, whereby his sacrifice was infinitely greater than mine. - Though it was difficult for me as a woman of rigorous moral standards and in full physical health, - I did renounce for the sake of my children - and this made my decision more bearable. He, however, did it only out of pure love and sheer goodness! This was a great sacrifice indeed! - He gave us also financially everything he possessed. All of his savings, he spent on us - to render our lives more beautiful and without worries - and always in a most unobtrusive and kind manner! - Never forget him because I love him and he was always extremely kind and supportive. - Should he survive me, then support him, give him all your help and love that you are capable of giving. By doing so you will only repay an old debt, because he has done such a lot for me. -

I certainly couldn't have survived the last terrible five years, being separated from you, without his help and support; - I also have to thank him for the way he has taken care of my health and thanks to him I was able to look after myself without worrying. I have received nothing from home (Mother means financial support from Father) for a long time. - I do not know what will happen to us - certainly nothing good. - But if only I could survive today's terrible situation, then this will be due to his good care of my health. (Mother has been visiting spas regularly).

I now have to tell you some things about my financial (in the original: "materiellen") wishes. - On paper and by rights I own at home a sizable fortune. I am the principal creditor of father's farms representing a considerable amount. - At present it's worth nothing! - When times return - for which I am hoping - when law will rule again, - then you must undertake the necessary steps, - to save for yourselves as much of it as possible. - All my possessions: cash, farmland and everything else you might be able to recover including my furniture, clothing, valuables and pieces of art, - in short everything I have owned, - or which is legally due to me - belongs to you my dearest ^a Matyi, Anny and Susilein. - I only put one condition that whatever uncle wants to keep of all that, or what he needs, should belong to him. - Even should he ask for nothing, then I know and hope, - that you will put at his disposal, whatever is in your power, to ensure for him a troubleless life. The small parcel which on the occasion of my last trip abroad, I have left there, - for you, - at that time having had principally Matyi and Susi in mind, - to ensure that at least something is being saved, - is still there and has not been touched. It belongs to all three of you, subject to the above condition. Do split the contents in a brotherly manner and wear them with my blessings and with pleasure in a long and happy lives. - I have received a confirmatory letter dated 10th December 1941 as follows: We have the honour to confirm to you, that the small parcel, which you have handed us some time ago for safe keeping until your next visit to Genève, is still in our hands, as well as the accompanying letter. This confirmation is from Banque intermédiaire des valeurs non-cotées, Genève, 12 rue de Hollande, tel: 51607 and 54335. - Salamon Schmiedli signed the letter, Genève tel: 51607. The parcel is signed by me and uncle. I can't remember now whether I have given only you or all three of you as the eventual recipients. But in any case, all three of you have sufficient signatures and letters from me, - to identify yourselves if that should be necessary. Me dearest children, I still have lots of things to tell you, but this letter must not get too long. For years I have toyed with the idea to write the story

of my life for you, not only from how it appeared from outside but how I have experienced it in reality. - I have always postponed this work, - though some years ago I have actually started it. I had no particular reason to postpone it, but I thought that, - later, - when I have grown older I would be in a better position to recollect and to concentrate and also have the peace of mind and be able to distance myself from events. - In my subconscious I know that I have always hoped, - to see you again, and tell you everything personally and therefore make it superfluous to put pen to paper. Today unfortunately these hopes are fading by the hour. Today I deeply regret that I haven't done it. It was a great omission, because over the years my thoughts have become clearer (in the original: geläutert which literally means 'purified by experience') and I feel that I have the necessary experience (to draw on). I am beginning to look at life from a higher vantage point, so I am equipped to undertake this job. This has, however, become impossible today. We live amidst a thousand dangers, tremble everytime the doorbell rings and our thoughts are concentrating on possibilities to save our lives, which are threatened in many different ways. For weeks I haven't been out in the streets! - My only walk is to the church to pray for you and us! - My dear little children may God bless you all and may He hold His eternal protective hand over you! - Be happy, jolly and contented persons! Follow, - as good Christians the righteous and balanced path, the proper path, - which will bring you the greatest happiness on earth and eternal life. - Open your eyes and hearts for everything that is beauty, noble and elevating in spirit and which lifts you above every day life! - But do not omit the duties of every life either, because these too are beautiful and valuable. - But if one has completed the larger span of one's life and lives in such difficult times, as we have for years, - then one realises, - how important everything beautiful in life's experience is. - Despite of everything I feel rich today! Rich in the true sense of the word! - Rich, above all, because God has given me you and a life-partner. - I am willing to shoulder any sacrifice, - if He in His Benevolence keeps us alive and reunites us after the end of this world conflagration. My richness is magnified by the fact that throughout my life I have conscientiously striven for beauty and as far as possible have made it part of me. Everything that I have experienced and stored up within myself remains my own property. No law and no terror can deprive me of this. It will only be extinguished when I die. - Do listen to me! - Gather in beauty, store up valuable experiences, do enjoy everything in life which provides valuable pleasures and gives you deep joy! - Let the beauty of nature penetrate deeply into yourselves. - Nature is the strongest power to heal all wounds and to provide comfort; it is necessary to know

nature intimately and to love it. Do believe me, these are not just empty phrases - these are the conclusions of my experience, which I have truly gathered and which I am now passing on to you. - Even amidst today's calamities, - I stand with a sense of wonder and enchantment in front of an apricot tree in full pink blossoms, - and it makes me forget my worries and sorrows albeit for a few seconds only.

Above all love and honour and render your religious devotion to our Lord and to our Saviour! - Only He can save us and give us strength, courage and perseverance and only the steadfast and firm belief in God can make us happy.

- A person who believes in Him and has opened his soul to God, possesses knowledge that leads to inner peace and equilibrium - and allows us to value life from a higher vantage point and makes living worth while.

Should God chose to let me see you again, then we can talk about these thoughts and feelings. - I hope that all three of you as well as your spouses are true believers and that you all love God. Matyi's letter especially, shows a deep belief in God and Anny's short card (I assume Mother refers to Anni's card of 25th April 1944, see exhibit 152. Though Mother's letter was started on 24th April, she finished it only on 16th May.) strengthen my hope and have made me very happy. - But if it is not given to me to see you all again in joy and peace, - then these lines should make it sure, that all my feelings, hopes and wishes are always with you and my last supplications and thoughts will be for you. I will watch over you and - as Matyi has confirmed in his dear and lovely letter that despite of the thousands of kilometers which separate us we are still in close contact in our feelings - you will always feel that I am with you from the other world and will always remain with you through your joy and sorrow.

I find it very difficult to conclude this letter. - Though I do realise that I am repeating myself. - So long as I write I'm particularly close to you - but once I have written down everything, then that means parting and the end!!! But I must stop though its bitter and sad! Good-bye my dearests!! I love you above everything else and have no other wish than that you and your families, your spouses and children be happy and blessed!

Forget my errors, think only of my your loving heart and don't forget your, in life and in death, you loving

Anyu (this is a form of endearment for anya, the Hungarian word for mother)
(There follows a postscript)

Be also good to your father. I have loved him once and cared for him.

He is not bad, - he is basically a good person. But he goes through life unthinkigly(in the original: ahnungslos which means without criteria or "head in the clouds") without being aware whether his actions are good or

bad. But he is your father, and for that reason I like him and I have nice memories of the years when we were together. - Poor soul, he is incapable of making his life permanently beautiful and should be pitied but not condemned.

I have started to write this letter by hand, but as I don't know how it will reach you, I have written two more copies by machine. These two are a little bit more detailed, because as I was typing I added various small things. - By and large they are identical. - I will leave all three copies with different friends, in the hope that at least one copy will reach you. I am ending it on 16th May; everything is much more hopeless now than when I started.

I am now without any hope with regards to our situation - and therefore excessively sad and nervous. Hence my unintelligible writing. - Once again - Good-bye!!! God be with you and protect you all because only He can save us from a most terrible future!! - We heard the news today that all foreigners will be imprisoned shortly!! This is terrible and could be the beginning of the end. - I should have travelled home weeks ago, but nobody thought (perhaps Mother didn't want to leave as Ernő had no chances to cross the border into Slovakia legally; he did the journey later illegally) that it could come to this which makes travelling home no longer possible. - Now it is quite impossible and we have to bear what God wills!! Our hopes are with Him and we pray to Him!!! - Heartfelt kisses!!!

I would have loved to see Grandfather again, to kiss his hand and say good-bye to him! - Now it is for you to do so in my place, console him and be good to him! - Tell him I always prayed for him and pass on my love to him and ask him to forgive me for everything if I have hurt him.

(End of letter).

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FINIS CORONAT OPUS

(26.3.1986)