

XIV: THE LAST LEAVE LEIPZIG: 1935-1939

"The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our life-time."

So said British Foreign Secretary, *Sir Edward Grey*, to a friend - not on the eve of Britain's entry into the Second World War, but the first. The statement was first published in his memoirs as early as 1925, subsequently earning wide attention as accurate foresight into the geo-political and cultural consequences of the 1914-1918 conflict.¹

It was during the period focused on within Chapter XIV, however, i.e. 1935-1939 (presented in four sections, loosely one for each year), that the European stage would be set, for the deadliest conflict in human history.² Not only would Hitler rewrite history post-Versailles, but he led Germany down a path towards self-destruction. Even before war broke out, anticipation of it meant that for those Hinsch family members that remained in Leipzig, the city would soon cease to be their home.

Nannj Tjyralla née Hinsch had already left Leipzig for Berlin in the mid-1920s, her two acrobat daughters being shipped beyond the *Heimat* either side of her move to the capital. Upon his retirement from trading antiques in mid-1934, elder brother *Fritz* had moved 10 km outside Leipzig to the Hinsch villa in *WenigMachern*, while early 1935 saw three of his four sons still living in the city of their birth. The fourth, *Heinz*, was recently wed and lived in Saxony's 'capital,' *Dresden*.

The marriage of *Nannj's* youngest daughter, 24 year old *Margot*, to a Jewish comedian from *Leeds, England* in early December 1934 ruled out her likely return to their *Heimat*, while elder sister *Nannj*, having accepted a marriage proposal shortly after arriving in *Holland* with *Margot* to perform in 1931, had settled in with husband, *Cornelis* (the stage manager at *Amsterdam's* leading theatre, *Carre*), in a southern district called *De Pijp*, with their two year old daughter, *Tiny* (pron. *Teenie*).

Margot had met her husband-to-be in *Holland* in mid-1934 when they both performed for the Dutch *Nationale Revue*. '*Johnnie Riscoe*' (a stage name) had arrived in the country in spring 1933 and by the time they were married, he'd grown to be "one of the leading stage and film favourites" in the Netherlands.³ Following their short sojourn to the UK, they were back in *Amsterdam* by mid-December⁴ to continue in the revue, '*Dat zou je wel willen*' (You'd Like That). *Johnnie* had also recently been cast in "a comedy part in one of the first Dutch talkies to be made," (*Holland's Jeugd*), over which he was said to be "cornering a great deal of publicity as a result." Shooting of *Holland's Youth* was already underway before they left.⁵

¹ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_lamps_are_going_out

² See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II

³ *Returning to England. The Performer*, Nov. 29th, 1934. Pg. 14.

⁴ *Johnnie Riscoe's Gezinskaart* or residential record (filed under his real name, *Carl Berkson*) dates the couple's arrival as December 19th, 1934 while ads in *The Performer* magazine imply a presence from December 13th (see Pg. 6).

⁵ A film "based on the adventures of the Dutch airmen who won the second prize in the England-Australia air race." *Johnnie Riscoe. The Performer*. Nov. 15th, 1934. Pg. 6. The film's title appears in the *Algemeen Handelsblad* on Nov. 9th, 1934.

Returning to the Netherlands at the end of 1934 ensured the newlyweds avoided the increasingly restrictive measures towards immigrants, which from 1935 would be extended to those involved in the production of films,⁶ while German nationals already in the country by the time the new measures came into force, remained exempt.⁷



Utrechtsestraat 87. The second floor flat with small balcony above the bay window was Margot and Johnnie's home until summer 1935

Following their marriage, I can imagine Margot hoped she and Johnnie might go on to become the next *Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald*. But he had other ideas and wanted a son. So for the time being, it was on with the shows, *Dat zou je wel willen* being performed at the *Concordia Theater* in *Breda* (southern Netherlands) until January 21st,⁸ where, according to the *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, Johnnie was more "clown than comic," with his eccentric dance.⁹ From there the cast and crew visited *Haarlem*, *Gouda*, *Utrecht*, *Zwolle*, *Assen* and *Dordrecht* until April 1st, 1935.¹⁰ In the meantime the couple upgraded their Amsterdam lodgings,¹¹ moving less than three weeks into January to the busy and bustling *Utrechtsestraat*, 87, pictured left (see '5').¹² The Tjyralla sisters thus remained neighbours.

One of the reasons for the tightening of immigration controls at the Dutch borders was the country's ongoing recession and high levels of unemployment. As a result, harmony was less easily found on Amsterdam's streets and Nannj and Margot will no doubt have witnessed the endless lines of redundant workers waiting to report at government agencies to claim benefit after their subsistence level income support was further reduced.

Typically government inspectors would visit claimants at home to investigate their daily life, a practice which quickly grew despised. Yet in spite of a Labour Fund (*Werkfonds*) which provided subsidised workplaces on large scale public works, it was generally insufficient to alleviate the masses' plight. Unemployment therefore led to a rise in NSB membership (the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* was the Dutch fascist and later national socialist political party),¹³ and in April 1935, its representatives violently clashed with young Jewish liberals in a brawl at Amsterdam's *Concertgebouw*.¹⁴

⁶ *Achter het doek: Duitse immigranten in de Nederlandse speelfilm in de jaren dertig* (Behind the Curtain: German Immigrants in the Dutch Movies in the Thirties). Inleiding. K. Dittrich van Weringh, K. van Weringh. 1987. Pg. 21-2

⁷ *Refugees from Nazi Germany in the Netherlands 1933-1940*. Bob Moore. International Institute of Social History of Amsterdam. Dordrecht, 1986. Pg. 71, 75. Previewed [here](#).

⁸ *The Performer*. January 17th, 1935. Pg. 6

⁹ *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*. January 30th, 1935

¹⁰ *The Performer*. Jan 31st through to March 28th, 1935. Pg. 6

¹¹ Riscoe had lived in the narrow, diminutive *Schapensteeg Str. 5*, close to the *Tuschinski* theatre ('4' on the map on pg. 473), the same address being confirmed on page 6 of *The Performer* on January 3rd and January 10th, 1936.

¹² On January 19th, 1935, according to Carl Berkson's *Gezinskaart* residential record.

¹³ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression_in_the_Netherlands

¹⁴ *Amsterdam: A Brief Life of the City*. Geert Mak. Vintage, 2001. Pg. 245

Notwithstanding the grave economic situation, Carré's business continued to boom and during 1935, over 66 percent of the capital's citizens who visited a theatre went to Carré. There they enjoyed diverse *revues* such as 'Van Lach tot Lach' by Meyer Hamel in January (with Sylvain Poons, Louis Davids and Fien de la Mar),¹⁵ Louis Bouwmeester's that March and April and later in the autumn, the next *Nationale Revue*.¹⁶

Back in Nannj and Margot's mother's 'hometown,' Berlin, the theatre thrived there too, the *Wintergarten* hosting English female talent that January, ranging from jugglers to can-can dancers, from acrobats to comedians and song.¹⁷ But it would seem 1935's chilly winter¹⁸ alongside the previous years' whirlwind events (including her daughters' weddings and mother's funeral) had left Frau Tjyralla rather restless. So given that neither of her girls were free to return 'home,' she planned to travel herself and booked a train to Amsterdam. That meant both Johnnie and Cornelis would come face-to-face with their mother-in-law! However, to exit Germany, she had to first request a single exit visa from her local police station (*Polizeirevieren*), which would permit her a month long absence.¹⁹

Once the weather improved (and just in time for the Easter weekend on April 18th to 22nd), Mama rode the train²⁰ to Amsterdam,²¹ where she was naturally met by her girls with smiles. Looking upon them, she came to realise that each looked every bit the portrait of "A woman...who looks like she's not used to doing her own shopping." Looking at Nannj, "yes" she thought, "her clothes scream money from head to foot, matching her figure, which looks like it's treated to an hour of massage a day," while of Margot: "She's every inch the lady in her pillbox hat, veil, expensive silk dress...silk stockings and little snakeskin sandals. Her face is a wonderful painting."²²



Margot, Mama, Hilda, Nannj and Kleine Tiny together again. Spring 1935

¹⁵ See: eenlevenlangtheater.nl/louis-davids/repertoire/kleinkunst/1923-1938/2828.html

¹⁶ 100 jaar Carré. Han Peekel, Fridtjof Meerlo en Han Santing. Loeb Uitgevers B.V., Amsterdam. 1987. Pg. 97

¹⁷ *Variety in Berlin. The Performer*. March 7th, 1935. Pg. 6

¹⁸ From January 7th - 21st, 1935, the mercury remained below zero, sinking to -12.6°C at its coldest. See: luise-berlin.de/bms/bmstxt00/0009gesd.htm. This prompted Dresden-based diarist Walter Klemperer to describe on January 15th, 1935 Saxony's "proper winter weather, beautiful snowy landscape." Despite Klemperer then writing on February 21st that it was "Completely spring like since yesterday!" frost and snow returned in early March. *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. Victor Klemperer. Modern Library Inc. 1999. Pg. 109, 113-114. In Berlin that cold snap lasted from March 2nd-15th, the chilliest day being -10.8°C. See: luise-berlin.de/bms/bmstxt00/0009gesd.htm

¹⁹ According to Prussian regulations which had entered into force on April 10th, 1933. A multiple exit visa was also available and valid for six months. Both were available free of charge. See: *Neuregelung des Ausreise-Sichtvermerks. Das Programm*. 9th April, 1933. #1618. Vol.32. Pg. 4

²⁰ Flights were available from *Berlin Tempelhof*, however, Tiny recalls her grandmother never flew.

²¹ Several new engines were introduced during the 1930s which, alongside improvements to existing lines meant higher speeds. That shortened the Berlin-Hamburg journey time after 1933 from 138 minutes to cca. 86 minutes. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streamliner and dbtrains.com/en/epochII. The route beyond Hamburg should have been Bremen - Oldenburg - Rheine - Hengelo - Utrecht and Amsterdam, according to:

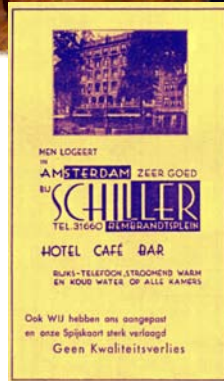
answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20091223144207AAYw8dy. NB: Further information on the route and journey was requested from: hbf@smb.spk-berlin.de on May 29, 2015 and info@sdtb.de but no reply was ever received.

²² *What Will Become of the Children? A Novel of a German Family* (1932). Claire Bergmann. Camden House, 2010. Pg.109



Above: The Schiller Hotel, Café & Bar, a combination of late Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Modernist elements. Even today the lamps retain their brass art deco fitting fixtures (the burgers are fabulous too).

Right: A Schiller Café ad placed in a 1935 *Carré* program for *Dat zou je wel willen*



Feeling older (but no less senior), *Mama* quickly asserted her superiority and instructed they head out for coffee and cake. One of her girls' favourite haunts was the *Schiller Café*, which lay up the street from Margot and Johnnie's flat on the *Rembrandtplein* (see '1' on pg. 473). There many artists and creatives, the '*beau monde*' or *glitterati* of those days, would gather, where they came to see and be seen. The owner, *Frits Schiller*, who was himself an artist, naturally drew a crowd which included painters such as *Jan Sluyters* and *George Hendrik Breitner*, the playwright *Herman Heijermans*, comedians such as *Fien de la Mar* and *Louis Davids*, alongside famous writers.²³ *Mama* took an immediately liking to *Schiller's* – there she could still vie for attention.

First up, *Mama* wanted to hear all about Johnnie. Just who was this new member of the family and what was her daughters' fascination with foreigners? Margot

updated her but said she'll have to wait to meet the comedian since he was very much in demand and between revues was also performing at the *Casino* theatre in *Hilversum*.²⁴ Otherwise she and Johnnie were relishing *Dat zou je wel willen*, which would ran until early May. Meanwhile he had been approached to do another film with the revue's leads, *Lou Bandy* and *Fien de la Mar* called *Het leven is niet zo kwaad*. She translated that for her mother as '*Life is not so bad*,' which she had to laugh, was really so.

But in case *Frau Tjyralla* suspected her daughters were settling into a routine, Margot pulled the next punch, announcing she was carrying a child and that come the autumn, *Mama* would be a grandmother again. She and Nannÿ teased her with '*Oma*,' after which she pronounced all her grandchildren from that point on would only refer to her as '*Mutti*,' especially in public. Her daughters were left feeling rather put out.

It took several moments, however, for *Frau Tjyralla* to absorb the fact that her next grandchild would be half-Jewish,²⁵ pondering "*What would the Nazis do to me if they found out?*" She enquired as to where Margot planned to raise the child, the answer to which of course was England, where in a short while she would travel, once her and Johnnie's commitments to the *Nationale Revue* were over. "*Well I can't very well visit you there!*" retorted *Mama*. A comment which deposited another heavy silence. "*We must be getting back to Kleine Tiny*," Nannÿ said softly. It had already been enough excitement for one day.

²³ See: nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schiller_Hotel

²⁴ *The Performer*. June 4th, 1935. Pg. 6

²⁵ Not many months later the Third Reich introduced the term "*Mischling*" to denote persons deemed to have both Aryan and Jewish ancestry. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mischling

The reunited family hopped the tram as far as *Singelgracht* and walked the last of the way to *Tweede (Ile) Jan Steen Straat* where *Tiny* was still napping while *Nannj's* husband, *Cor*, took a break from tending his pigeons to meet his mother-in-law. *Hilda* (pictured on the last but one page) was a Jewess who helped *Nannj* out with cooking, and in advance had prepared them a supper consisting of pepper soup and *Matzis*, namely tartar beefsteak with onion. Naturally Jewish culture pervaded the *Ridderhof's* home life, with the result being that on Saturdays, food was typically re-heated rather than cooked afresh.



*Kleine
Tiny at
three*

Mama came face to face with Jewish culture in the street too where, when she was not annoying '*Pa*,' she met *de Pijp* locals such as *Onkel Biet*, a Jewish chap who owned a plumber's shop nearby and who would drop in on his bike and flirt with *Mutti* during his lunch hours. Between meals, *Nannj*, *Mama* and *Kleine Tiny* took walks in the nearby *Sarphati Park*.

Meanwhile, *Margot* and *Johnnie* were preparing their return to the UK. Just before leaving, the pair had their portrait taken in Amsterdam's *Kalvestraat* (see it at the end of Chapter XIII), a parting Mother's Day gift to *Mama*.²⁶ Although the last of the fourth *Nationale Revue's* shows were completed in early May,²⁷ ads placed in *The Performer* reveal *Riscoe* had solo bookings lasting up to May 21st, at the *Harmonie Theatre* in *Groningen* for instance.²⁸ That meant *Margot* could see her mother off first.

Three days later,²⁹ however, the couple arrived in Leeds. *Margot's* new home was to be 69, *Sholebroke Avenue* in '*Leeds North*,'³⁰ where she would continue preparing for the birth of their child under the 'caring' eye of *Johnnie's* mother, *Theodora* and her husband. Her house lay within a wealthy suburb three kilometers north of Leeds city centre called *Chapeltown*. It doesn't stand today, many of the buildings in that area having fallen into disuse and been replaced by new flats, although some of the remaining 'villas' have been divided up into smaller, low-rent flats. One such building several doors down from the '*Riscoes*' is pictured right.



Home-from-home in *Sholebroke Avenue*.
Three doors down from *Johnnie* and *Margot's*
Leeds 7-based home

²⁶ The portrait was dated May 4th, 1935, while May 10th had been designated the Day of the German Mother. See: *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 159

²⁷ *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, May 10th, 1935

²⁸ *The Performer*. May 2nd and May 9th, 1935. Pg. 6

²⁹ On May 24th, 1935, according to Carl Berkson's *Gezinskaart*

³⁰ *Leeds North* was a borough constituency incorporating the wards of Brunswick, Headingley, North, and North West until 1950 (until 1955 it included the wards of North, Roundhay, and Woodhouse).

See: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leeds_North_\(UK_Parliament_constituency\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leeds_North_(UK_Parliament_constituency)).

Chapeltown itself was constructed in the nineteenth century and had many large terrace houses and villas built for Leeds' new middle class whose influx was brought on by the industrial revolution. It was a desirable area for those becoming more established, not least because of its leafy and architecturally notable appearance.³¹

Throughout its history it has also been home to successive emigre communities, each of which has added a new dimension to the culture, religious practices and heritage of the area. Among them for instance were the *Ashkenazi Jews*. In 1932, for instance, the *Chapeltown Road New Synagogue*, a large-domed, Byzantine style building opened.³²

It wasn't long, however, before Johnnie returned to Holland. He left around June 20th,³³ to begin rehearsing the next *nationale revue*; '*Dat doet je weer goed!*' (*It really does you good!*).³⁴ Margot, now five months pregnant remained behind alone, although it was hardly her first time in England. In fact, it should have been her fourth, counting also her 1928 tour of the UK.

Upon her return 'up north,' however, she could well be forgiven for having missed "*the home of twentieth century England*." That was a label more typically was attached to the south,³⁵ and it was this contrast between north and south which according to the late historian and journalist, David Thomson, became to a larger extent the contrast between depression and prosperity. *J.B. Priestley*, the English literary observer, even went as far as to describe Margot's new 'homeland' as two nations in 1934's *English Journey*.

Alas for Margot, the industrial towns of the north were typically characterized by "*slag-heaps and chimneys, scrap-iron and foul canals*," writes George Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, which he published in 1937. "*Towns like Leeds and Sheffield have scores of thousands of 'back to back' houses which are all of a condemned type*" set to "*remain standing for decades*" where in the bleak industrial heartlands of Yorkshire and Lancashire, he witnessed a depressed, working-class life...shires that he deemed part of a strange country whose industrial towns proffered "*labyrinths of little brick houses blackened by smoke...stinking dustbins and lines of grimy washing and half-ruinous WCs...[where] not a single one has hot water*"³⁶ and all along a housing shortage and overcrowding persists.

I suspect Margot kept her distance from Leeds back-streets and was probably grateful for the middle class roof over her head, even if it meant she was subsequently far from her real family. On the other hand, given the size of the villa and the money to be made from renting out rooms, I daresay she was neither the only 'tenant' and won't have been entirely short of company. Though whether that was good or bad, only its walls will know.

³¹ See: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapeltown, West Yorkshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapeltown,_West_Yorkshire)

³² That said, during the following decades the Jewish population in Chapeltown began to decline with many families moving further out of the city. See also: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapeltown, West Yorkshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapeltown,_West_Yorkshire)

³³ *The Performer*. June 20th, 1935. Pg. 6. NB: His subsequent home was indicated to have been Amstel 122.

³⁴ N.V. *Nationale Revue*. *Algemeen Handelsblad*. June 5th, 1935. Issue: 35319. Vol. 108

³⁵ *England in the Twentieth Century*. David Thomson. Second Ed. By Geoffrey Warner. 1981. Pg. 183

³⁶ *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Modern Classics. George Orwell. Penguin Books. 1989. Pg. 15, 48, 46

I imagine Margot bided her time watching more than a few 'talkies,' since about a kilometer up the road, in Chapel Allerton, lay the *Dominion*, an art deco cinema that had recently opened in January 1934.³⁷ Even literary figurehead George Orwell remarked in 1936 how; "*The movies made a great difference to living standards...helping to avert revolution.*"³⁸ (Did he know something about Margot we didn't?!) That summer Dietrich's new movie; '*The Devil is a Woman*' was released, which she may well have enjoyed from the comforts of the theatre's stalls.³⁹

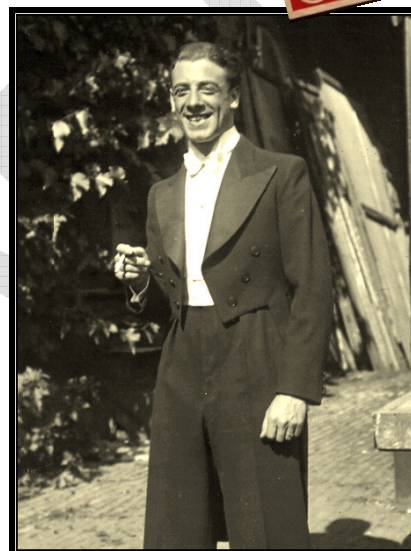


Margot's
'Local.'
The Dominion
cinema,
August 1937
Source: ...wiki/
Chapel_
Allerton

It wasn't long, however, before Margot was reunited with her family and former colleagues, when she returned to Holland in mid-July (accompanied by her in-laws) to see the premiere showing of '*Dat doet je weer goed!*' Within the fifth *Nationale Revue*, husband Johnnie performed as Lou Bandy's opposite alongside the likes of Claire Hammé, Wiesje Bouwmeester and 16 Muriloff Girls. The first engagement was on July 24th, 1935 at the K&W Theatre in den Haag according to the August 1st issue of the UK's variety trade paper, *The Performer*, where; "*In addition to his comedy sketches, Johnnie also launched his new variety act in the show, this being a burlesque in pantomime entitled, 'The Storm.'*"⁴⁰ It added; "*He is also doing a Stan Laurel impression about which the local papers wax enthusiastic.*" The *Algemeen Handelsblad*, for example, deemed Riscoe an 'oldhand' on the show circuit calling him an "*anatomical wonder,*" perhaps owing to his imitation of Stan Laurel.⁴¹



Above:
Show poster
for *Dat doet je
weer goed.*



Left;
Johnnie
shoots a grin
at family
before going
on stage,
1935.

According to the new immigration rules, fresh arrivals to Holland were supposed to be given a visa and their passports stamped 'visit for two weeks,'⁴² and that probably will have meant Johnnie's family returned to West Yorkshire in early August. "*In between appearances with the National Revue,*" writes *The Performer*, Johnnie was to be found filming '*Life is Not So Bad.*'"⁴³

³⁷ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapel_Allerton and cinematreaasures.org/theaters/33604. NB: Less than 3km down the road to the east of Chapeltown and in Headingley there was also the Hyde Park Picture House. See: hydeparkpicturehouse.co.uk. Another cinema was the Kingsway Cinema in Harrogate Road, Moortown, north of Chapel Allerton that opened in June 1937. See: cinematreaasures.org/theaters/48054

³⁸ *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Modern Classics. George Orwell. Penguin Books. 1989. Pg. 81-83

³⁹ See: [imdb.com/title/tt0026276/releaseinfo?ref=tt_dt_dt](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0026276/releaseinfo?ref=tt_dt_dt)

⁴⁰ Johnnie Riscoe. *The Performer*. August 1st, 1935. Pg. 13

⁴¹ *Algemeen Handelsblad*. Specific reference missing.

⁴² *Refugees from Nazi Germany in the Netherlands 1933-1940*. Bob Moore. International Institute of Social History of Amsterdam. Dordrecht, 1986. Pg. 71, 75. Previewed [here](https://www.refugees.nl)

⁴³ *He Wasn't Shot! The Performer*. October 3rd, 1935. Pg. 14

Family members will have no doubt been bemused to learn of an offer Riscoe received in late September to go to Germany to act in a film being produced by UFA, the principal German film studio. According to *The Performer's* October 3rd issue; "Reporters were at the studio when the offer arrived, with the result that some big splash stories found their way into the next morning's dailies." Quips *The Performer*; "You see, when Johnnie got the offer from Berlin he was playing the part of a Jewish fruiterer!" Clearly the paper knew of Johnnie's own Jewish origins, but did UFA? Under a 'PS,' however, it added: "Johnnie is not going to Germany but intends to keep close to Amsterdam, for the Riscoes anticipate a happy event within the next week."

Johnny Riscoe – Proud Papa.
 Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Riscoe, who became the proud parents of a baby boy last Wednesday morning. The new arrival was born in the Leeds Maternity Hospital, and both mother and child are doing nicely, thank you! Johnnie is, we believe, already preparing a new dancing mat for Junior and buying a Dutch grammar book.

Above:

Harvey Riscoe's birth as announced by
The Performer. October 10th, 1935

Below:

Johnnie Riscoe (centre) in *Dat doet je weer goed!*
 Source: Netherlands Theatre Institute (TIN)

Riscoe junior had already been born by the time that article was published, although it was several months before Johnnie eventually got home to see his son, *Harvey Theodor (Teddy)*, who arrived on October, 2nd, 1935 at Leeds West's Maternity Hospital. Naturally news of his birth was carried by *The Performer* for all in the UK entertainment industry to read and in an article entitled: *Johnnie Riscoe – Proud Papa*, joked that his father was "preparing a new dancing mat for Junior and buying a Dutch grammar book."⁴⁴ I wonder how Margot felt, not only since she was *Deutsch* and not *Dutch*, but awaiting her husband's arrival so they could properly welcome the son he so very much wanted.

Dat doet je weer goed! ran in Carré for a month and until October 15th, an article in *De Kunst* illustrating its success by stating; "If ever the show's title [It really does you good!] needed affirming...this week's performance in Carré was virtually sold out...If amidst the crisis all ranks can be as crowded as they were in Carré, this can only be the result of sincere approval from the stands."⁴⁵

Johnnie's revue engagements went on until December 5th, 1935,⁴⁶ and a day later, he was at the Leeds birthing registrar to record Harvey's arrival.⁴⁷

Perhaps he was not sorry that he missed the premiere and reception for what eventually was a 90 minute feature film, *Het leven is niet zo kwaad*, when it was released on December 20th, 1935.⁴⁸ Although his had been little more than a cameo role, the movie 'fopped' according to *Dries Krijn* in his 1980 *History of the Revue*.⁴⁹



Above: Riscoe
 (centre) keeps a low profile
 in film flop; *Het leven is niet zo kwaad*

⁴⁴ *Johnnie Riscoe – Proud Papa. The Performer*. October 10th, 1935. Pg. 15

⁴⁵ *100 jaar Carré*. Han Peekel, Fridtjof Meerlo en Han Santing. Loeb Uitgevers B.V., Amsterdam. 1987. Pg. 97

⁴⁶ The text "ingagement 5.12.1935" appears on Johnnie Riscoe's *Gezinskaart*.

⁴⁷ *Harvey Teddy Riscoe's birth certificate*, No. 280/1935, dated December 6th, 1935.

⁴⁸ See: [imdb.com/title/tt0219873](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0219873)

⁴⁹ "Werd echter weer een mislukking." *Geschiedenis van de Revue in Nederland*. Dries Krijn. De Walburg Pers, 1980. Pg 123

By the end of his Dutch engagement, Riscoe had become the principal comedian of the Dutch *Nationale Revue* in the words of biographer and writer, Dennis Gifford, in no small part thanks to the fact he grew well-versed in the language.⁵⁰ But with Margot's move and Harvey's arrival, he turned his attention to the UK, *The Performer* reporting on November 21st that; "after three years successful work on the Continent as principal comic in a number of revues and films, Johnnie Riscoe is returning to England."⁵¹

He was accompanied by the director of the Dutch *Nationale Revue*, Bob Peters, who came along to book attractions.⁵² Although Margot might have expected otherwise, Johnnie was not returning home just yet – he had been booked to play 'Idle Jack' in the 'Dick Whittington' pantomime at North London's *Alexandra Theatre* in Stoke Newington alongside his new comedy act.⁵³ He performed in the panto until mid-January and continued thereafter as a standalone comedian, his holding address becoming 62a Castletown Road, London W14.⁵⁴

"Merry Christmas and Happy New Year," Margot whispered to Harvey when she saw her husband's schedule. Not the ideal start to her England residency she'd have wished for and I daresay again her mind drifted back to Amsterdam and Berlin, and to the days when she'd been her own star. "Transition will be a challenge," she mused.

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Over in Germany's capital, where Margot had spent the bulk of her teens, that January of 1936, its *Scala* theatre put on a 'crazy show' that proved to be a big hit. It featured dancing ensembles made up of local talent including the 24 *Scala Girls* interspersed between revue acts that included trampolinists, a ballerina, tango dancers, impersonators and a seal named 'Charlie.'⁵⁵ Berlin was certainly beginning to regain some of its former character, it was even growing decidedly sophisticated and modern, a side-effect of the Nazis' removal of the traditional divisions in German society.⁵⁶

Mama had returned there from Amsterdam in the early summer of 1935.⁵⁷ Another who ventured 'home' that same year was *Pola Negri*, the famous Polish-American actress who had hit the big time in Berlin when she lived there during the 1920s. The realities of mid-1930s Germany, however, were all too apparent to her:

*"Despite the overt optimism of the Germans, there was an undercurrent of unrest in the air, and a rigid display of militarism everywhere one looked. Banners and flags streamed from buildings, and at the slightest provocation, military marches were loudly played by bands in the larger public squares. The sharp heel clicks and whiplash snapping of "Heil, Hitler!"*⁵⁸

⁵⁰ Obituary: Johnnie Riscoe. Denis Gifford. *The Independent*. April 20th, 2000

⁵¹ Johnnie Riscoe. *The Performer*. November 21st, 1935. Pg. 15

⁵² Johnnie Riscoe. *The Performer*. December 5th, 1935. Pg. 9

⁵³ *The Performer*. January 2nd, 1936. Pg. 9

⁵⁴ Riscoe was booked until early April when he played the *Queen's Park Hippodrome* in Manchester before heading over to Birkenhead near Liverpool for the week of April 16th, 1936, according to *The Performer*. April 9th, 1936. Pg. 6

⁵⁵ *Scala, Berlin, Again Goes "Crazy."* *The Performer*. January, 23rd, 1936. Pg. 3

⁵⁶ *Questions on German History. Paths to Parliamentary Democracy*. German Bundestag. 1998. Pg. 281

⁵⁷ One in which as many as 36 days were above 25° Celsius whilst another nine were over 30°C.

See: luise-berlin.de/bms/bmstxt00/0009gesd.htm

⁵⁸ The Nazi 'Hitler' (Roman) salute had been deemed a compulsory greeting among all public employees since July 13th, 1933. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_salute

sounded incessantly on all sides. It was the new religion and almost everybody paid obeisance to it. They showed hostility both to the few who courageously denied its doctrines and to the many deemed so inferior that they were not permitted to be part of it.”⁵⁹



Tinker, Tailor, Soldier,
Spy? Fritz Hinsch with his
honour cross, cca. 1935

An example of this very hostility may well have even manifested itself among the members of Frau Tjyralla's elder brother's family. Around the time she visited Holland, Fritz Hinsch was decorated with 'The Honour Cross of the World War 1914/1918'.⁶⁰ Established by President Hindenburg, it was the country's first official service medal for soldiers of Imperial Germany who had taken part in the war.⁶¹

Another who collected the same award that spring was that soldier whom Fritz's former wife had subsequently married after divorcing him; Walther Martin.⁶² By mid-July 1935, however, the Kaufmann found himself celebrating inside a labour camp. Exiled 50km east of Dresden to Bautzen,⁶³ he was detained in a subcamp of the Groß-Rosen concentration camp, where he would spend the next 15 months.⁶⁴ What brought about this back-to-back reward and punishment?

There are two possible explanations. First, although the Nazis had been rounding on and locking up opponents well before Hitler seized power, the practice continued well into the mid-thirties. Between September 1934 and April 1935, for instance, two thousand of Leipzig's KPD or *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* members were arrested, whilst an estimated 900 were still thought to be active.⁶⁵ On into the autumn and the early summer of the following year, the secret state police, the Gestapo⁶⁶ (short for *Geheime Staatspolizei*) arrested a further 7,266 people nationwide in connection with the banned communist and social democratic parties (SPD).⁶⁷ Had Walther Martin left-wing sympathies?

⁵⁹ Pola Negri, *Memoirs of a Star*, Doubleday and Company, 1970. Pg. 369. NB: It was actually January 1935 when she returned, so several months before Frau Tjyralla left and returned from Holland, Negri travelling via Bremerhaven to Berlin.

⁶⁰ Also known as the Iron Cross or *Ehren Kreuz des Weltkriegs 1914/1918*. NB: The small pin worn above Fritz's medals is that of the nationalist veterans' organization, the National Socialist German Front-kämpferbund/Stahlhelm. To an extent this can be used to date his photograph. Although Hitler had banned the Stahlhelm in July 1933 (see Chapter XIII, pg. 491), according to de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stahlhelm,_Bund_der_Frontsoldaten it was not until November 7th, 1935 that he formally declared its mission fulfilled and disbanded it, following a reorganization which took place on March 28th, 1934. That broadly corresponds with the observations of Dresden-based diarist, Walter Klemperer, who on January 27th, 1934, declared "the Stahlhelm has been finally eliminated today," while 18 months later, on August 11th, 1935, he writes "Everywhere the dissolution of the Stahlhelm." *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. Victor Klemperer. Modern Library Inc. 1999. Pgs. 52 and 130.

⁶¹ The Honour Cross, introduced in July 1934 was also awarded to the surviving next-of-kin of those who died or were missing in action, which meant Frau Tjyralla could have applied for it on behalf of her late husband. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Honour_Cross_of_the_World_War_1914/1918

⁶² Walther Martin was awarded the Honour Cross on April 10th, 1935 according to his residential record.

⁶³ Where as it happened, Ernst Thälmann, the communist leader who ran against Hitler in the 1932 election was also kept in solitary confinement between March 1933 and August 1944, after which he was deported to Buchenwald and subsequently shot. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Thälmann

⁶⁴ From 15th July, 1935 until November 1st 1936 according to his residential record where it indicates: *Entlassungs Schein Gefangenen Anstalt v. Bautzen*

⁶⁵ *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 41

⁶⁶ The 'Secret State Police' was the official secret police of Nazi Germany at the time, which Hermann Göring formed on April 26th, 1933. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gestapo

⁶⁷ That is, between October 1935 and May 1936. *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittcock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 212

On the other hand, arrests of subversives were often 'legitimised' by informers, who cooperated with the Nazis on various levels. This ranged from established non-Nazi policeman who adapted the New Order to neighbours, friends and fellow customers in shops and pubs. Alarming, *"many of those who were denounced were victims of previous disputes with family members, neighbours or work colleagues"* who *"could feel morally justified in upholding the Nazi social order without the embarrassment or guilt that might attend denouncing someone they actually knew."*⁶⁸

In the photograph on the previous page, Fritz Hinsch wears a uniform that suggests civil authority. Was Walther Martin's internment therefore payback for the wife Fritz 'lost' perhaps even before the First World War got underway?

The atmosphere in Berlin certainly left Frau Tȳralla apprehensive and she disclosed little regarding her daughters and her Jewish son-in-law to anyone. In the words of Berlin-historian, Alexandra Richie, the capital's *"cafes and Hinterhöfe and offices were filled with people willing to betray others...at every level of Berlin society."* Unwanted husbands' treasonous talk was overheard, children denounced their parents for telling jokes about the *Führer*, spies' reported everything from prostitution to listening to foreign radio. The *ante* was most certainly upped after the city's police chief ordered Jewish businesses to close along the *Kurfürstendamm* on July 20th, 1935, a move which was followed by vehement attacks against Jews in the press.⁶⁹

Every staircase in a block of flats and every street had its Nazi-appointed 'Block Warden' whose job was to keep a close eye on the neighbours and report any dangerous behavior. According to a *Sopade*⁷⁰ report on Berlin from 1937, however, while *"the Block Warden...is supposed to talk to the housewives about prices and food shortages, he pushes into people's homes to find out what newspapers people read, what their lifestyle is like..."*⁷¹

Conditioning German society into adopting this rank and file attitude was a key element in Hitler's vision for total allegiance. But if Nannȳ and Margot had put themselves at a safe distance from their *Heimat*, it was Frau Tȳralla who next moved on, departing *Friedrich-Wilhelm Stadt* and *Albrechtstrasse*,⁷² albeit no farther than a few streets northwest and about ten minutes on foot to a tenement building at *Tieckstrasse*, 35 (see '2' on the map within Chapter XIII Pt. 2 on pg. 498).



Pretty in Pink but under Block Warden Scrutiny:
*Frau Tȳralla's new home at
Tieckstrasse 35, as it appears today.*
Source: Google Streetview

⁶⁸ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 214

⁶⁹ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 422, 423, 427

⁷⁰ The Social Democratic Party's organization in exile which operated in Prague from 1933 to 1938.

See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sopade

⁷¹ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 213

⁷² The date she moved into *Tieckstrasse* is not known formally. Only that she was there from at least 1937.

I guess ultimately it was the rent more than the 'terror' that prompted her to relocate, given that she no longer had Margot's income to depend on. Practically speaking, she remained within *Mitte* and a district historically known as the *Oranienburger Vorstadt*.⁷³ Now just a couple of blocks from the *Stettiner Bahnhof* (there trains ran to the Baltic *Ostsee*), it was still the 15 minutes far *Lehrter Bahnhof* that was of greater importance when Amsterdam was on her agenda.⁷⁴

Tension continued to mount in the capital and beyond following the September, 1935 introduction of the *Nuremberg Laws* "for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour." Effectively legalising racial discrimination, under the new *Reich Citizenship Law*, only nationals of 'German or kindred blood' received citizenship.⁷⁵ Little wonder Frau Tjyralla always made clear she was '*Reichs Deutsch*.' Little wonder Europe was beginning to feel 'uneasy,' recalled Pola Negri.⁷⁶

"It did not take very long for signs to be posted in all non-Jewish stores" noted Leipzig-based Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman "...declaring that Jews were not welcome in their establishments...Over the doors of grocery stores, bakeries, and dairies the signs proclaimed clearly for all to see that Jews were not admitted. Pharmacies would not sell them medicines. Hotels would not give them a night's lodging."⁷⁷

Strict adherence by merchants and businessmen had the potential to make the Jews' predicament critical, as is described in the textbox below.

14.1: Leipzig Streetview: *Juden sind hier nicht erwünscht*

"There was no Jewish pharmacy in our section of town (immediately west of the *Hauptbahnhof*). The closest pharmacy was on *Gerberstrasse*, and its proprietor had in the past been an outspoken critic of anything vaguely connected to Judaism."

"My parents sent me to the pharmacy to fill a doctor's prescription...Since I was well aware of the pharmacist's negative opinion of Jews I was not expecting a picnic, and in this feeling the owner did not disappoint me. As I entered the store, my greeting of "*guten Tag*" was answered with a resounding "*Heil Hitler!*" I suddenly found myself in a most degrading and humiliating situation. My sense of pride and self-respect had disintegrated. The man had explicitly stated that I was not welcome there, and here I was forcing myself upon him."

"I decided to wait my turn, but it did not come quickly. The pharmacist ignored my presence completely. Customers who entered the store much later than I did, even other boys my age, were served before me. I simply kept waiting. I did not protest my mistreatment for fear of creating an incident. Finally, when no other customers remained in the store, the pharmacist turned to me with a harsh: "*What do you want?*" I gave him the prescription and he filled it, but when he handed me the medicine he suggested that perhaps in the future, I take my business to another pharmacy. I did not reply. My "*auf Wiedersehen*" upon my departure was again answered with a rousing "*Heil Hitler!*"

"When I left the store I was depressed and dejected, greatly concerned about the fate of my fellow Jews... Leipzig's Jews, even in the early years of the Hitler regime, lived in a state of fear and apprehension, often bordering on hysteria."



Source: *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*.

Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman. Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1991. Pg. 61-63, 67. Photograph: catholica.com.au

⁷³ See: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oranienburger_Vorstadt

⁷⁴ *Tieckstrasse* on the other hand certainly did not put her within easy reach of Leipzig, although Frau Tjyralla remained connected to multiple *S-Bahn* routes.

⁷⁵ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 429

⁷⁶ Pola Negri. *Memoirs of a Star*. Doubleday and Company, 1970. Pg. 376

⁷⁷ *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman. Mesorah Pubs Ltd. 1991. Pg. 60-61

Up to this point, many Jews had stayed put, adopting a 'wait and see' attitude, but in Wahrman's eyes, by now, "*emigration was the only solution left.*"⁷⁸ Yet even the lands beyond Germany would not remain safe for long. On March 7th, 1936, the rest of the European continent got a foretaste of what was to come when Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland, that zone west of the river Rhine that had been demilitarised under the Versailles treaty. Following the move, which saw him turn his attention beyond simply domestic affairs, he established a series of military bases.

For many Germans, however, it was an act that "*broke the chains of Versailles*" and one which naturally boosted national pride. Recalled an interviewee of social historian, Tom Kohut, "*That was a real historical event, and we really celebrated,*"⁷⁹ while an acquaintance of Dresden-based diarist, Victor Klemperer, proudly proclaimed: "*Nothing has impressed me so much as rearmament and marching into the Rhineland.*"⁸⁰

There was no question that most of the country embraced the beginning of Germany's return to great-power status,⁸¹ although I wonder how Germans abroad must have felt? In 1936 Yorkshire, for instance, was Margot one of those for whom "*Hitler, Locarno, Fascism and the threat of war aroused hardly a flicker of interest*"? Certainly "*the decision of the Football Association to stop publishing their fixtures in advance*"⁸² flung all Yorkshire into a storm of fury.⁸³ UK-based Germans must nevertheless have borne the brunt of their fair share of jokes, *The Performer* for instance reflecting in May 1935: "*Why is Hitler like a mad bull?*" "*Because he's fond of Göring.*"⁸⁴

Perhaps Margot took refuge in her local picture house, catching Marlene Dietrich and Gary Cooper's new movie, *Desire*, which went on to be a box-office success.⁸⁵ Klemperer though laments the fact that "*the whole world inside and outside*" Germany kept "*its head down,*" even going as far as to speculate that the Reich would do a deal with England or Italy,⁸⁶ especially after no form of retribution followed. Many historians argue that in retrospect, this had been the last opportunity for the Allies to prevent the Second World War.⁸⁷

⁷⁸ *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939.* Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman. Mesorah Pubs Ltd. 1991. Pg. 72

⁷⁹ *A German Generation*, Yale University Press. 2012. Tomas A. Kohut. Pg. 107

⁸⁰ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years.* V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. March 23rd. Pg. 156

⁸¹ *Lenin, Stalin and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe.* Robert Gellately. Jonathan Cape, 2007. Pg. 312 (referenced in *A Brief History of The Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis.* Martyn Whittock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 218)

⁸² An attempt to quell the 'football pools,' a scheme for betting on scorelines. See also *The Spectator*, February 14th, 1936, Pg. 9 archives at: archive.spectator.co.uk/article/14th-february-1936/9/the-football-pool-scandal-by-e-benson-perkins-at-t

⁸³ *The Road to Wigan Pier.* Modern Classics. George Orwell. Penguin Books. 1989. Pg. 82

⁸⁴ *Eddie Bayes on Hitler.* *The Performer.* January May 9th, 1935. Pg. 6

⁸⁵ See: imdb.com/title/tt0027515/releaseinfo?ref=tt_dt_dt

⁸⁶ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years.* V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. Sept. 9th, 1936. Pg. 189 and May 16th, 1936. Pg.165

⁸⁷ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis.* Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg197

Nannj did grow alarmed, however. Geographically she was much closer to their *Heimat* and began to fear she would soon face another war. Her homeland's regimented preparations for conflict picked up pace and one by one it was her cousins' turns to play their part too, beginning with the recently turned 21 years old, Hans. The *Luftwaffe* had already been revived in March 1935,⁸⁸ whilst military service had been introduced for 'young men' a fortnight later on March 16th.⁸⁹ From April 1st, 1936, it was time then for the prospering textile merchant to undertake his so-called *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (RAD).

The Reich Work Service stood for six months of work service in labour 'camps' that was compulsory for all males aged 18-21 and which was intended to "*educate German Youth, in the spirit of National Socialism, to be members of the Volksgemeinschaft and to develop a true conception of work, especially an appropriate respect for manual labour.*"⁹⁰ In reality it was of course decidedly militaristic, albeit more subtle, as rows of teenagers armed only with shovels and pickaxes marched off to dig ditches and gardens throughout the city.⁹¹



Heinz Hinsch: Lover of landscapes but with an eye for opportunity

Curiously, Hans was exempted from completing full service and for reasons not entirely clear, released after only two months.⁹² He turned up at brother, Heinz, and his wife Ingeborg's flat in Dresden whereupon he modestly helped to establish their book business. Heinz had spied an empty shop in *Loschwitz* (where the couple lived) and proposed using his wife's windfall inheritance to purchase the property and fill it with books for lending.⁹³ With the *RingKaufhaus* having just been Aryanised,⁹⁴ Ingeborg quit her job there and turned her attention to managing the family enterprise (while Heinz concentrated on his art). Hans donated a series of 'worldly' novels by an author called *Karl May*, and thereafter they sounded out potential suppliers, including a *Mannheim*-based trader named 'Kober' who was a distant relative of the Hinsch cousins' late grandmother, *Marie Lieberoth*.

Margot and Nannj had less and less opportunity to keep abreast of family developments – although they did learn of the arrival of cousin Martin Hinsch's second child, when *Beatrice Maria Christa* was born the day after Harvey on October 3rd, 1935. Martin was the second eldest Hinsch son and a *Kaufmann* who still lived in Leipzig, in *Querstrasse*, with his wife *Anna-Marie* along with their firstborn, 18 month old, *Wolfgang*.

⁸⁸ *The Anglo-American Press and the 'Secret' Rearmament of Hitler's Germany, 1933 to 1935*. Jason Ranke, *Clemson University*. 2009. All Theses. Paper 1259. Pg. 127. Online [here](#).

⁸⁹ Originally intended to last a single year, on August 26th, 1936 it was increased to two. *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. Victor Klemperer. Modern Library Inc. 1999. August 29th. Pg. 186

⁹⁰ Established June 25th, 1935. *A German Generation*, Yale University Press. 2012. Tomas A. Kohut. Pg. 87, 128-9. NB: With the outbreak of the war in Sept. 1939, it became obligatory for young women as well.

⁹¹ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 433

⁹² Hans Hinsch's *Einwohnermeldekarte* states "*Wegen L75. L73. zum Arbeitsdienst befreit*" and that he returned to his mother and step-father's flat in Leipzig's *Markgrafenstrasse* on May 30th, 1936. Recalled niece, Irene in Sept. 2012 "*Heinz always suspected not all was 'above-board' with young Hans.*"

⁹³ Dresden-local, Klemperer, noted in early 1934 how deposit-free lending libraries had "*shot up like mushrooms in the last one to two years. Now they are everywhere, even in the poorest districts of the city, as abundant as chocolate shops.*" *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. Feb. 16th, 1934. Pg. 55

⁹⁴ Klemperer writes that it "*was Aryanised last year or the year before.*" *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. Oct. 9th, 1937. Pg. 239

While I suspect Martin and his family will have appreciated the National Socialists' 'marriage' loan, they disliked the atmosphere which they fostered across Saxony and which worsened day-by-day. Alongside the frequent Jew-baiting in Leipzig, trams in Dresden carried notices such as; "*Who buys from the Jew is a traitor to the nation.*" It was a message that was inevitably accompanied by sporadic acts of violence.

Further alarming to both *Martin* and the eldest of the four brothers, *Frits*, was the Third Reich's 'Church Struggle' against Catholicism, for allegedly allying itself to Communism.⁹⁵ A gardener by trade, like Martin, Frits too was married to a Catholic, which perhaps explains why he and his wife, *Veronika*, began making plans to move their family outside and away from Leipzig north, where they lived at the time.

Snippets of Margot and Nanny's news reached their cousins via their mother and her brother, but all round, communication grew increasingly challenged. Conscious that before long it may not be possible to reach the continent, Margot insisted that she and Johnnie return to Holland to show off Harvey, before it's too late.

That visit happened following the last of Johnnie's engagements in the spring of 1936, although *The Performer* was quick to point out in mid-May that;

*"He does not intend staying in Holland for very long this trip as he has quite a number of dates pending in this country."*⁹⁶

But thanks to the fact that both he and Margot could 'prove sufficient means for a longer stay'⁹⁷ (based on Johnnie's contracts and Margot's residing with her sister), the Riscoe party arrived in Holland on Monday, May 4th, 1936.⁹⁸ They eventually spent over six months there, which inevitably saw Nanny and Cor's tiny apartment become a *Babel* of tongues. Tiny, now three and a half, positively mollycoddled her baby cousin! Sadly though, there's not a single photo available of the family from this period.



Ready! Steady! Go! Margot, Johnnie and Harvey, prior to leaving Leeds for Holland. Late April 1936



⁹⁵ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. July 21st, 1936. Pg 130. NB: As early as summer 1933, Catholic newspapers were being shut down and the activities of Catholic organisations were being restricted while from 1934, radical Nazis had begun to enact a 'Church Struggle,' resembling the Kulturkampf of the 1870s which occurred under Bismarck. *A Brief History of The Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 175, 176

⁹⁶ *Johnnie Riscoe Again Storms Holland. The Performer*. May 14th, 1936. Pg. n/a

⁹⁷ *Refugees from Nazi Germany in the Netherlands 1933-1940*. Bob Moore. International Institute of Social History of Amsterdam. Dordrecht, 1986. Pg. 71, 75. Previewed [here](#). NB: According to van Weringh, research has shown that this ruling (and the two-week visa stamp requirement), could not fully stem the flow of refugees, however, which meant the border was often crossed illegally. Furthermore, if those involved in film entertainment had money and relationships, they crossed illegally too. Even in later years, the border was continuously found to be far from 'closed,' according to a damning November 1938 report of a special Committee of Vigilance "one of antifascist intellectuals." See: *Achter het doek: Duitse immigranten in de Nederlandse speelfilm in de jaren dertig* (Behind the Curtain: German Immigrants in the Dutch Movies in the Thirties). *Nederland en de emigranten* (Holland and the emigrants). K. Dittich van Weringh, K. van Weringh. 1987. Pg. 21-22

⁹⁸ Johnnie Riscoe's *Gezinskaart* includes April 22nd, 1936 in close proximity to the words 'Foreign Office,' which would appear to be connected with the approval of a visa.

Johnnie's bookings would not see him return to the *Nationale Revue*,⁹⁹ but instead contribute to a long-running¹⁰⁰ variety show called *Faveur*, where he performed in a bill that included the *Ludowsky Ballet* (known for its earlier engagement in *Lachpillen* and *Een Geel Bandje, Meneer*).¹⁰¹ As early as Friday, May, 8th, and on until the 20th, Margot's husband lodged in *Groningen* in the north of the Netherlands, where he performed at its *Harmonie* theatre.¹⁰² "At least I am no longer alone," she thought.

Riscoe "opened strongly" according to a *Performer* article entitled 'Johnnie Riscoe Again Storms Holland',¹⁰³ and not long afterwards it reported he "was the outstanding comedy hit of the show."¹⁰⁴ "Apart from playing his own act, Johnnie is compering the show and playing in a sketch in which he is the comedian – doing all his work in Dutch."¹⁰⁵ A writer at the *Leeuwarder Nieuwsblad* said his "Charlie Chaplin routine was priceless."¹⁰⁶

Although Riscoe was full with work, *The Performer* was downbeat regarding the working climate for entertainers in the country, reporting; "there is not a great deal of work for Variety artistes in Holland at the moment, the *Faveur Road Show* being about the only Variety programme in the country... Not only have the cinemas ceased to play acts, but even the cabarets in the larger centres, in which not a few artistes from this country found engagements, have terminated or reduced in no uncertain manner their entertainment commitments."¹⁰⁷ Amsterdam was obviously proving to be the exception.

Johnnie moved on to *Den Helder's Casino* theatre in *North Holland*, where he performed until July 12th,¹⁰⁸ allowing the sisters' plenty of time to relish one another's company. Of course the pair took to the shops, having twisted Cor's arm to mind the kids since *Carré* had just one show scheduled that July, before a busy August kicked-in.¹⁰⁹

Mind you, they had to spend much of their time dodging showers, the weather being particularly inclement that summer. Nine centimetres of rain fell, for instance, on July 7th in *Dokkum* (*Friesland*, near to *Groningen*) while the following day in *Veldhoven* (*Brabant*, a suburb of *Eindhoven*) over ten centimetres fell. A week later, on July 15th, 34 mm fell in *De Bilt* (near *Utrecht*).¹¹⁰ Not the weather Margot had hoped for on her break from the UK, and perhaps she'd have been better off visiting her cousins and their families in *Saxony*, where it was reportedly far better.¹¹¹ She'd not been back for three years now, and it was even four since she'd made the rounds.

⁹⁹ The *Nationale Revue* which his family had travelled over to enjoy his premiere in the previous summer, *Dat doet je weer goed!*, curiously, still ran and precisely then was being performed at the *Grand Theatre* in *Groningen* with *Frans Bogaert* now in the supporting lead role according to the *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, May 8th, 1936. Pg. 14

¹⁰⁰ In *Das Programm* on June 26th, 1932, Pg. 10 *Faveur* was reported to have entered its thirtieth year. In *The Performer*, on May 28th, 1936, Pg. 8, the road show was credited to 'Mr. Faveur' in an article entitled "The Holland Field."

¹⁰¹ *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*. 8th May, 1936. Pg. 14

¹⁰² *The Performer*. May 7th, 1936. Pg. 6

¹⁰³ Johnnie Riscoe Again Storms Holland. *The Performer*. May 14th, 1936. Pg. n/a

¹⁰⁴ The Holland Field. *The Performer*. May 28th, 1936. Pg. 8

¹⁰⁵ Johnnie Riscoe Again Storms Holland. *The Performer*. May 14th, 1936. Pg. n/a

¹⁰⁶ *Leeuwarder Nieuwsblad*. July 15th, 1936

¹⁰⁷ The Holland Field. *The Performer*. May 28th, 1936. Pg. 8. NB: The article adds: "So far as cinemas are concerned, no fewer than seven houses in one of the larger cities cut out Variety within the period of one week."

¹⁰⁸ *The Performer*. July 9th, 1936. Pg. 6

¹⁰⁹ 100 jaar *Carré*. Han Peekel, Fridtjof Meerlo en Han Santing. Loeb Uitgevers B.V., Amsterdam. 1987. Pg. 99

¹¹⁰ See: meteolink.nl/weerhistorie-2/weerextremen-per-maand/juli-historie

¹¹¹ Saxony experienced a heatwave, Klemperer reporting on July 8th, 1936 that "for days now" they'd been experiencing "very great sultry heat" while on July 18th it was "extraordinary, 89° in the shade." See: *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. July 21st, 1936. Pg. 174, 178

Bargains in hand, the sisters dived into the *Schiller Café* (pictured right). Over coffee, Nannÿ reflected;

*"Living conditions in Holland are not especially dear," to which Margot responded; "That's true, although things are generally more expensive than in England."*¹¹²

"Na Ja," said Nannÿ. "It's all down to the government's policy of sticking to the gold standard, or something like that," she mused, recalling something she'd just read in the paper. "You're more fortunate over there."

*"Well" inclined Margot; "West Yorkshire is not without its faults, but a girl can look like a fashion plate at an even lower price thanks to the mass-production of cheap luxuries such as art-silk stockings. Even on the street corner one can indulge in a private daydream of yourself as Clark Gable or Greta Garbo."*¹¹³

"Now you're being nostalgic!" grinned Nannÿ. "Filmstars and Broadway, that all becomes history when you are a mum and a housewife."

But Margot was nostalgic about her time in Holland and she also missed Berlin, not to mention *The Six Rockets*, their acrobat troupe which had toured the US. She wished she saw her mother more often too, and although according to Tiny, *Mama* would visit the *Ridderhofs* almost every year in Amsterdam, there's no evidence she joined her daughters that summer. I suppose Nannÿ and Cor's flat would have burst at the seams anyway. Either that or Johnnie and Cor dismissed the idea before it even got onto the table!

I wondered though whether my grandmother too missed performing, or North America?

"Hardly" Tiny recalls. "She seldom talked about her career as an acrobat with remorse or a longing to return. Occasionally her map would come out with the basket of photos from her US years. Mum would occasionally mention visiting real Indians too. But that was about it."

The following day, just before the families headed to *Zandvoort's* beach on one of July's finer days, the postman delivered a letter, from Leipzig north of all places and *Gohlis*, where both Nannÿ and Margot had been born. Nannÿ opened it, thinking it must have been from *Anna Büttner*, the wife of their late manager, or perhaps *Annedore Frenkel*, one of their former fellow acrobats with whom she alone had travelled to the US.¹¹⁴

¹¹² *The Holland Field. The Performer.* May 28th, 1936. Pg. 8

¹¹³ *The Road to Wigan Pier.* Modern Classics. George Orwell. Penguin Books. 1989. Pg. 81-83

¹¹⁴ *Frenkel* had not been part of the rockets' 'return tour' of 1928 (which included Margot) having remained behind in Leipzig after marrying the troupe leader's son, Arno Büttner, and eventually bearing him a child. Now divorced, she returned to live north of Leipzig in *Rofstauer str.* 12 with her next-of-kin uncle, *Otto Scheidig* (until approximately 1941) and son, Lester (born 1930, according to Büttner's birth certificate: Nr. 4292/30 December, 1899) after which she is personally listed in the *Leipzig Adressbücher*. Margot, however, was acquainted with *Annedore*, having first met her in Leipzig then Berlin in 1927 and later in Saxony in 1931 and again in 1932.

But no. The letter was from another of the 1923 crowd, towering *Gertrud Tafel*, who had returned to the US late in the 1920s to perform with the '*Six Marinellis*,' that acrobat troupe managed by Anna Büttner's son, *Arno*.¹¹⁵

Friends
Reunited:
Two of the
'Six Rockets':
Gertrud Tafel
(left), *Lissi*
Huebner
(right) with
daughter,
Ingeborg
Mahrenbach.
Spring 1936



In her letter, *Gertrud* (more familiarly known as *Gerda*) explained that she and *Arno* had remained in the US until 1934 before returning to Leipzig. Upon her arrival she'd reacquainted herself with another of the 1923 troupe, *Elisabeth Huebner*. '*Miss Lissi*' originally hailed from Dresden but now lived with her husband in *Hilgen-Neuenhaus*, northwest of *Köln*, something *Nanny* already knew. But because her mother's home was in the Saxon capital,¹¹⁶ *Lissi* would pass through Leipzig when heading to visit her. As a consequence they'd renewed their friendship, often reminiscing about their acrobat days. Tears came to *Nanny*'s eyes when she saw the picture of not one but two of her former chums, together with *Lissi*'s daughter, *Ingeborg*. Now she felt nostalgic!

As for *Arno Büttner*, *Gerda* mentioned that he was back in the entertainment business.¹¹⁷ She and *Arno*, along with *Annedore*, *Lissi* and the former *rocket* and *Marinelli*; *Melanie Geidel* had all attended the fiftieth anniversary celebrations earlier that year of Leipzig's *Krystall-Palast*, from March 16th to 30th,¹¹⁸ (where *The Six Rockets* had performed themselves in 1927), and since then *Arno* had built up a new line of work but in the movies. She'd heard that he'd recently purchased his first unnamed *Filmtheatre*, one of the city's 43 or so,¹¹⁹ (no doubt from profits generated by *The Six Rockets* and *Six Marinellis*, she wrote), and he was hoping this would become his new 'cash cow.' *Arno Büttner*'s subsequent progress is described in the textbox overleaf. She signed off wishing *Nanny* well and hoped she would see her back in Leipzig before long, politics permitting. Food for thought as she and *Margot* left for the beach.

As July rolled into August, the *Tyrallas' Heimat* and *Berlin* became the focus of the world's attention as the 1936 Olympic Games got underway on August 1st. Despite a protest committee having been established a year earlier in the Netherlands known as *The Olympic Games Under Dictatorship* (also known as 'DOOD' or *De Olympische Onder Dictatuur*), with many hoping the United States would lead a boycott of the Games (especially after the introduction of *The Nuremberg Laws*), both initiatives failed.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ As footnote 145 of *Chapter XII* explains, the return of *Gertrud Tafel* to the US is without full explanation.

¹¹⁶ Since 1931 According to photographs held by *Lissi*'s son, *Harald Mahrenbach*.

¹¹⁷ According to the city's 1935 *Adressbuch* entry, he returned to the suburb of *Gohlis* (where his widowed mother, *Anna Büttner*, lived in *Klara Str. 4 II. W 32* according to the 1932-1937 *Adressbücher*). Initially employed as a *Kaufmann* he lived in *Lothringer strasse 4 a. I* (today *Coppisstrasse*) until 1937 according to the *Adressbücher* (nearby *Margot*'s place of birth in *Gottschallstrasse*, nor far from his late father's business address up until he died; *Grunert str.10. II E*. in *Mockern*, also north Leipzig – an address which *Arno*'s mother used once more from 1938-1943). He then used *Ludendorffstrasse 100/2* south of Leipzig's *Park Rosenthal* as an official address from 1938-1941 according to filmtheater.square7.ch/wiki/index.php?title=Gera_Frommater_Lichtspiele.

¹¹⁸ *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert in LEIPZIG*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 42

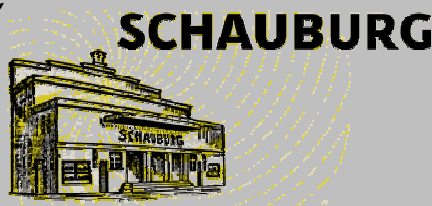
¹¹⁹ *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert in LEIPZIG*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 43

NB. It's not clear from the *Adressbuch* entries referred to in footnote 124, which, it just says: "*Lichtspielhaus*."

¹²⁰ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 462

14.2: If you can't beat them, join them... Six Rockets' manager turns to "cans filled with movie reels"

Arno Büttner's acquisition of a cinema theatre in Leipzig in 1936 was just the beginning of his new business venture. A year later he became joint *Filmtheater Inhaber* of the *Prisma Palast* in *Dresdner Str.14*, in Leipzig-Reudnitz¹ and in 1938 he acquired another, the *Frommater Lichtspiele* in the nearby town of Gera in *Thüringen*, which he owned until at least 1941.² In 1939, he also jointly acquired the *Regina-Palast* in *Dresdener Str. 56*, which had re-opened after renewal in 1937. That he also owned at least until 1941.³



Although he may initially have dreamt of presenting American alongside German films, the Nazis will have left him disappointed. The two largest German film studios were effectively nationalized in 1935 and by 1939, thanks to the decline of exports of German films (partly due to the hostility of foreign film distributors towards the repressive policies of the Nazis) and the reduction of foreign imports (due to Nazi tax and currency laws), most Germans could only see films produced within Germany. Of these, about 65 percent were being made by state-financed companies while the remainder were subject to the strict controls of the Propaganda Ministry.

Come 1938, however, the categorization of German films reveals just 10 percent were political, 41 percent were dramas and 49 percent, comedies.⁴ The Reich Minister of Propaganda well knew he had to entertain the masses and steer clear of 'official' films and "*Under Goebbels*," writes Alexandra Richie, "*Berlin retained, even enhanced its role as the largest and most powerful centre of film production in Europe...As a result, film attendance rocketed, quadrupling between 1933 and 1940 and overtaking all other forms of entertainment.*"⁵ The industry was also bolstered by the return of Pola Negri who went on to star in a slew of 1930s movies.

As for Arno, little more is known about his film theatre exploits.

1. According to the 1938 Leipzig Adressbucher whilst:

allekinos.pytalhost.com/kinowiki/index.php?title=Leipzig_Prisma-Palast_Ostvorstadt confirms he became the owner in 1937 and also his registered address became Meusdorfer str.9. in Connewitz, south of the city centre. From 1938 he owned it in partnership with Hermann Pirl. It was destroyed by bombs in 1943.

2. See: filmtheater.square7.ch/wiki/index.php?title=Gera_Frommater_Lichtspiele

3. See: allekinos.pytalhost.com/kinowiki/index.php?title=Leipzig_Regina-Palast_Reudnitz

4. A Brief History of The Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis. Martyn Whittlock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 186-7

5. Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 453

6. Image: Filmtheater Schauburg in Leipzig-Plagwitz, which opened in 1928. Source: kino-am-adler.de. See also: [de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schauburg_\(Leipzig\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schauburg_(Leipzig))

The XI Olympiad saw no expenses spared in a games which lasted until Sunday 16th. A huge new stadium and village was constructed to the west of Berlin while at the same time, the reign of terror toward Jews ceased. All signs of discrimination that had previously hung in the capital such as '*Jews the road to Palestine does not go through here*' were removed as the big propaganda machine went into full motion.

Jews who had put up with the discrimination till now must have felt their patience rewarded as no anti-Jewish comments appeared between June 30th and September 1st. Indeed, Berliners were even given detailed instructions as to how to treat foreign-looking visitors.¹²¹

¹²¹ Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 463

The city became like a fantastic stage set and to its residents it seemed like a return to the Golden Twenties. There was easy access by auto to the sea and the region's lakes while the Brandenburg Gate was festooned with gigantic flags and oak garlands. Denizens replaced the vegetables in their window boxes with specially designed flower displays and life was good, as long as you kept your mouth shut (although many protested when well-loved buildings were destroyed and trees felled to widen the *Unter den Linden*).

"Berliners...like the rest of the world, believed that they heralded the dawn of a new era of self-confidence, free of the humiliation of the past." Over a million visitors took to Berlin that summer and became convinced that the horror stories they'd heard about Hitler's Germany were simply untrue.¹²² Perhaps that explains *Mama's* no-show that year – she was too busy sub-letting her apartment so as to cash in on the tourists and instead camped out at her former partner's apartment.¹²³ Margot might've guessed.

Despite the celebrations, however, 1936 was a year in which Germany too was gripped by economic crisis. *Carl Friedrich Goerdeler*, Leipzig's mayor since mid-1930, was entrusted with the task of dealing with the deflation now being caused by rearmament,¹²⁴ and despite his early sympathy for the Nazi regime, had grown disillusioned (not least with the Nazis who massively increased the debts owed to Leipzig's municipal government). *Goerdeler* therefore proposed a policy of *rapprochement* with the Western powers and a sharp cut to military spending.

Hitler rejected his suggestions and in turn proposed a *Four Year Plan* (like those the *Soviet Union* were renowned for),¹²⁵ and not long afterwards, *Goerdeler* moved into the opposition. He resigned from office on March 31st, 1937, having declined to accept his re-election as mayor of Leipzig.

The Four Year Plan can be viewed as another major turning point in Germany's preparation for war, for it set out to prepare the population for self-sufficiency (something its leaders had overlooked during the first). It also concentrated on expanding heavy industrial capacity and developing synthetic substitutes for two critically imported raw materials; oil and rubber. It called for an increase in automobile production, initiated numerous building and architectural projects; developed the nation's network of *Autobahns* (see text box overleaf) and further shored up the nation's military defenses. It even blatantly declared: *'the German Armed Forces must be combat ready within four years,'* and that the *'German economy must be mobilized for war within four years.'*

If ever there was a manifesto for war this was it. Yet foreign dignitaries ignored those words at their peril,¹²⁶ with *Hermann Göring*, the commander-in-chief of the *Luftwaffe*, subsequently being put in charge of the plan's realisation.¹²⁷

¹²² *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 463, 465, 464

¹²³ On May 1st, 1936, Albert Petzold indicates *Frau Tjyralla* is his sub-tenant on his Berlin-based *Einwohnermeldekarte*.

¹²⁴ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Friedrich_Goerdeler

¹²⁵ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four-year_plan. NB: That said, by 1936, employment was back up to the level of the best years of Weimar. The birth rate, a reliable measure of confidence, rose by 22 percent within a year of Hitler's coming to power and continued to grow throughout the 1930s. *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 432

¹²⁶ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 435

¹²⁷ As of October 18th, 1936. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Year_Plan

14.3: Roads Bring Happiness: Mobility in 1930's Germany

The *Leipziger Bicycle-Club 1881* may have celebrated its 50th anniversary on June 24th, 1931 and gone on to become the forerunner of the *Bundes Deutscher Radfahrer*,¹ however, one of Hitler's dreams was to create a network of multi-lane highways connecting the principal German cities. The construction of these roads, called *Autobahns*, got underway in 1934 and created jobs for 200,000 people (including forced labour) and 20,000 building firms, from cement manufacturers to haulage companies. By 1936, 2000 kilometers of slick road were under construction or already finished.²

But by 1939, only a further 1000 had been completed, among them a stretch from Königsburg (Kaliningrad) to Elbing (Elblag).³ Overall there had been very little demand for highways, partly because Germans loved their motorcycles. They owned one half of all those worldwide in 1938, while its car ownership lagged far behind that of the USA, GB and France, with just four percent of the global total.⁴



It was only in 1938 that the *KdF-Wagen* (the People's Car or Beetle, shown above right) began to be mass-produced.⁵ As if in response, a year later, a 1939 propaganda film, *Roads Bring Happiness*, noted how Germans "could now ride on the most modern, the safest and the most beautiful roads in the world." They brought the Volk from all over the Reich together while ads and films showed good German families picnicking together beside the long cement ribbons running through idyllic countryside.⁶



In the city, *Potsdamer Platz* was once again referred to as the 'busiest intersection in the World,' for which Nazi columnist, Max Ehlert wrote in 1937; "This haste and movement of cars and people and yet the highest order remains... an unforgettable image."⁷ Travel by car was not without its risk, however, with figures being reported in Leipzig the following year of 5,167 motor accidents which gave rise to 45 deaths.⁸

Public transport was nevertheless undergoing its own advances too. From 1935, Leipzig's buses ran on LPG (low pressure gas) and from 1937, electric trolleybuses were introduced,⁹ which combined the advantages of the tram (emission-free operation) and bus (freedom from rails) without the drawbacks (the need for tracks, expensive routes, diesel exhaust and noise).¹⁰ In 1938, the *Grosse Leipziger Strassenbahn* became LVB: the *Leipziger Verkehrsbetriebe*.¹¹ In Berlin, they appeared to worry more about the loss of income as passengers conceivably switched to cars, the authorities installing new signs on the public transportation system which read "A Fare Dodger's Profit is the Berliner's Loss," leading to thousands of non-paying passengers being reported to the police.¹²

The contrary impressions and experiences of another former public transport user who bought his own car, follows in textbox 14.4.

Sources:

1. *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 37
 2. *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 432, 440
 3. *A German Generation*, Yale University Press. 2012. Tomas A. Kohut. Pg. 98
 4. Frank Steinbeck. *Das Motorradd: Ein Deutsche Sonderweg in die Automobile Gesellschaft*. Franz Steiner, 2012
 5. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volkswagen_Beetle
 6. Reference missing.
 7. *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 461
 8. *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 44
 9. *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 41, 43
 10. See: leipzig-lexikon.de/VERKEHR/obus.htm
 11. *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 44
 12. *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 422
- Images: Top: Retrieved from: huskerdudenbilen.no/2014/12/14/dagens-lykkepille-volkswagen-1303big/

Both Silesian agriculture and Leipzig's industry played important roles in the build up to the foreseen war and it's thanks to distant relative, Gerard Tjyralla's research that we are fortunate to have an insight as to how Margot and Nannj's Silesia-based cousins fitted into that broader picture (even if they didn't).



Sold! The Tjyralla farm exchanges hands in February 1936 under the watchful eye of the Reichsnährstand, a body of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture that regulated food production

For instance, when their father's eldest brother, *Onkel Johann*, died on May 18th, 1936, it was around the time that the economic crisis was at its worst. Almost 75, he was survived by his four sons; *August*, *Joseph*, *Karl* and *Peter*¹²⁸ besides his 58 year old wife.¹²⁹ It had already been fixed that the second-eldest, Joseph, would take over the family farm (despite the repeated objections of elder brother, *August*),¹³⁰ and on February 10th, 1936, the transfer was completed¹³¹ on letterhead embossed with '*Blut und Boden*'¹³² and formally endorsed by the *Reichsnährstand*, a government body whose legal authority extended over everyone involved in agricultural production and distribution.¹³³

Under the *Hereditary Farm Law* of September 1933 (which 'protected' farms from being mortgaged or sold due to debt), family members had been obliged to occupy properties following a senior's death, and there were clearly those in high places who felt the Tyralla farmstead was safest in Joseph's hands. It was probably no coincidence either that on the same date the agreement was signed, *Jungbauer*¹³⁴ *Joseph* married *Auguste Sobek* in Radstein. Born October 1912 in the Tjyrallas' home village, she was seven years his junior.

That March of 1936, their inventory consisted of two horses and their foal, four cows and three calves besides two breeding sows.¹³⁵ Over the coming years, however, the family were put under increasing pressure and control to contribute to the Nazi drive for self-sufficiency,¹³⁶ which led to an era of 'enticement and deprivation' in the words of *Hartmut Berghoff*. The following year, on May 11th, 1937, the first of *Joseph* and *Auguste's* daughters, *Cristina Maria (Cristel)*, was born, followed by *Elisabeth (Liska)* on May 25th, 1939.

¹²⁸ Second eldest, *Joseph*, born 1905, was one of eight siblings, although only four appear to have reached adulthood. All were born in *Ernestinenberg*, a community founded in the second half of nineteenth century three km north of Radstein. It's not clear what eventually became of *August* (the eldest), *Karl* and *Peter* other than their professions respectively were a *Kaufmann/Händler* in *Radstein*; farmworker; and furrier in Lower Silesian *Frankenstein*.

¹²⁹ *Bertha Remeth* was born cca. 1878 and had married *Johann Tjyralla* on May 2nd, 1899.

¹³⁰ In May 1934, *August*, born 1901, requested the *Erbhofgericht* in *Kreis Neustadt* to intervene in the planned arrangement on the grounds that he should not be excluded (*heraus schießen*) from his rightful inheritance. He repeated that call in mid-December, 1935, to which Paul's elder sister, *Josepha Ernst*, intervened from nearby *Neudorf* two weeks later, pleading the *Amtsgericht* not to undo the pending transaction.

¹³¹ *Betr. 5 Hl. 80/35* retrieved from *Johann's Nachlassakte* (Aktenzeichen 5 EhR. Radstein 19).

¹³² *Blut und Boden* stood for Blood and Soil, ideology that placed a high value on rural living and which celebrated the relationship of a people to the land they occupied and cultivated. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_and_Soil

¹³³ *Kreisbauerschaft Neustadt, Landesbauerschaft Schlesien*. See also: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichsnährstand

¹³⁴ *Bauern* or "farmer peasant" was a term the Nazis attempted to refurbish from a neutral or even pejorative to a positive term. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_and_Soil#Nazi_implementation

¹³⁵ According to the contractual agreement, *Joseph's* brothers were compensated, for example, RM 3000 to youngest brother, *Peter Paul Tjyralla*, in RM 1000 installments on October 1st, 1939, 1940 and 1941

¹³⁶ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 84, 108. NB: Only about 35 percent of all farming units were declared hereditary, i.e. *Erbhof*, intended to pass from father to son although in theory, any farm of 7.5 to 125 hectares could be declared as such – the size needed to maintain a family and act as a productive unit (larger farms would have to be subdivided). *Johann's Nachlassakte* reveals the Tjyralla plot was 10.22 ha. See also: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichserbhofgesetz.

In contrast to Silesian soil, central Germany's strength (vis-à-vis the *Ruhr* for instance) was its secure location for fuel and chemicals production (especially once war, with its attendant bombing raids, occurred). Leipzig therefore became a critical hub with the rapid development from 1935 of the Central German (*Mitteldeutschland*) industrial areas which contributed growth of up to 65 percent and a tumbling unemployment rate.¹³⁷ At the same time its heavy industry was modernized and the development of aircraft and precision engineering was promoted.

Although this appears to have had little direct impact on the Hinsch fraternity, Leipzig's engineering concerns went on to become the center of the modern German armament industry, serving both the army and airforce.¹³⁸ Famous firms like *Rudolf Sack KG* became producers of munitions and people carriers (*gelandewagen*), while the *Junkers Flugzeug- und Motorenwerke AG* (whose planes assisted General Franco in his campaign against the Spanish Republic) employed 12,000 alongside *Werft Leipzig-Mockau*,¹³⁹ and the *Mockau*¹⁴⁰ airfield hosted a flying school from 1938¹⁴¹ (a response to Göring's call of 1933 that: "*Das Deutsche Volk muss eine Volk von Fliegern werden.*")¹⁴² Rearmament was great for the economy, but it ultimately rendered the city an even greater target.

Growing disenchanted by what he saw happening within his home city, Margot and Nanný's eldest cousin, *Frits*, followed their lead as it were and departed Leipzig too – at least as far as *Machern*, where he and his family moved at the beginning of October, into his father and step-mother's neighborhood. There he was no longer a stone's throw from the city's military targets, while in *Machern* at least, the rising prices and growing scarcity of foodstuffs¹⁴³ could be offset by farming one's own land.¹⁴⁴



Morning assembly and
flag-raising at a German school.
Source: *Questions on German History*.
German Bundestag

¹³⁷ By 1937, unemployment across Germany was less than one million, a far-cry from the six million (which then included women) of January 1933. *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 93

¹³⁸ See: leipzig-sachsen.de/leipzig-stadtchronik/leipzig-geschichte-1900-heute.html and *A Brief History of The Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 197

¹³⁹ *Leipzig: Geschichte der Stadt in Wort und Bild*. VEB, Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1978. Pg. 85

¹⁴⁰ At the beginning of 1926 civilian air traffic and post used *Leipzig Schkeuditz* (which would later become Leipzig/Halle). In 1931 a *Flughafen-Restaurant* opened with *Kaffeegarten* that subsequently became popular and by 1937, *Leipzig Schkeuditz* was the fifth biggest airport in Germany. *Leipzig geht in die Luft. Die Leipziger Luftfahrt von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Wolfram Sturm. Engelsdorfer Verlag, 2011. Pg. 97, 99

¹⁴¹ See: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flughafen_Leipzig-Mockau

¹⁴² "The German people must become a nation of airmen." *Leipzig geht in die Luft. Die Leipziger Luftfahrt von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Wolfram Sturm. Engelsdorfer Verlag, 2011. Pg. 105

¹⁴³ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. M. Whittock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 211

¹⁴⁴ Vera or Lothar might be invited to affirm.

Frits of course was also a trained horticulturalist, which bound him more closely to the aims of the Four Year Plan¹⁴⁵ as well as to playing a part in the *Blut und Boden* ideology. But I wonder if the Nazis' struggle against Catholics and its attacks on church schools and the harassment of priests, also influenced his decision to move?¹⁴⁶ Among their children, *Konrad* was nine, *Veronika* eight and *Lothar* seven. I just wonder whether he hoped their relocation beyond the city might limit the party's stranglehold on the childrens' education?¹⁴⁷

Brother Martin and his family meanwhile remained devoted to his trade from Leipzig's *Querstrasse*, at least while their mother, *Hedwig*, lived nearby in the beautifully affronted *Markgrafenstrasse 10*. On November 1st, 1936, her husband was released from the labour camp at *Bautzen*. Pre-empting *Walther Martin's* return, her youngest son *Hans* moved out, via *Jakobstrasse* in the northwest, and on to *Leipzig Reudnitz* a month later.¹⁴⁸

By this time, Margot and Nannj had little news about their Leipzig-based cousins (let alone those in Silesia). Even keeping track of Johnnie Riscoe that summer had proved to be a challenge! While the Olympics took place, he had returned to the starting point of his 1936 Holland tour; *Groningen*, where from August 6th till 13th, he performed at the *Wintertuin Frigge* as the "eccentric phlegmatic dancer" within a three-person programme "full of humour."¹⁴⁹ Meanwhile, in Amsterdam's *Carré theatre*, Nannj's husband *Cornelis* linked up with *Armand Haagman* and *Louissette* once again for his new *revue* entitled '*Relletjes op de Amstel*' (Riots on the Amstel). That ran the entire month and was followed in mid-September by the next *Bob Peeters/Lou Bandy Nationale Revue; 'Zoek de Zon op'* (*Find the Sun*) which was performed throughout October.¹⁵⁰

Margot relished the free seats she was offered in the theatre, which reminded her of her days in cabaret and on stage with the likes of *Bandy, Peeters* and one time lover, *Willy Walden*. "I must invite *Willy for coffee*" she mused to herself, promising to get hold of his number.

Despite the poor state of the Dutch economy, *Carré* thrived thanks to Director, *Alex Wunnink*. Recalls *Han Peekel*, author of *100 jaar Carré*, even "amidst an outside world increasingly grim from the crisis and the threat of war...the theatre brought sun."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Under the law on the establishment of the *Reichsnährstand* (the *Reichsnährstandsgesetz* of September 13th, 1933), all persons and businesses operating in agriculture, fisheries and horticulture were forcibly united within the *Landwirtschaftskammer* or Chamber of Agriculture. One of its aims was to offset the rural exodus, while another was to control production in the agricultural sector. To an extent the regime succeeded, with Germany's share of self-sufficiency rising from 68 percent in 1928 to 83 percent in 1938, alongside an increase in production. See also: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichsnährstand

¹⁴⁶ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. M. Whittock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 176-7

¹⁴⁷ Vera or Lothar might be invited to affirm.

¹⁴⁸ According to *Hans Martin's Einwohnermeldekarte* seit 27.10.36 bei *Calmand, Jakobstrasse 7/I* (close to the zoo) and then seit 30.11.36 in *Kohlgartenstr. 63/I bei Graupner*.

¹⁴⁹ *Wintertuin Frigge*. *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*. August 8th, 1936. Vol.49, Issue 186.

¹⁵⁰ It ran until 1st November. *100 jaar Carré*. *Han Peekel, Fridtjof Meerlo en Han Santing*. Loeb Uitgevers B.V., Amsterdam. 1987. Pg. 99

¹⁵¹ *100 jaar Carré*. *Han Peekel, Fridtjof Meerlo en Han Santing*. Loeb Uitgevers B.V., Amsterdam. 1987. Pg. 98

Around the time 'Zoek de Zon op' graced Carré's stage, the Netherlands' economy also began to improve, something *The Performer* belied within its pages on September 10th, 1936. Indeed, from its lines one could detect growing optimism about variety's future in Nanny's adopted country;

*"We are given to understand that there is every possibility that the autumn will see quite a fillip in flesh and blooded entertainments in Holland. A number of first-class cinemas in that country plan to introduce one or two Variety acts into their film programmes each week. A year or two back Holland was quite a fruitful field in that it offered a good deal of work in cabarets and picture houses, but the beginning of the year saw nearly every place of entertainment dispense with its flesh entertainment owing to a temporary depression."*¹⁵²

A few weeks later, on September 26th, 1936, the Dutch government dropped the 'gold standard' (the guilder's link with gold) and devalued its currency.¹⁵³ Suddenly Holland became less dear for foreigners and after years of decline, the country witnessed economic recovery. The Dutch stock market started climbing again, trade improved and unemployment stopped growing (NSB membership subsequently falling).¹⁵⁴

The Riscoes opted to extend their stay a little longer and between October 2nd and 12th, Johnnie performed in *Nijmegen* (less than 10km from the central Dutch German border) at the *Unitas Theatre*.¹⁵⁵ He next went on to *Breda* in southern Holland (cca 10 km from the Belgian border) to the *Concordia*, where he performed until October 21st,¹⁵⁶ before concluding his "successful tour with *Variete Faveur* at the *Schouwburg in Tiel [central] Holland*."¹⁵⁷

Writing in his *History of Dutch Revue*, Dries Krijn, like his peers, also observes how Riscoe "had successfully climbed the Netherlands variety ladder."¹⁵⁸ So it must have been with a heavy heart that his availability for UK gigs was therefore announced in the *Performer* magazine from October 26th.¹⁵⁹ Margot was graced a little more time with family in Holland when her husband returned to the UK alone the following month, ostensibly to look "around Town for a few days prior to shortly commencing a tour of the biggest theatres in Paris."¹⁶⁰ "Het leven is niet zo kwaad," she thought to herself...

Towards the end of November, the Riscoes left Holland for France, stopping in *Liege*, Belgium¹⁶¹ en route to Johnnie's 'Paris Season,' where between November 19th and 30th, the family breadwinner put on shows at its *Rex Theatre*, the *Gaumont Palace* and until December 11th, the *Petit Casino* and the *Bobino Theatre*.¹⁶²

¹⁵² *Work in Holland. The Performer. September 10th, 1936. Pg. 5*

¹⁵³ *The Netherlands and the Gold Standard, 1931–1936; A Study in policy formation and policy.* Richard T. Griffiths. (Ed.). Springer, 2013. From an abstract which appears [here](#).

¹⁵⁴ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression_in_the_Netherlands

¹⁵⁵ *The Performer. October 1st, 1936. Pg. 6*

¹⁵⁶ *The Performer. October 15th, 1936. Pg. 6*

¹⁵⁷ *The Performer. October 22nd, 1936. Pg. 6*

¹⁵⁸ *Geschiedenis van de Revue in Nederland.* Dries Krijn. De Walburg Pers, 1980. Pg. 123

¹⁵⁹ *The Performer. August 20th, 1936. Pg. 6*

¹⁶⁰ Johnnie Riscoe. *The Performer. October 29th, 1936. Pg. 19*

¹⁶¹ On November 20th, 1936 according to Johnnie Riscoe's *Gezinskaart*.

¹⁶² *The Performer. Issues of Nov. 19th, 1936. Pg. 6; Nov. 26th, 1936. Pg. 7; Dec. 3rd, 1936. Pg. 7*

Margot's return to Holland had been a real treat for both her and her sister. Even if they knew it would be a while before they saw each other again, neither could have guessed it would be twenty years. To celebrate their last evening together, they hit the town and enjoyed their former 1928 *London Palladium* dressing room co-star, *Sophie Tucker*, who was in Holland that November for a week of performances.¹⁶³

The Riscoes arrived back in the UK in mid-December, after which mister appeared on stage on the 14th at the *Granville* in Chelsea and Fulham.¹⁶⁴ Which is how 1936 concluded and 1937 began – much the same as the year before – an announcement even being posted in *The Performer* on December 31st reporting that as a result of his shows, Johnnie was “rewarded with a bunch of excellent contracts.” It added:

*“Johnnie is now taking one more fling at Continental work, and for the first half of the month of January will play the Alfa Theatre, Luxembourg, returning after this engagement to play a long string of dates in this country.”*¹⁶⁵

Dolefully Margot and Harvey headed back up to the ‘old industrial north,’ to where the great nineteenth century industries of coal, iron, shipbuilding and textiles struggled from year to year with depression and decline as its workers did with unemployment.¹⁶⁶ Still, I suspect plenty of her fellow countrymen and women would have willingly traded places with her, or at least will have envied her, Dresden-based Klemperer lamenting in his diary at the evident migration about him:

*“So many people are building a new life for themselves somewhere, and we are waiting here, with our hands tied.”*¹⁶⁷

In accordance with *The Nuremberg Laws*, Germany's Jews were no longer allowed to visit cultural events, use public baths, libraries, museums and parks (although Goerdeler did his best to offset these restrictions while he remained in office).¹⁶⁸ Park benches in Leipzig's *Rosental*, for instance, carried the inscription: “*Forbidden for Jews*,” while that same year had forced the surrender of Jewish cemeteries, with their graves being removed to one central location in *Delitzscher Strasse*. Jews were barred from almost all positions and professions whilst their movements were limited too. Arrests became everyday occurrences for the 11,564 who still lived in Leipzig,¹⁶⁹ and some two thousand nationwide were ‘sentenced’ between 1936 and 1939.¹⁷⁰ Such was the result when they no longer had legal recourse.

As the year drew to an end, more and more Saxons could see the writing on the wall, Victor Klemperer gloomily predicting; “*War is unavoidable; every day brings it closer*” on November 24th, 1936.¹⁷¹ Another diarist, *Count Harry Kessler*, was also downcast, reflecting on New Year's Eve: “*1936 has been a cheerless, unhappy year full of worry.*”¹⁷² Nannö and Margot might have agreed, but at least they had been together.

¹⁶³ *In Holland. The Performer*. November 12th, 1936. Pg. 24

¹⁶⁴ *The Performer*, December 17th, 1936. Pg. 7

¹⁶⁵ *Johnnie Riscoe. The Performer*. December 31st, 1936. Pg. 6

¹⁶⁶ *England in the Twentieth Century*. David Thomson. Second Ed. By Geoffrey Warner. 1981. Pg. 182

¹⁶⁷ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Mod. Lib. Inc. 1999. Pg. 186. Aug. 29th, 1936

¹⁶⁸ *Leipzig: Geschichte der Stadt in Wort und Bild*. VEB, Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1978. Pg. 86

¹⁶⁹ *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 42

¹⁷⁰ *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman. Mesorah Pubs. Ltd. 1991. Pg.72

¹⁷¹ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. Victor Klemperer. Modern Library Inc. 1999. Pg. 200

¹⁷² *Berlin in Lights. The Diaries of Count Harry Kessler (1918-1937)*. Transl. by C. Kessler. Grove Press. 1999. Pg. 480

There was at least one ray of light though for Klemperer, which followed when he purchased a car for himself in early 1936 – although even that joy didn't last long, as the textbox below illustrates. Perhaps he tried to convince himself that it was 'for the greater good.'

14.4 Me and My Car

"I want to...buy a secondhand car," wrote Dresden-based public transport user Victor Klemperer in his diary. "The car will give us a little bit of life and of the world again," he mused on New Year's Eve, 1935.

It wasn't long before he had it either. "We first saw 'our car' through a window..." Its appearance captivated us." From there though, it was literally downhill. Just three months later, on March 6th, 1936 he grumbled; "19M tax, 33M insurance a month! The whole thing a desperado adventure. What a commercial item the car, and everything that goes with it, has become. A world!" By Easter Sunday morning, April 12th, Klemperer's impressions had gone from bemusement to embitterment: "The car eats me up, heart, nerves, time, money," and six weeks later, on May 21st, he spoke for both his and his wife; "It has taken a terrible hold over us, d'une passion dévorante."

That's not to say all Klemperer wrote about the family car was bad. He still found moments of positivism too. For example, in respect to public transport he noted on June 14th that with the car "waiting in the hospital courtyard, we were not depending on the last bus and stayed late." But such moments were rare. Less than two weeks later on June 26th he grumbled: "I miscalculated...the running costs of the car."

ISN'T IT FUNNY HOW PEOPLE THINK THAT

monthly car payments,
monthly car insurance costs,
weekly trips to the petrol station,
hours lost sitting in traffic,
bi-weekly car washes,
yearly car registration,
expensive car repairs,
paying for parking,
and buying other accessories like
windscreen wiper fluid,
winter tyres and air fresheners

is better than buying a monthly bus pass,
sitting back and relaxing with a good book
each morning on the way to work?

By the time the summer holidays arrived on July 5th, i.e. around six months after he purchased the vehicle, he appeared to be in dire straits: "I do not dare undertake any further excursions with the car; 3 gallons of gasoline, 3.60M, are too great an expenditure." But by this time the car was something of an addiction and on September 5th he again ventured out, albeit reflecting: "On the drive the beast behaved abominably and thought up new tricks." Klemperer, like most of us, however, couldn't give up his wheels and as many as two years later (June 29th, 1938) could still fondly regard it as "our last little piece of freedom."

City planners across the country too began to embrace the automobile as a means of transport, as the above image of Leipzig's Straße des 18. Oktober reveals, planning highways through cities, often at the expense of residents' quality of life. Upon his visit to Berlin on May 22nd, 1937, Klemperer, however, like many, was in awe at "the vehicles [which ran] in each direction four abreast."



Sources: I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years. Victor Klemperer. Modern Library Inc. 1999.
Image: An artist's impression of the reconstructed Straße des 18. Oktober, an avenue which heads southwest of the city centre past the Bayersche Bahnhof to the Völkerschlachtdenkmal. Infographic: busandcoach.travel

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According to Jan Logemann writing in *Trams or Tailfins*;

*“the late 1930s shone bright as a time of prosperity in the popular memory...Into the early years of World War Two, many Germans experienced a standard of living that in their own recollections would compare favourably not only to the depravations of the Depression era but also to the shortages of the postwar years.”*¹⁷³

To begin with, the Four Year Plan had had an immediate effect, making Berlin the industrial powerhouse of the Third Reich, bringing with it enormous prestige. Dozens of gleaming new factories rose on the edge of the city, many of them benefitting from Hitler's drive to create synthetic products. Thousands of its residents were employed in the new industries, while Germany's capital became the biggest single largest armaments producer on the continent, with thirty percent of its workers and 90 per cent of those in the metal industry engaged in the production of weapons and war materials.¹⁷⁴

Speaking of war industry, I wondered whether that might have brought business back to *Mama's* husband-that-never-was; *Albert Petzold*, recalling that during the First World War he'd been involved in the production of synthetic materials (for example, food supplements). Three months prior to the Olympics, he registered at Berlin's *Einwohnermeldeamt* as a *Selbständig Kaufmann* (independent salesman),¹⁷⁵ while a new home address on the *Spree's* north bank (not far from where his sister had lived in 1910) and in what today is *Moabit* (formerly *Charlottenburg*) could be seen.¹⁷⁶ A little over a year later, on July 1st, 1937, he settled a few blocks south, where he would remain until mid-1944.¹⁷⁷

Still billed a '*Fabrikant*,' might he have moved closer to his manufacturing premises? Unfortunately there is little readily available historical information about the isolated tract of land that he moved to and which was surrounded by the *Spree* on three sides. Neither are there many clues about his work, other than the fact that he retained his *Motzstrasse, 24* address in *Schöneberg* until the following year (according to *Berlin's Adressbücher*) while in 1939 his trade was given to be '*Neuheiten*' (novelties). We know well Albert's penchant for invention, however, the share of the German economy engaged in producing consumer goods fell between 1935 and 1937 from 25 to 17 percent. Was Albert still contributing to that diminishing sector then?¹⁷⁸

In the context of employer-employee relationships, it's worth recalling *Herr Petzold* probably often encountered one of the Nazis' most blatant attempts at social engineering, in which workers were won over with a wealth of cosmetic benefits, through the 'Beauty of Labour' and 'Strength through Joy' (*Kraft durch Freude*) campaigns.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ *Trams or Tailfins: Public and Private Prosperity in Postwar West Germany and the United States*. Jan L. Logemann. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012. Pg. 18. Online [here](#).

¹⁷⁴ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 435-6

¹⁷⁵ On May 1st, 1936, when he appears to have been identified as; 'R.174,' perhaps in conjunction with the Reich Citizenship Law.

¹⁷⁶ *Bundesratufer Str. 13, NW21* according to the *Berlin Adressbuch 1937*.

¹⁷⁷ *Wullenweber Str.9* according to his *Einwohnermeldekarte*. NB: Today it is *Berlin Moabit, NW87*.

¹⁷⁸ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 78

¹⁷⁹ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 438. NB: In truth, the Nazis had already succeeded in winning workers' votes by 1932, writes Peter Stachura in *Germany since 1800: A New Social and Economic History* edited by Ogilvie & Overy. Pg. 239

The 'Beauty of Labour' campaign, for example, forced factory bosses to modernize their offices, install new safety equipment, lighting, furniture and the latest technology, while 'volunteers' planted trees around the factories and created parks for their own use. Under the 'KdF' campaign on the other hand, factories treated employees to evening classes, amateur cultural events, exhibitions, concerts, sports facilities as well as cheap organized travel. Theatres that had closed during the Depression were reopened by the Nazis', with subsidised tickets distributed as they sought to bring theatre to the masses. Even if working class Berliners disliked the Nazi regime, the campaign, which saw Berlin awash with KdF posters portraying the city as a work-fevered metropolis, was later recalled with a whiff of nostalgia.¹⁸⁰



Theatre for the Masses:
"Now the theater is also open to you through the KdF theater circle"

According to Alexandra Richie, Berlin became an island of modernity (a buzzword *Mama* often liked to use) in a world of Nazi provincialism. Two new Coca-Cola plants opened in the 1930s and the "endlessly well-kept city"¹⁸¹ grew plush with German-Italian cuisine, as Germany strengthened her ties with Italy's leader, Mussolini.¹⁸² Berlin clubs played jazz, even if it was officially banned, while the capital continued to show Hollywood films, thus becoming the playground of prominent Nazis who could break the laws enforced in the provinces. Life was terrific for those free to enjoy the delights of rich, powerful Berlin.¹⁸³

For the thousands of Jews, Catholics, Social Democrats, homosexuals, church activists and others who were deemed 'unacceptable' to the 'new Germany,' however, Berlin was a living nightmare. During May 1937 alone, over 200 Jews were picked up in highly visible places such as cafes and cinemas, humiliated in the streets and sent to camps,¹⁸⁴ while Minister Goebbels sought to create an outward illusion of Berlin's openness abroad.¹⁸⁵

Goebbels instruction that radio should not be boring meant that two thirds of the broadcast material was music, almost all of it popular come 1939.¹⁸⁶ Yet despite the consequences, more and more turned away from Nazi programming and tuned into the *Deutschen Freiheitsender* 29.8, *Radio Moscow* or *Radio London*,¹⁸⁷ Klemperer noting a former *Stahlhelm* member, for example, who remarked:

*"I laugh every evening when I listen to Radio Moscow. One only needs to substitute 'Stalin' for 'Hitler' every time and 'Bolshevist' for 'National Socialist,' then the speeches are identical."*¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁰ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 438, 452

¹⁸¹ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. May 22, 1937. Pg. 222

¹⁸² *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 461. NB: An 'Axis' had already been declared between Italy and Germany on October 25th, 1936 and this was followed by Mussolini's state visit to Berlin on September 27th, 1937 (Frau Tjrala's 54th birthday). See: *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 469

¹⁸³ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 442

¹⁸⁴ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 431, 430

¹⁸⁵ *Het nachtleven in Berlijn* by Richard Schneider within *Berlijn-Amsterdam 1920-1940: Wisselwerkingen* by Kathinka Dittrich (ed.) 1982. Pg. 56

¹⁸⁶ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg.188

¹⁸⁷ *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert in LEIPZIG*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 43; and *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 218

¹⁸⁸ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. Sept. 27. 1936. Pg.191

The advent of radio in the Netherlands there meant most Dutch families could tune in to national and international radio stations too as a means for keeping up with events. Even for those without radios, the deluge of Jews fleeing Germany into Holland come 1937 and 1938 served the desperate news first hand.¹⁸⁹

Yet the more serious the situation became, the less the average citizen wanted to know about it. For instance, when an Amsterdam-based Jewish lawyer packed up his belongings and went to America, his acquaintances merely looked on and considered him both mad and a coward. “‘We are Dutch,’ they responded, ‘and we will stay in the Netherlands.’”¹⁹⁰ Indeed, many Jews took a certain pride in staying.¹⁹¹

Right: Nannj, Cor and Alex Wunnink in the Carré Koffiekamer while off right is their Jewish accountant, Dekker and his wife



There was no shortage of Jews engaged in Dutch theatre while from photographs it looks as if those Amsterdammers at Carré themselves remained indifferent too. Nannj (the German among them) reverted to blonde¹⁹² with the approach of her thirtieth birthday, while Tiny before long could be found ‘treading the boards.’ Life continued with an expectation of optimism in that typical Dutch way.

Below: Kleine Tiny takes to the stage



Despite the economic growth in Germany, recovery wavered in the Netherlands after the United States suffered its recession of 1937, leading once more to stagnation for its Dutch counterpart. Rising political tensions caused by Germany’s increasingly aggressive behavior spread uncertainty too, resulting in the withdrawal of capital from European economies.¹⁹³ Dutch theatre, however, continued to ride the ups and downs, *The Performer* running an article later that year entitled ‘Variety in Holland,’ in which it informed its readers:

“Any artistes who might care to try working in Holland...there is quite a good deal of work for acts able to play cabaret, cine-Variety or Variety.”¹⁹⁴

Musical and comedy entertainment played a key part in Dutch radio programming too, and in spring 1937, it spawned what arguably became the most successful partnership of all time in the country’s theatre history, thanks to the inventiveness of none other than the Ridderhofs’ and Tjyrallas’ good friends and acquaintances, *René Sleewswijk* and *Willy Walden*. The textbox opposite tells the whole story.

¹⁸⁹ *The Hiding Place*. Corrie ten Boom. Elizabeth Sherrill, John Sherrill. Guideposts Associates. 1971. See also footnote 97; *Achter het doek: Duitse immigranten in de Nederlandse speelfilm in de jaren dertig*. K. Dittrich van Weringh, K. van Weringh. 1987. Pg. 21-22

¹⁹⁰ *Herinnering aan Joods Amsterdam* (Remembering the Jews of Amsterdam). Bregstein & S. Bloemgarten. De Bezige Bij. 2004. Online [here](#).

¹⁹¹ *Anne Frank and After*. D. van Galen Last, Rolf Wolfswinkel. Dutch Holocaust Literature in a Historical Perspective. Amsterdam University Press. 1996. Pg. 34. Online [here](#).

¹⁹² Although once or twice her do-it-yourself attempts with peroxide reportedly went painfully wrong!

¹⁹³ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression_in_the_Netherlands

¹⁹⁴ *Variety in Holland*. *The Performer*. October 14th, 1937. Pg. 8. NB: Readers were encouraged to contact Ivan Browning and Henry Starr, ‘coloured entertainers at the piano’ that were ‘well-liked’ in Holland and enjoyed ‘very successful engagements at the Tuschinski Theater and Cabaret Le Gaité in Amsterdam inter alia during October 1937. Originally planning to be in Holland a month, they extended their run to seven weeks, including three Dutch radio appearances.

14.5: "Snap je dat nou, Juffrouw Snip?" A Revue Legend is Born – through Radio

In 1935,¹ Dutch *revue* producer, Rene Sleswijk, who was a close friend of the Ridderhofs and one time travelmate of Margot Riscoe, was asked by one of the scene's best-known stars, Louis Davids, to mastermind a new show in which the celebrated artist would be the centerpiece. Thanks to his decade-long experience, the *Louis Davids Revue* was a hit in the theatres. But it also introduced Sleswijk and Davids to the radio age, Dutch radio station, 'AVRO,' asking Sleswijk to produce a few of its weekly 'De bonte dinsdagavondtrein' (The Multi-coloured Tuesday Night Train) shows each year.²



Sleswijk engaged Davids, but in spring 1937 he fell ill before a performance forcing the producer to turn to Willy Walden,³ his leading man from their 1933 German cabaret tour (and another of Margot's once rather close acquaintances – see Chapter XIII, Pt.2). Walden invited his *Bouwmeester Revue* co-star, Piet Muijselaar, along to host a double-act. Their now legendary broadcast was made on March 16th, 1937, when the pair performed a bonus scene to fill the last bit of a one and three-quarter hours show, exchanging jokes in drag as two chattering ladies called 'Snip' and 'Snap.' It turned out to be the hit of the week.

Initially touring as the *Nederlandsche Revue, De Snip & Snap Revue*⁴ debuted in Groningen in May 1938 under Sleswijk's management. As a result of its success, the pair were hired by Amsterdam's Carré theatre in 1950 for five months each year,² eventually playing for a total of 112 months.⁵ That prompted its Facebook page manager to recognise stage manager, Cor Ridderhofs, contribution in July 2015, remarking; "He worked on shows [such] as the Strassburger Circus and Snip en Snap. He did a great job and has done lots of good things for Carré."⁶

Snip & Snap held a monopoly over the Dutch *revue* scene from the end of the nineteen fifties,⁷ their legend subsequently running until 1977. And it was all thanks to Dutch radio.

Sources:

1. The same year Rene Sleswijk's second son, Hans, was born; January 31st, 1935, in Amsterdam.
2. See: resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn5/sleswijk; and René Sleswijk. *Leven dat op 1 Oktober 65 jaar duurt*. Leidsch Dagblad. September 23rd, 1972. Pg. 15
3. Walden was under Sleswijk's management at the time according to: nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willy_Walden
4. See: nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snip_en_Snap
5. Coen Verbraak's Obituary of Walden here: coenverbraak.nl/walden.htm
6. Personal correspondence with 'Koninklijk Theater Carré' on July 23, 2015
7. See: nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revue

By the time the 1937 summer holidays arrived, the Ridderhofs had returned to Cor's motherland, the Walcheren peninsula. Recalls Tiny; "I loved the holidays we took in Yerseke." There she would watch Tante Pautje, Cor's eldest sister, making the famous *Zeeuwse 'Babbelaars'* (butterscotch) whilst relishing the company of her cousins 'Tante' Mientje and 'Uncle' Lou¹⁹⁵ and their three young children. Her only regret, was not to have learned the age old family recipe so that she could later make *Babbelaars* herself!



The Summer Nannij turned 30! Cor steers the way out of Yerseke in Zeeland

¹⁹⁵ Mientje van Krimpen was Cor's niece and the daughter of Pautje, who herself was born August 7th, 1888, five and a half years before Cor (and on the same day as Nannij). See: reocities.com/Heartland/Hills/9782/Ridderhof.html

Just before the Ridderhofs departed for *Zeeland*, Nannj received a letter from Mama, announcing her visit that September in order to join in the celebrations. Cor groaned. After her last stay, he'd felt she was too restless for his liking, while it seemed only yesterday that Margot and family had returned home. In her missive, *Frau Tjyralla* brought Nannj up to date on all that had been going on in Berlin, reminding her that it was now five years since her daughter had last visited her homeland.

Mama explained she had just moved flats,¹⁹⁶ leaving *Tieck Strasse* for *Dresdener str.* 77 south of the *Spree* in Berlin's *Luisenstadt* (see '3' on the map in Chapter XIII on pg. 490).¹⁹⁷ She wrote that life was just great, and that her new home was a few doors down from the *Thalia Theatre* at *Dresdener str.* 72/3¹⁹⁸ which she just relished. *Oranienplatz* and the grand *Michaelskirche* lay nearby, perfect for strolls, while from *Moritzplatz* she needed ride just three stops on the *U-Bahn* to be in the heart of central Berlin; *Alexanderplatz*.

The heat so far that summer though had been enervating, with the weather reporters having said that already some 50 days had been above 30 degrees Celsius¹⁹⁹ while she'd heard from *Onkel Fritz* it was no better in Saxony.²⁰⁰

*"Otherwise," she wrote; "the streets buzz, clubs stay open all night, theatres thrive and Hitler enjoys a wave of adulation such that ladies are completely in love with him."*²⁰¹

She added that she was looking forward to Berlin's carnival-style celebrations of its 700 year history, which would climax on August 16th, 1937.²⁰² Then, once the *Ridderhofs* were back from their holidays, Mama would board the train for Holland.

Crossing the frontier was not the 'breeze' it is today, given the caution the Dutch authorities exercised in averting the admittance of more and more refugees.²⁰³ Nevertheless, when Mama did eventually arrive she was:

"a picture of wealth," Tiny recalled, *"laden with hatboxes, never without red or silver fox fur around her neck, impeccably dressed in the latest fashion and with haute couture accessories. Even if Mutti would plead poverty, she was always a 'show.'"*

¹⁹⁶ Note that in April 1937, Paul Tjyralla's Leipzig-based *Nachlassakte*, which contained records pertaining to Nannj Tjyralla, was closed.

¹⁹⁷ See: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luisenstadt

¹⁹⁸ Her second (1942) *Berlin Einwohnermeldekarte* states: *früher Berlin Tieck Str. 35 Berlin Mitte. 22(?) 1937.*

¹⁹⁹ There were 43 days above 25 degrees in Berlin and seven above 30 degrees, according to *Das Wetter in Berlin von 1933-1945*: luise-berlin.de/bms/bmstxt00/0009gesd.htm

²⁰⁰ Klemperer repeatedly bemoans the "really enervating heat, over 30 degrees in the shade" from June 11th until August 8th, including the "terrible stifling heat and....little air."

See: *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. Pg. 224, 232

²⁰¹ Noted *Charlotte Muller*, daughter of a Berlin Social Democrat in

Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 436

²⁰² 1,500 young men and women dressed in period costumes paraded along a six-mile route, while elaborate floats showed a stylized portrayal of Berlin history from the foundation of the ancient 'Germanic' settlements to the *Hohenzollerns* and the great victories of the Prussian military, demonstrating that Berlin was now the 'center of the Reich' and 'the most powerful city in the world.' See: *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 467

²⁰³ A period described as the closed border ('*de gesloten grens*') in *Nederland en het Duitse exil 1933-1940*. Kathinka Dittrich van Weringh & Hans M. Wurzner (eds). Van Gennep, 1982. Pg. 95

When I imagine *Mutti's* arrivals at Amsterdam's *Centraal Station* I think of *Dietrich* making an entry and suppose my great grandmother's were little different. Mind you, *Kleine Tiny* was never invited along to greet her grandmother.

"She always kept her distance" Tiny recalled melancholically. "I was made to feel like the fifth wheel on a wagon. To her, children were to be seen and not heard."

On the other hand, *Tiny's* grandmother was generous too, a reflection of Berlin's prosperity at the time. On this occasion, and to help celebrate *Tiny's* fifth birthday, she brought a huge brunette doll made of porcelain and an accompanying pram.

One gift that met with less enthusiasm (but which was no less memorable) was a copy of '*Struwwelpeter*'. A collection of ten '*dazzling and gruesome*' tales, it is a somewhat macabre children's classic describing the misfortunes that befall youngsters who misbehave. It was authored by Heinrich Hoffmann, a Frankfurt doctor in December 1844 after he failed to find a suitable gift to give his three year old son that Christmas. Apparently his tales have '*delighted generations ever since.*' It was republished in 1933.

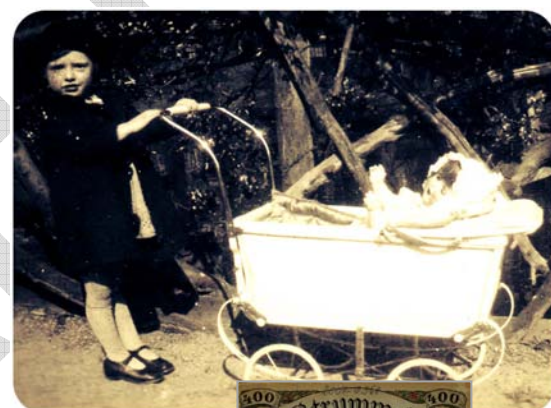
Both *Frau Tjyralla* and *Nannj* would read to *Tiny*, particularly *Die Geschichte vom Suppen-Kaspar* ('The Story of Augustus Who Would Not Have Any Soup') when she skipped her breadcrusts (citing her pet dog ate them instead). No wonder she recalled the punchline word-for-word in 2012:

"Ich esse keine Suppe Nein, Ich esse mein Suppe nicht, Nein, meine Suppe ess' ich nicht!"

It was a full-on *Deutschesprachraum* during those days and *Tiny* grew comfortable with speaking German such that within a few years she was writing her own letters to her grandmother. That *Mutti* brought with herself *Struwwelpeter* suggests her grandmother probably grew up with Hoffman's 'horrors' herself. I wondered though, did she also bring along anything more contemporary, such as Erich Kästner's, *Emil und die Detektiv*? Even if Kästner was on the Nazis' blacklist, 'Emil' was not one of the books they burnt. Published in December 1929 it was followed in 1934 by a sequel, *Emil and the Three Twins*. *Tiny* though bore no recollection of Emil's adventures.



Making a Scene: *Frau Tjyralla* courted glamorous receptions like those offered to *Marlene Dietrich* in April 1930 (above) while her grand-daughter (below) celebrated 'Gifts from Germania.' For 'Mutti,' family was always a show



Kids' must-read: *Struwwelpeter* by Heinrich Hoffmann. 1917 Jubilee Edition

Aside from reading bedtime stories to *Tiny* and keeping out of Cor's way, *Mama's* visit chiefly meant spending time with *Nannj*. But instead of waiting on her and helping her out at home she would of course drag her off to the cafés and movie theatres instead. A favourite nearby was the *Alhambra* which had opened a few years earlier²⁰⁴ that lay a few blocks to the north, across the *Singelgracht* and a stone's throw from the *Frederiksplein* (where the *Paleis voor Volksoliet* had once stood). *Nannj* was particularly fond of Gloria Swanson, although the star was no longer the big name she'd been prior to the advent of the talkies. Within the *Alhambra's* prestigious cinema, there was also a dance hall and cabaret bar upstairs that had opened in 1934 known as '*Le Papillon*'. Sadly it no longer stands today.

Returning once more to soak up the atmosphere at the *Schiller Café*, *Mama* asked whether *Nannj* had news of *Margot*, to which she could only respond; "*precious little as all seems to have gone rather quiet.*" What she did know, however, was that her sister had been largely laid up at home, alone with *Harvey* and *Mrs. Berkson*, since returning to the UK, while *Johnnie* criss-crossed the country. After his brief stint in Luxembourg in early January that year, he'd worked in and around London billed as an '*Eccentric Comedian*.'²⁰⁵ Occasionally his itinerary brought him closer to home, when he played the likes of *Hull*, *Bradford*, *Halifax* and *Huddersfield*.²⁰⁶ But even then it meant a flying visit at best. To the best of her knowledge he remained popular with the media, which continued to give him positive reviews.

For instance, she'd seen one which *Margot* had sent her from a 'first house' gig at *Hackney Empire* in late February 1937, which was reported on by *The Performer*: "*Johnnie Riscoe in 'Continental Capers' follows up eccentric footwork with a humorous impression, depicting the predicament of one in 'stormy winds' with umbrella.*"²⁰⁷

"It's high time I went to visit your sister in Leeds" said *Mama*, "and you should come along too, *Nannj*."

"I'm sure they'll be delighted to receive two more Germans, *Mama*" she replied, "given all that's happening to them back home."

Mama for once was speechless.

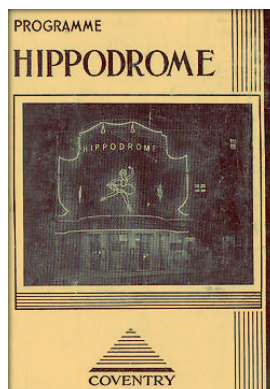
²⁰⁴ December 8th, 1933 according to cinematreasures.org/theaters/11256

²⁰⁵ His London residency is confirmed by its telephone/address books according to ancestry.com. His telephone district between 1937 and 1938 was notably '*Gladstone*.'

²⁰⁶ His full itinerary included the Clapham Grand (from Jan. 18); the Margate Hippodrome (from Jan. 25); the Hammersmith Palace (from Feb. 1); the Ilford Hippodrome (from Feb. 8); the Islington Odeon (from Feb. 15) and the Hackney Empire (from Feb. 22); the Tivoli in Hull (Mar. 1); the Aston Hippodrome (near Birmingham, from Mar. 15); London's Chiswick Empire (from Mar. 22); the Nottingham Empire (from Mar. 29); the Southampton Palace (from April 5); the Bradford Palace (from April 19); the Halifax Palace (from May 3); the Coventry Hippodrome (from May 10); the Huddersfield Palace (from May 17) and the Lyric Cinema in Wellingborough (from June 7) according to *The Performer* on Jan. 14, Pg. 7; Jan. 21, Pg. 7; Jan. 28, Pg. 7; Feb. 11, pg. 7; Feb. 25, Pg. 7; Mar. 4, Pg. 7; Mar. 11, Pg. 7; Mar. 18, Pg. 7; Apr. 1, Pg. 7; Apr. 15, Pg. 7; Apr. 29, pg. 7; May 20, Pg. 7; May 27, pg. 7.

²⁰⁷ *Hackney Empire*. Reviewed First House, February 22. *The Performer*. Feb. 25, 1937. Pg. 15

Johnnie Riscoe does the Coventry Hippodrome. May, 1937. He's third on a bill of eleven acts. Copyright: WorthPoint



What Nannj didn't know was that an ad in *The Performer's* May 6th, 1937 edition had indicated Riscoe would be free for the best part of June²⁰⁸ and that Margot was praying those dates would not get booked up. She was hoping for some holiday time and Johnnie had talked about spending the summer in a *Butlins* holiday camp, an increasingly popular destination in the UK.²⁰⁹ But I suppose she'd have given anything to be in Holland instead. Even if she didn't often receive a reply to her letters, Nannj constantly assured Margot in writing that Tiny had fond memories of her aunt, telling her whenever they would walk from their neighbourhood up the *Utrechtsestraat* towards the *Tuschinski* theatre, that when they passed by number 87 she'd say; "*that's where Margot used to live.*"



'Margot's Utrechtsestraat,' the year the Tjëralla sisters arrived in Holland, wherein such trams ran till cca. 1945 according to Joop Jansen. Source: Stadsarchief Amsterdam

Having finished lunch and moved onto dessert, *Mama* brought with herself insights as to what was news with Nannj's cousins. *Martin* and his family had moved at the beginning of April to a third floor flat in *Windmuhlenstr. 32*, southeast of Leipzig's centre,²¹⁰ which she reminded her daughter, lay at the foot of the street she was born in, namely *Kurprinzstrasse*. Then a few weeks ago, she'd learned he'd been ex-communicated by the Protestant church.²¹¹

Youngest cousin, *Hans*, meanwhile had become *Hans Martin* on June 10th, which meant *Tante Hedy's* occasionally-in-trouble husband, *Walther Martin*, had become his legal guardian. In the event of *Walther's* death that meant *Hans* fully inherited his parents' wealth, possessions and livelihood.²¹² "*Goodness, the Hinsch's and those close to them must be growing fearful for their lives,*" Nannj thought to herself. Four days later, 22 year old *Hans* had then left for *Frankfurt am Main* to build his career and seek his fortune.

"*Aech Ja,*" said *Mama*. "*Another Hinsch has left Leipzig,*" she pointed out to her daughter.

"*Quite a parting gift, as it were, from his step-father,*" Nannj responded, conscious that she'd left Leipzig with nothing, "*don't you think?*"

"*Na ja,*" reacted *Frau Tjëralla*, caught off guard. "*It was largely for legal purposes, to make it easier for him to establish himself,*" she quickly reacted.

"*All the same,*" Nannj thought to herself, "*A parent's support is always welcome.*"

According to *Martin's* son, *Rüdiger*, *Hans* nevertheless remained in close contact with his real father after he left (even if he and *Fritz Hinsch* had never lived under the same roof).

²⁰⁸ On May 31st, June 14th and June 21st, 1937 according to *The Performer* on May 6th, 1937. Pg. 7

²⁰⁹ *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Modern Classics. George Orwell. Penguin Books. 1989. Pg. 8

²¹⁰ From April 1st, 1937 according to *Martin Hinsch's Einwohnermeldekarte* and the 1938 Leipzig Adressbuch.

²¹¹ "*Kirchenaustritt: 10.8.1937*" according to *Martin Hinsch's Einwohnermeldekarte*.

²¹² Personal correspondence with former *Referentin*, Martina Wermes at the *Sächsisches Staatsarchiv* on July 27th, 2013.

Perhaps the biggest news, however, was that *Heinz* and *Ingeborg* were expecting a baby, *Mama* blaming the long cold winter,²¹³ while she quickly added that from what she'd heard, the couple had also recently moved their *Loschwitz* shop across the *Elbe* to *Tolkewitzer Straße*. *Ingeborg's* labour had borne fruit and in *Blasewitz* she found a more cultured clientele for the books which they now sold.

Capitalising on her mother's reputable name in the book business, she would often visit Leipzig's annual fairs and its publishers to arrange supplies (despite not being part of the writer and traders' guild, the *Reichsschrifttumskammer*, established by *Goebbels* in 1933).²¹⁴ She had also diversified the store's range of goods, adding high quality *Kunsthandwerk* (handicrafts).

Unbeknown to *Nannj* and *Frau Tjyralla*, *Heinz* and *Ingeborg's* daughter, was born a day and five years after *Tiny* was born, on September 23rd, 1937.²¹⁵ Her parents named her *Irene*. It wasn't long before she became something of a celebrity.

"I quickly became a regular at the store" *Irene* joked with me later. *"My mother would take me along in the pram to the shop, where I was quiet as long as I wasn't hungry"* although *"sometimes a customer – a lady – would feed me with the bottle."*

Having polished off coffee, the *Tjyrallas* made their way back to *Ile Jan Steen Straat*. A few weeks later it was time for *Tiny's* grandmother to leave. *Cor* breathed a sigh of relief, while *Onkel Biet*, the Jewish plumber, joined *Tiny* as they waved her off with their handkerchieves as she departed for *Centraal Station* with *Nannj*.

When she arrived home in Berlin, she saw her still relatively new environs from a completely new perspective that late October. *S-Bahn* engineering works had forced her to travel via *Hallesches Tor* and *Prinzenstrasse* which meant that this time she approached from the south side and a half-dozen blocks down the road. At *Wassertorstrasse* she got a glimpse of the area's more typical tenement flats and for a moment wondered why she had chosed to live in *Luisenstadt*.

It was here that the British author, *Christopher Isherwood*, had briefly lived for instance in 1931, a memorable observation in his *Goodbye to Berlin* being that a single lavatory typically served four flats. However, when he too returned 'to the slums' one winter a couple of years later, he asked himself: *"Did I ever really live here"* among the muddy courtyards, under the gas flares lining the long damp street, inhaling the moist, familiar rottenness of the tenement buildings?"²¹⁶

²¹³ That 1936/7, the temperature had remained below zero for as many as 25 days, from December 8th until New Year's Day. A week later the mercury again fell below zero, a spell which lasted until February 2nd. Although the first spell had seen it bottom out at -4.7 degrees Celsius, it then plummeted to -14.7°C on January 26th, according to *Das Wetter in Berlin von 1933-1945*: luise-berlin.de/bms/bmstxt00/0009gesd.htm

²¹⁴ See: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichsschrifttumskammer

²¹⁵ To mark the occasion, *Ingeborg* received a string of pearls from her father-in-law. He was fond of her, perhaps moreso than his own son. Little wonder *"Heinz would seldom say anything positive about his father (or anything at all),"* *Irene* told me. Perhaps the rift between the pair went back to Fritz pulling the funding on *Heinz's* studies.

²¹⁶ Extracted from the second part of *Goodbye to Berlin* entitled; *'The Nowaks.'* *Christopher Isherwood*. 1935. In *'The Berlin Novels.'* Vintage Classics, 1999. Pg. 386

Frau Tjyralla began to have second thoughts about her new locale and quickly decided the area was not to her liking. It took until December 1st, 1937, however, before she had served notice. She returned to her familiar haunts in *Charlottenburg*,²¹⁷ this time *Sesenheimer Str.*, 15 (pictured left).²¹⁸ There she found herself opposite the *Deutsche Opern*, just off of the grand allee; *Bismarckstrasse*. She was also several blocks north of her former home at *Niebuhrstrasse*.

Had she gone upon Albert's invitation, I thought, and so I decided to ask Tiny, who got to know Frau Tjyralla relatively well in later years, if she had any insight into this restless Libran's private life? "No" she said. "*She seldom talked about her personal life. On the face of it, Mutti was an independent woman. She simply expected to be waited upon.*"



Sesenheimer str. 15, Frau Tjyralla's home for just four months, from late 1937 until early 1938

As *Frau Tjyralla* shivered that winter,²¹⁹ a Christmas card reached *Nannj* from *Margot* which left her feeling very sorry. In an unusually long letter, she wrote that *Johnnie* had concluded his engagements that May and though they'd spent some of the summer together, the year's second half had seen him intent on doing something new. There were opportunities in cinema, television and in the UK's 'golden age of radio,' which as elsewhere, brought millions cheap home entertainment.²²⁰ *Johnnie* had parted ways with his agent, *Nat Day*²²¹ and unrepresented,²²² was managing to find work without any form of self-promotion.²²³

Margot had tried to put her foot down regarding her husband's presence in their family home life, but he was restless (and not unlike her mother, she added). During October he had filmed a short skit, the sort that ran prior to a film's showing that he had used for self-promotion. It had been issued at the end of the month (it is detailed, together with its *British-Pathé* context, in the textbox overleaf) but that was typically how *Margot* got to see *Johnnie*, given his infrequent comings and goings.

²¹⁷ According to *Nannj Tjyralla's* Berlin *Einwohnermeldekarte*, which is when she formally registered.

²¹⁸ Her landlord was a chap called *Blum* who appears to have signed her in a week later given the '10/12' which appears on her *Einwohnermeldekarte* for 10th December, 1937.

²¹⁹ From December 6th until the 23rd it was below zero, hitting -9.6° Celsius on the last day in that period. That was followed by another thirteen freezing days, from December 26th through to January 7th (the coldest being -13.9° Celsius. Most of February, from 12th until 27th was below zero too, according to *Das Wetter in Berlin von 1933-1945*: luise-berlin.de/bms/bmstxt00/0009gesd.htm

²²⁰ "...literally everyone in England has access to a radio," wrote Orwell in 1936. *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Modern Classics. George Orwell. Penguin Books. 1989. Pg. 82-83

²²¹ *Nat Day* began his stage career in variety in 1898 before hosting a London-based agency from 1904-1982. *Broadway Babylon: Glamour, Glitz, and Gossip on the Great White Way*. Boze Hadleigh. Back Stage Books. New York. 2007. Pg.25. Online [here](#).

²²² *The Performer*. January 6th, 1938. Pg. 18 (Classified Ads).

²²³ There are no citations in *The Performer*, nor relevant online resources over *Riscoe* during the second half of 1937.

14.6 Johnnie Riscoe Lives! Almost Eighty Years On

Associated British-Pathé was once a dominant feature of the British cinema experience since it offered a weekly dose of filmed news that was seen by millions. It “reported on everything from armed conflicts and seismic political crises to the curious hobbies and eccentric lives of ordinary British people,” reports its website.

In the 1930s, the newsreel became increasingly ambitious, providing audiences not only with quantity but variety. “*Would You Believe It?*” was a series that assorted footage of various unusual news items from around the world, such as oddly-named streets, strange animals, and bizarre technological breakthroughs. At the same time, “*Feminine Pictorialities*” offered a “special selection for the ladies” including bathing, hat fashions, hairstyles and women’s sport.

Johnnie’s own contribution was probably filmed at the *British-Pathé* studios. It can be seen today in full at its website, where it is also described as follows: “Johnny stood in front of a park bench...wearing a hat which is too small for him and has a drawn on moustache. He pretends to be foreign and keeps getting his words mixed up. He then does a silent routine demonstrating the different approaches men and women have to sewing a button on. He starts with the woman who threads the needle expertly and sews away whilst gossiping to her friend. Then he shows how a man sews. He unravels all the cotton before breaking it over his knee. He sticks the end in his mouth several times before trying unsuccessfully to thread the needle whilst sticking his tongue out a lot with concentration. He drops the thread then tries again this time turning the needle the right way up. He manages to thread it and wraps it around several time before pricking his finger. The thread gets stuck and he bangs it on the ground. He sews the button on with a great deal of difficulty and walks off before realising it has fallen onto the ground. He picks it up then throws it on the floor again in anger.”

That, however, appears to have been Johnnie’s only foray into British film work.

Sources: britishpathe.com/record.php?id=36670; britishpathe.com/pages/history; and ...history/#19331958



Nevertheless, she was not one for feeling sorry for herself and sitting at home alone and with cinema having grown really popular in England, she often got out, usually under the pretext of improving her English. Despite it being the age of the *Granadas* and *Odeons* (these were the new big-scale cinema chains that were really swelling the numbers of cinema tickets sold weekly²²⁴), her local ‘picture house’ was the *Dominion* up the road, and that became her “favourite refuge.”²²⁵

In late October, 1937, Marlene Dietrich’s new movie ‘*Angel*,’ had been released and through that, Margot had appreciated a taste of home, even if it was a Hollywood movie.²²⁶ As so often when she’d return from the theatre, she typically popped in to an English pub, her favourite being *The Three Hulats*, once upon a time a coaching inn.²²⁷ It was just large enough to hire in commercial travelers, actors and variety artists²²⁸ and there she would chat to the punters and remind them: “*I used to be on the stage you know. I toured Germany, the US, Canada, Holland and Cuba too.*”

²²⁴ *England in the Twentieth Century*. David Thomson. Second Ed. By Geoffrey Warner. 1981. Pg. 182

²²⁵ *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Modern Classics. George Orwell. Penguin Books. 1989. Pg. 74. NB: He adds: “In Wigan...the pictures...are fantastically cheap there. You can always get a seat for fourpence, and at the matinée...for twopence.”

²²⁶ See: imdb.com/title/tt0028575/releaseinfo?ref=tt_dt_dt

²²⁷ See: jdweatherspoon.com/pubs/all-pubs/england/west-yorkshire/the-three-hulats-leeds

²²⁸ *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Modern Classics. George Orwell. Penguin Books. 1989. Pg. 8

That's how Margot typically escaped the frightful feeling of impotence and despair, she told Nannj. She'd fallen pregnant several times after Harvey, although all had typically miscarried. To cope with *Johnnie's* absences, she kept a white *Keeshond*. Known as a 'Dutch Barge Dog,' thanks to its popularity back in the early decades of the twentieth century as a watch dog on canal barges in the Netherlands, in a small way it helped retain her continental connections, especially as it was a German *Spitz* by its breed, she clarified.²²⁹



The *Keeshond*, otherwise known as a 'comfort dog' introduced to the UK in 1926 (and not by Margot)

Yet being German, not to mention unemployed, Margot added that she felt out-of-place and more than a little adrift in West Yorkshire without *Johnnie* by her side. She was never short of money, an *artiste* being paid about GBP 250 a week for music-hall appearances,²³⁰ but she saw her husband rarely, bar a day or two now and then, when he dropped in for his comfort and to check up on Harvey who was now two years old. Naturally she was beginning to wonder, was this what she gave up her life on the stage for? It was not what she expected when they married (even if the Netherlands had been turning the screw on immigrants which had made her tenure there problematic). Oh if she could turn back the clock.

She signed off her letter remarking that come the end of the year *Johnnie* would be on stage in *Bootle, Merseyside*,²³¹ but it already looked to her as if their marriage would not last long. From the New Year he would be more permanently based in London,²³² and there he planned to start developing a line of business as an impresario. Indeed, he was already in negotiations with an act she recalled as being named the '3 *Harvey Sisters & Victor*.'²³³

"He could have me in his act," she wrote dejectedly. Right now she longed to be anywhere but Yorkshire. 'The beautiful south' with *Johnnie*, or perhaps even better, back in America.... To say she was feeling displaced herself was an understatement.

So much for crackers and Christmas pudding, thought *Nannj*, as she wondered where all this might lead, and quickly scribbled a reply, hesitating whether to mention that *Willy Walden* was on the way to becoming a household name thanks to *René Sleswijk's* help.

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²²⁹ It was brought to the UK in 1926, according to: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keeshond

²³⁰ *Stage Broadcasts. Mr. George Black and the B.B.C. The Performer.* January 20th, 1938. Pg. 4

²³¹ *In a Few Lines. Johnnie Riscoe. The Performer.* January 6th, 1938. Pg. 12

²³² In the *Performer's* first issue of 1938 it announced: "Johnnie Riscoe...this week has a new permanent address in London. It is 3, White Heather House, Cromer Street, London WC1. 'Phone: Terminus 5913." *In a Few Lines. Johnnie Riscoe. The Performer.* January 6th, 1938. Pg. 12

²³³ *The Performer.* March 3rd, 1938. Pg. 20

British historian, Giles Macdonogh described the following year, 1938, as one “of cataclysmal change for Germany.”²³⁴ Numerous interviews with its citizens testify to the militarization of daily life and the preparation of the population for war.²³⁵ Berlin-based Pola Negri, for instance, recalling:

*“From Potsdamer Platz to the edge of the Ku-damm...it seemed that enemy aircraft had been bombarding the city since early morning and had set the heart of the capital ablaze with incendiary bombs. We scanned the skies but they were mysteriously clear of all planes but our own. We were unofficially at war, and nobody knew with whom. Some hours later, it was announced that the whole thing had been a rehearsal staged to calculate the effectiveness of the fire department when under the threat of the enemy attack. The fires had been artificial, the plane was a dummy. This did nothing to quiet my private fears.”*²³⁶

Frau Tjiralla spent just four months in West Berlin, returning to *Dresdenerstrasse* on March 31st, 1938. It would be her last home in 1930s Berlin. But if 1938 sounded the death knell of her Berlin residence and any hope of a reconciliation with Albert, it was not just a turning point for her but for Europe as a whole. Geo-political matters by this time were nothing more than a countdown to war. Having dealt with the ‘internal’ enemy,²³⁷ the Nazis turned their attention to Germany’s neighbours in their quest for resources and living space. Under the so-called ‘Anschluss’ of March 12th, Austria was ‘integrated’ (read: annexed) into the Third Reich, fulfilling a dream of nationalists who since the nineteenth century had sought the creation of a ‘Greater Germany’ comprised of ethnic Germans living in Europe.

“The event had been accompanied by widespread displays of loyalty to the new Nazi order” writes Martyn Whittock.²³⁸ Even in Austria, Hitler was surprised at the enthusiasm he was received with, given its Chancellor’s resistance to a union.²³⁹ In Leipzig, however, despite a publicity visit by Hitler on March 26th, 1938,²⁴⁰ some 33,500 Leipzigers voted ‘no’ or spoiled their ballot papers when a referendum on unity was held that April.²⁴¹ Victor Klemperer described Hitler’s takeover as an “immense act of violence.”²⁴²

Yet “For the Berliners of those early years, it must have seemed that Hitler not only achieved great successes but won the praise of the outside world. Everyone agreed to stage the 1936 Olympics in Berlin which ‘Germany won,’” writes Otto Friedrich. *“He canceled reparations, he marched his troops into the Rhineland, walked out of the League of Nations and staged the Anschluss.”*²⁴³

The subdued international reaction to the *Anschluss* only led Hitler and his supporters to conclude that he could use still further aggressive tactics in his ‘roadmap’ to expand the Third Reich.²⁴⁴

²³⁴ 1938: *Hitler’s Gamble*. Giles Macdonogh. Constable, 2009. Pg. xiii referenced in *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 200

²³⁵ *A German Generation*, Yale University Press. 2012. Tomas A. Kohut. Pg. 143

²³⁶ Pola Negri. *Memoirs of a Star*. Doubleday and Company, 1970. Pg. 387

²³⁷ Around 1939, there were still 75,000 Jews living in Berlin. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Berlin

²³⁸ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg.201

²³⁹ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anschluss#The_end_of_Austria

²⁴⁰ See: hitlerpages.com/pagina65.html

²⁴¹ Leipzig: *Geschichte der Stadt in Wort und Bild*. VEB, Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1978. Pg. 84

²⁴² *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Mod. Lib. Inc. 1999. March 20, 1938. Pg. 251

²⁴³ *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s from 1972*. Otto Friedrich. Pg. 391-2

²⁴⁴ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anschluss#Reactions_and_consequences_of_the_Anschluss

Pola Negri saw matters differently:

*"My heart really went out to the older generation" she wrote in her autobiography. "They were helplessly caught in a situation over which they had lost all control. They had lived through the last war, and the suffering that came as its aftermath, and now they faced the future with fear of a repetition of those awful times. They had been disenfranchised by the wildly romantic young, the young to whom Germany suddenly belonged, the young who waited impatiently, with zealous enthusiasm, to die for the glory of their Führer."*²⁴⁵

Indeed, the parents of this younger generation *"viewed the Nazis with contempt and the Nazi plan to create a populist Volksgemeinschaft with alarm. [But] Their children found these views old-fashioned, socially narrow and timid,"* writes Kohut.²⁴⁶ For them the National Socialists meant sweeping aside 'the rule of old men' and establishing a 'Reich of Youth.'

*"By contrast, the Nazis were in tune with the needs of youth, presenting young people with the opportunity to be independent, to assume responsibility and to take action."*²⁴⁷

The prudish moral codes of the parental household belonged to yesterday, especially for a youth raised on a 1920s diet of Hollywood films, consumerism and dancehalls.

One can too easily picture how Margot and Nanny's late brother, *Theo* (whom I daresay the former's son was named in homage to) would have fitted into this climate. Elderly Klemperer, on the other hand, now struggles with his nationality:

*"I have deceived myself my whole life long, when I imagined myself to belong to Germany...how completely homeless I am."*²⁴⁸

Immediately following the *Anschluss*, Hitler made himself the advocate of ethnic Germans living in Czechoslovakia, triggering the 'Sudeten Crisis.'²⁴⁹ Recalls Negri;

*"Civilian traffic was replaced by truckloads of soldiers and military equipment, marching infantry, processions of tanks. We went to sleep at night and awakened in the morning to the tune of the incessant blare of military songs from loudspeakers rigged in every street."²⁵⁰ "Today Germany-tomorrow the world!" War anesthetized the country; peace lived on borrowed time. Clouds of uncertainty hung over Europe, casting dark shadows across the bright summer land."*²⁵¹

Berlin's development as a metropolis continued apace and it was against this backdrop of modernity that Hitler dreamt of redesigning and renaming the capital as *Germania*, a grand city home to eight million people, that would not only dominate Germany. On April 20th, 1938 – his birthday – the construction of its East-West Axis got underway.

²⁴⁵ Pola Negri. *Memoirs of a Star*. Doubleday and Company, 1970. Pg. 386

²⁴⁶ *A German Generation*, Yale University Press. 2012. Tomas A. Kohut. Pg. 124

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*. NB: In January 1931, over 42 percent of Nazi Party members were under 30 years old and 70 percent were under 40. The Social Democrats by contrast had only 18 percent of their members under 30 and 44.6 percent under 40. See: *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittcock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 32

²⁴⁸ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. April 5, 1938. Pg. 253

²⁴⁹ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudetenland#Sudeten_Crisis

²⁵⁰ Public loudspeakers allowed for special speeches to be heard and those around were to stop and listen. *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittcock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 188

²⁵¹ Pola Negri. *Memoirs of a Star*. Doubleday and Company, 1970. Pg. 388-389. NB: 46 days in Berlin were above 25°C, 6 over 30°C according to *Das Wetter in Berlin von 1933-1945*: luise-berlin.de/bms/bmstxt00/0009gesd.htm

The event was accompanied by hundreds of thousands of Berliners cheering 60,000 troops that marched for over four hours past his podium with their guns, trucks, tanks and other weapons of war.²⁵² The Bismarck Memorial (*Bismarck-Nationaldenkmal*), along with the famous Berlin victory column, once located in front of the *Reichstag* (before which *Frau Tjyralla* was pictured in the early 1930s – see Chapter XII, pg. 440) were moved in 1938 to the *Tiergarten*.²⁵³

Few members of the population were eager for war, however. As conflict with the Czechs and their allies appeared imminent, reports from government agencies in Munich identified a depressed mood amongst ordinary Germans and an unpatriotic listening-in to foreign radio broadcasts that only served to heighten their fear. This despite the full theatres, cafes and cinemas, which otherwise indicated a positive feel-good factor in society.²⁵⁴

Another military parade took place in late September which was designed to fan Berliners' desire for war. American correspondent, *William L. Shirer*, too witnessed and recorded the lack of enthusiasm amongst the city's residents. In his diary on September 27th (*Frau Tjyralla's* 55th birthday), he wrote how the civilians, pouring out of their workplaces "ducked into the subways, refused to look on, and the handful that did stood at the kerb in utter silence..."²⁵⁵

Since November 1937, Saxony had been the main staging area of the *Wehrmacht*,²⁵⁶ which is how Hitler put pressure on *Czechoslovakia* for the cessation of the *Sudetenland*.²⁵⁷ But for some members of *Frau Tjyralla's* extended family, that was already too close for comfort. At the end of April, *Walther Martin* followed his stepson west and began scouting for work and a new home. It didn't take long to find what he was looking for and on August 31st, he led *Tante Hedwig* to *Freiburg (im Breisgau)*, where, nestled up against the French and Swiss borders in *Baden Württemberg*, they hoped for greater peace and security – and an escape route in case Germany became untenable.²⁵⁸ Another 'Hinsch,' no matter how far 'removed,' had bidden farewell to Saxony.

Ticket to Ride:
Ingeborg
(photographed by *Heinz*)
after hitch-hiking with military personnel



Second eldest, *Martin*, appears to have been on the lookout for somewhere safer to live too and was attracted to Austria which sat conveniently between Italy and Germany. He collected a travel pass on June 10th. *Hans* meanwhile returned to visit *Heinz* and *Ingeborg* and day-tripped with them that summer to *Sächsische Schweiz*, savouring the weather before the couple alone hitchhiked through the *Reich* with German officers. Shortly afterwards, *Hans* returned to Frankfurt, married his partner 'Luise' and started his own family.

²⁵² *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 470, 472

²⁵³ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bismarck_Memorial

²⁵⁴ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg218

²⁵⁵ *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. W.L. Shirer Pan Books. 1964. Pg. 488, referenced in *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg218

²⁵⁶ See: leipzig-sachsen.de/leipzig-stadtchronik/leipzig-geschichte-1900-heute.html

²⁵⁷ The *Sudetenland* was an area in northern Bohemia bordering Germany, in which 3.2 million ethnic Germans lived. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudetenland

²⁵⁸ Home became *Tennenbacherstr. 43 I* according to *Walther Martin's Einwohnermeldekarte*.

Heinz and Ingeborg though had no intention of leaving Saxony, Irene told me in December 2015. Having successfully 'set up shop' in *Blasewitz*, business quickly boomed and they soon acquired a second stationary store, closer to the city center in *Pfotenhauerstrasse*. There they catered for a different kind of client but still sold books too. And they were now about to add a third, a *Leihbücherei* (or lending library), in *Blasewitz's Schillerplatz*. "Those were the days without TV," mused Irene, "when people liked to read a lot."

With the future of the *Sudetenland* hanging in the balance, Europe appeared to be on the brink of war. It was only averted when England, France and Italy capitulated to German demands in signing the *Munich Agreement* of September 29th, 1938, Chamberlain calling it "peace for our time." In betraying the Czechs, the agreement transferred the *Sudetenland* to Germany and made other territorial adjustments at the request of Poland and Hungary. As a result, *Czechoslovakia* lost one third of its population.²⁵⁹

Britain, recognizing that war was now inevitable, abruptly geared its economy towards production for war. In Holland, the effects of the 1937 depression became less visible, as it too began to rearm itself in the preamble to World War Two. Although it started its rearmament relatively late and imported much of its weaponry, the artificial economic recovery caused by pre-war preparations also had its effects by 1938, and by the following year, large numbers of formerly unemployed people had been drafted into the army, while rising defence spending (the budget tripled between 1936 and 1939) artificially revived several sectors of the economy.²⁶⁰

Yet, writes Geert Mak in *Amsterdam: A Portrait of the City*, "the entire country lived in an atmosphere of cheerful disbelief and deliberate self-deception."²⁶¹ Remember Heinz Weilek, the German *émigré* writer who had been living and working in Holland since 1933? Late in 1938 he met a Jewish couple in Lugano, Switzerland who had fled Vienna via Prague and were headed to America from France. The woman implored him:

"Please, won't you join us, within two years the whole of Europe will be dominated by Nazis. They will not leave one Jew alone. We have seen it in Germany, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia."

"Yes, Ma'am," he answered: "But in Holland..."

"Ach, you don't know the Nazis" she retorted. "They have been ferreting for such a long time."

"You don't know the Dutch" he naively replied.²⁶²

Central European states on the other hand took sides; *Romania* guaranteed oil supplies to *Germany*, *Yugoslavia* signed a trade-agreement with *Italy* and *Hungary* joined the *Anti-Comintern Pact*.²⁶³

²⁵⁹ *A German Generation*, Yale University Press, 2012. Tomas A. Kohut. Pg. 108

²⁶⁰ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Depression_in_the_Netherlands

²⁶¹ *Amsterdam: A Brief Life of the City*. Geert Mak. Vintage, 2001. Pg. 248

²⁶² Originally published in *De oorlog die Hitler won* by Heinz Wielek. 1947. Pg. 11. Quoted in *Anne Frank and After*. D. van Galen Last, Rolf Wolfswinkel. Dutch Holocaust Literature in a Historical Perspective. Amsterdam University Press, 1996. Pg. 34. Online [here](#).

²⁶³ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittcock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg203

Like her Hinsch nephews and in-laws, *Frau Týralla* began to think about moving too. The real question though, was where to? Somewhere she supposed that put her out of harms way, ideally within reach of *Nannij* or *Margot*.

Time was of the essence, however, since she was not the only German contemplating a move. In less than twelve months before the outbreak of war, some 226 orders, ordinances and legal amendments were issued regarding German Jews, ranging from the trivial to the devastating that rendered their lives there increasingly untenable.²⁶⁴ From a Jew-turned-Protestant's perspective, *Klemperer* reflected "*The silence around me is frightening.*"²⁶⁵ From June, 1938, Jewish businesses were publicly branded, whilst ration cards were issued the next month²⁶⁶ and labelled 'J' for *Jude*, followed by their passports in October. Next came the expulsion of Jews of Polish origin.

Although an arrangement had been worked out between the Polish and German governments on October 29th allowing all Polish citizens to return 'home' without fear of future deportation, by November 1st they were expected to first register with the German police as foreign nationals. German Jews who had born in the country to foreign parents were suddenly deemed aliens, and in Leipzig, as many as 1300 crowded the grounds of the Polish consulate desperately seeking asylum. The situation reached crisis point when most remained waiting within the grounds but outdoors for days without food, water or sanitary facilities, whilst German police officers guarded the perimeter, not only imprisoning them but preventing onlookers from delivering supplies.²⁶⁷

Ten days later the Nazis upped the Jewish ante when *Kristallnacht* occurred between November 9th and 10th, 1938. It was then that the SA, other members of the Nazi Party and ordinary Germans desecrated, burnt or demolished Jewish cemeteries and property, ruining some seven thousand Jewish-owned businesses nationwide, including 29 department stores, myriad homes, schools and community centres, whilst the Jewish Star of David was daubed on shopfronts, cafes, restaurants and businesses.²⁶⁸

Frau Týralla stayed well behind closed doors that night, where in Berlin, nine out of its twelve large synagogues were plundered and destroyed, while Jewish property was set fire to and their windows smashed.

*"As day broke, swarms of Berliners ran through the streets, beating Jews and looting their property."*²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ *The Jews and Germans of Hamburg. The Destruction of a Civilisation 1790-1945.* J. Grenville. Routledge, 2012. Pg. 190

²⁶⁵ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years.* V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. Aug. 24, 1938. Pg.266

²⁶⁶ *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert in LEIPZIG.* Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 44

²⁶⁷ *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939.* Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman. Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1991. Pg. 89-90

²⁶⁸ *A German Generation,* Yale University Press. 2012. Tomas A. Kohut. Pg. 110

²⁶⁹ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin.* Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 430

In Leipzig, the *Night of Broken Glass* saw twelve of its thirteen synagogues destroyed, besides many Jewish businesses.²⁷⁰ Hans Hinsch's former place of work, *Bamberger & Hertz* was gutted, whilst the neighbouring Aryan businesses such as the *Kaffeehaus Corso* (to the right in the adjacent image) were admirably saved. Ironically, it fell to the Jews to manage the clean up under the ridicule of Leipzigers, who accused them of arson in order to collect on their insurances. Tellingly, however, several days later, an ad appeared in local newspapers offering 200,000 bricks for sale. Bricks which had apparently been salvaged from the wrecked synagogues.²⁷¹



Hans Hinsch's former employer, *Bamberger und Hertz* on Augustusplatz stands gutted, November, 1938.
Source: Leipzig: Geschichte der Stadt in Wort und Bild

Paul T yralla would have dismayed I imagine, had he seen what became of his former environs in the heart of Leipzig's Jewish quarter farther north that night. At the intersection between *Eberhardstrasse*, where he lived in the years before he was married at No. 5, and *Nordstrasse*;

*"a huge mob of perhaps two hundred gathered" at around six AM on the morning of November 10th, "viciously and inquitously assaulting Herr Karger, an elderly Jew with a long, white flowing beard who was the proprietor of the restaurant on the corner."*²⁷²

Nordstrasse became the center of mob activities with the *Bernstein Shul*²⁷³ at *Eberhardstrasse*, 11 and Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman's parents' silverware store on *Nordstrasse* also being looted.

It *"and all adjacent streets were littered with demolished household items" recalled Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman. "Jews were being dragged from their homes and pushed underneath a bridge crossing the Parthe River," a short distance to the north. "Rumours began circulating that eventually the bridge would be blown up and the more than 150 Jews beneath would be crushed in the ruins... As the day progressed, the situation...gradually returned to normal."*²⁷⁴

The aim of the organized pogrom of November 1938 was the final exclusion of Jews from all areas of commercial and economic life. It was followed by the first mass deportations to ghettos and camps.²⁷⁵ In Berlin, over 20,000 were loaded on to trucks and hauled off to *Oranienburg*, *Buchenwald* or *Dachau*. A correspondent for the *New York Times* noted some members of the public had shouted *"Down with the Jews!"* while the *Daily Telegraph* observed *"racial hatred seemed to have taken complete hold of otherwise decent people."*²⁷⁶

²⁷⁰ See: leipzig-sachsen.de/leipzig-stadtchronik/leipzig-geschichte-1900-heute.html

²⁷¹ *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi S. Wahrman. Mesorah Pubs Ltd. 1991. Pg. 95-99

²⁷² *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi S. Wahrman. Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1991. Pg. 110

²⁷³ Prayer rooms founded in 1919. See: sgermansynagogues.com/index.php/synagogues-and-communities?pid=64&sid=821:leipzig-prayer-rooms-that-were-attacked-in-the-city-of-leipzig-on-pogrom-night-november-9-10-1938

²⁷⁴ *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi S. Wahrman. Mesorah Pubs Ltd. 1991. Pg. 112-114

²⁷⁵ *Questions on German History. Paths to Parliamentary Democracy*. German Bundestag. 1998. Pg. 290

²⁷⁶ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 430

Others observed that the majority of people had been;

“‘deeply disturbed’ by the events, not least because they resented the re-emergence of lawlessness, vandalism and destruction of private property.”²⁷⁷

Many Berliners in fact felt deeply ashamed by what had taken place and, risking their own internment in labour camps, attempted to shelter the Jews from harm.²⁷⁸ The Netherlands, France and Britain too finally recognized the desperateness of the situation and eased immigration restrictions in a wave of sympathy, especially for children and men interned in concentration camps.²⁷⁹

The so-called *Kindertransporte* was a unique enterprise offering Jewish children (alongside a number of Christians racially defined as Jews by the Nazis) a means of escape. As many as 10,000 babes-in-arms to adolescents up to 18 years old were shepherded from all over Germany to safety, passing through the *Hoek van Holland*²⁸⁰ to new homes in Great Britain. At various points across Holland, volunteers stood handing out chocolate and offering to post the cards the children had hastily written with sentences like:

“We are now in Holland and I can hardly describe how we have been received...The Dutch people are extraordinarily kind to us.”

The Netherlands also provided generous refuge, though for most it ultimately proved tragically temporary.²⁸¹

For Leipzig’s approximately 13,000 Jews, it was the beginning of the end. Between November 10th and 15th, over 550, ranging in age from 19-76 and of diverse professions: merchants, physicians, mechanics and furriers were arrested, imprisoned on trumped up charges and sent to *Buchenwald*.²⁸² In fact, the first deportations had already begun at the end of October, when around 5,000 Polish Jews were shipped to the border via Leipzig’s *Hauptbahnhof*, far more than from any other German city.²⁸³ That figure totaled around 6,700 for the period June-December.²⁸⁴

On November 12th, Jewish-owned businesses were liquidated or Aryanised and on December 3rd, the same occurred for their industrial enterprises. Nazi revenues ran into millions of marks.²⁸⁵ The result, according to *Rabbi Wahrman*, was the pauperization of the Jewish population, with *Brühl* (already smashed and looted during *Kristallnacht*) hit especially hard.²⁸⁶

²⁷⁷ *Faust’s Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 430-1

²⁷⁸ *Berlin Rising. Biography of a City*. Anthony Read and David Fisher. W. W. Norton & Company, 1994

²⁷⁹ But for most, time was too short for them to get their wives and close relatives out too. *The Jews and Germans of Hamburg. The Destruction of a Civilisation 1790-1945*. J.A.S. Grenville. Routledge. 2012. Pg. 179

²⁸⁰ A town in Holland’s southwestern ‘corner’ that has hosted ferry services to eastern England since 1893.

See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoek_van_Holland

²⁸¹ *The Jews and Germans of Hamburg. The Destruction of a Civilisation 1790-1945*. J.Grenville. Routledge. 2012. Pg. 196-7

²⁸² *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi S. Wahrman. Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1991. Pg. 103

²⁸³ This was because 73 percent of Leipzig’s Jews were foreign-born. Only 7 percent possessed German citizenship.

See: *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi S. Wahrman. Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1991. Pg. 90

²⁸⁴ *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi S. Wahrman. Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1991. Pg. 103

²⁸⁵ *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert in LEIPZIG*. Martina Güldemann. 1999. Pg. 44

²⁸⁶ *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi S. Wahrman. Mesorah Publs Ltd. 1991. Pg. 73, 102

On December 5th, 1938, the Berlin police chief pushed through the *Ghettodekret*, forcing Jews to move away from government buildings and from the affluent western section of the city. They were now forbidden to rent accommodation from Germans and one by one, districts were declared *Judenfrei*. According to Frank Foley, the British passport control officer in Berlin, it was “no exaggeration to say that Jews have been hunted like rats in their homes, and for fear of arrest many of them sleep at a different address overnight.”²⁸⁷ Berlin’s Jewish population continued to fall as a result of emigration, from 160,000 to about 80,000 between 1933 and 1939.²⁸⁸ Throughout there was “selected blindness on a mass scale.”²⁸⁹

In January 1939, a second round of deportations of Leipzig’s Polish Jewish citizens occurred, this time numbering over a thousand. Despite the attendant challenges, Jewish emigration turned to flight and almost daily one could see huge lifts being packed with furniture and other belongings. No Jew wished to remain in Germany by this time.²⁹⁰

Frau Týralla had seen enough as well. On February 1st, 1939, she said her own “Goodbye to Berlin,” exchanging it for Hamburg, Germany’s “other wicked city.”²⁹¹ Home became *Pulverteich*, 30, conveniently situated just a few blocks from the city’s *Hauptbahnhof*. It also lay a short stroll from the inner city’s *Alster* lakes,²⁹² one of its typically touristic pedestrian meccas where people liked to feed the swans and drink coffee in its pavilions before taking a steamboat out on the water.²⁹³ Her parting testimony ‘explains’ why she left:

„Früher wohnte ich in Berlin und bin am 1. Februar 1939 von Berlin nach Hamburg gezogen, um näher am Hafen zu sein.“ (“Earlier I lived in Berlin and on February 1st I moved from Berlin to Hamburg in order to be close to the sea”)



New Beginning:
Frau Týralla's
next domicile in
Pulverteich, 30
Hamburg

Dietrich would joke about ‘the good gut feeling of a Berliner’ in her autobiography²⁹⁴ but in moving to Hamburg, through her coded explanation, its clear *Frau Týralla* had intended to put Amsterdam and Leeds within closer reach. Perhaps like the Dutch, she was counting on Germany’s respect of Dutch neutrality or even Britain remaining a friendly state in the event of a conflict with Poland.

²⁸⁷ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 430

²⁸⁸ See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin

²⁸⁹ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 431

²⁹⁰ *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi Shlomo Wahrman. Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1991. Pg. 121. Writes Klemperer: “We continue in this simultaneously crushing and stupefying chaos, this empty breathless busyness, this absolute uncertainty.” See: *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. December 15th, 1938. Pg. 280

²⁹¹ *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* from 1972. Otto Friedrich. Pg. 160

²⁹² Formed by the *Alster River* (almost an anagram of the *Amstel*). See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alster

²⁹³ *What Will Become of the Children? A Novel of a German Family* (1932). Claire Bergmann. Camden House, 2010. Pg.80

²⁹⁴ The gut feeling she referred to was her decision in early summer 1933 not to return to Germany to make more films without the accompaniment of her director, von Sternberg. *Marlene Dietrich. My Life*. Translated by Salvator Attanasio. Weidenfeld and Nicholson. 1987. Pg. 80

Amsterdam was now less than a day by train, while from Hamburg, where the broad glittering *Elbe* ran into a sea of 'boundless horizons and blue infinity',²⁹⁵ she could hope to find passage to safer shores if the need arose.²⁹⁶ By leaving the capital, she could also forget about the 'highly charged atmosphere' whilst distancing herself farther from the powder keg that was central and eastern Europe.²⁹⁷ She was after all war-widowed and knew she could no longer count on the patronage Albert Petzold had once provided.²⁹⁸

According to cultural historian, Siegfried Kracauer; "Whoever stays for any length of time in Berlin hardly knows in the end where he really came from,"²⁹⁹ and in heading north, *Frau Tjyralla* certainly put further distance between herself and her brother and what she perhaps never really considered to be her 'homeland,' Saxony. "*Leipzig had always been a family detour, anyway,*" she reminded herself.

By moving to the *Jutland* peninsula she returned to her father's 'hearth.' *Sülfeld bei Bad Oldesloe* (see Chapter I) was only a short distance away, and even if she had no acquaintances there, perhaps she herself felt safest in the land of the north Germans, among Protestants and Prussians. Besides evincing her Prussian identity, maybe she exercised some sort of Hanseatic conviction too? She promptly informed her daughters of her move and new address.

Mama's gut feeling about middle Europe had not been unfounded. Six weeks later, on March 15th, 1939, Hitler walked into the Czech capital, Prague, occupying *Bohemia* and *Moravia* – in flagrant breach of the Munich Agreement and without "*even the pretence of a respectable ethnic rationale for its action.*"³⁰⁰ Those who had hoped for the best, remarks Whittock, could now no longer delude themselves that Hitler "*was simply righting the wrongs of the peace treaties that followed the end of the First World War.*"³⁰¹ As a result, the Western powers reviewed their policy and pledged their assistance to Poland and other eastern and southeastern European countries in case of a German attack.³⁰²

²⁹⁵ *What I Saw: Reports from Berlin, 1920-1933*. Joseph Roth. Transl. by M. Hoffman. Granta. 2003. Pg. 36

²⁹⁶ Klemperer writes on December 15th, 1938 regarding his own possible passage to Havana: "*Even though the number of sailings has been doubled...there are no more places to be had until 1940.*" *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. Pg. 281

²⁹⁷ It was a long-standing aim of German foreign policy, declared in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, to conquest and dominate central and eastern Europe.

²⁹⁸ Note that in 1938, Albert's supposed 'niece' Frieda, a *Sprachlehr*, lived in *Weserstrasse* in *Neukolln* (the same district in which 'sister' Olga had previously lived) until 1943 (the last year a *Berlin Adressbuch* was produced). *Neukolln* is located in the southeastern part of the city and today is characterized by having one of the highest percentage of immigrants in Berlin. It may only be a coincidence that in 1917, an *Adolf Petzold*, a *Sculptor* and *Hilfsregisseur*, lived at *Weserstrasse 2*.

²⁹⁹ *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin*. Alexandra Richie. Harper Press. London, 1998. Pg. 407

³⁰⁰ *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History*. Colin S. Grey. Routledge, 2007. Pg. 110. Referenced in: *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 203

³⁰¹ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 203. NB: By 1939, Nazi spending on rearmament was running at about 33 percent of GDP, compared with a normal state's spending of up to 4 percent of GDP. See: Pg. 206

³⁰² *Questions on German History. Paths to Parliamentary Democracy*. German Bundestag. 1998. Pg. 301

With conflict imminent, *Martin* was the last to take flight, moving his family to *Vienna* on July 1st, 1939. Twenty eight years old, although eligible for *Wehrmacht* service, he had avoided it so far "for political reasons" son *Rüdiger* told me. There he hoped to stay off the Nazis' radar.³⁰³



Farewell Leipzig!
The Hauptbahnhof in
1939: Martin
Hinsch's last port of
call before reaching
Vienna that July.
Source:
LeipzigInfo.de

That in turn meant that among all Hinsch family members, by now none remained in the city of their birth which also means that from the viewpoint of our story, our 'Prussian' family had completed its passage through Leipzig – a little over half a century after arriving in 1877. And that despite it being one of the largest and most important cities in the Third Reich and the most populous in Saxony.³⁰⁴ In fact, the period 1932-1939 spawned the greatest period of international and national migration our family ever saw. Splintered, a Hinsch 'diaspora' effectively now existed.

As for the notion of '*Blood and Soil*,'³⁰⁵ it was left largely to *Onkel Fritz* to uphold that, since it was he who retained the possession of land, whilst the family members' (bar eldest son, *Frits*) 'fluttering off to the town' would have risked its being 'scattered it to the four winds.'

Looking back, despite the regime's allegations as to the negative implications of the Weimar period for the family following the 'liberal capitalists' and 'Marxists' destruction of its 'moral foundations' and its counter-claims to re-establish its true meaning, in reality the Nazis undermined the German family in an unprecedented way, writes Lisa Pine;

*"...By subjecting the family to state encroachment and mechanisms of control, by reducing its socialization function, by attempting to remove its ability to shelter emotionally and to provide for its members, and by subjecting it to the racial thinking that was so central to Nazi ideology. The implication of the National Socialist era for the German family was the ultimate destruction of the the private sphere, in physical and practical terms, as well as morally and spiritually."*³⁰⁶

³⁰³ Although this hardly seems possible, given that within the period between the *Anschluss* and a plebiscite on unity which took place April 10th, 1938, authorities rounded up 70,000 Social Democrats, Communists, and other potential political dissenters and imprisoned them or sent them to concentration camps. See:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anschluss#German_troops_march_into_Austria Furthermore, as soon as Austria was forced into the German Reich, all Austrian males were subject to the universal general conscription Hitler had imposed on Germany in 1935. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anschluss#Moscow_Declaration

³⁰⁴ In 1939, the city numbered over 707,365 residents (not counting military and RAD workers). See: leipzig-sachsen.de/leipzig-stadtchronik/leipzig-geschichte-1900-heute.html

³⁰⁵ Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau's view on the importance of *Bodenständigkeit*. See Jonathan Osmond in *Germany since 1800: A New Social and Economic History* edited by Ogilvie & Overy. Pg. 96

³⁰⁶ Lisa Pine in *Germany since 1800: A New Social and Economic History* edited by Ogilvie & Overy. Pg. 371

The rearmament campaign of 1936 had set the priorities; 'guns before butter' and by 1939, access to the latter plus fat, fruit and coffee was indeed restricted, consumer culture having grown inevitably politicized and free consumer choice limited.³⁰⁷ Disappointing harvests, foot and mouth disease amongst cattle did not help, while the imbalanced Nazi economy meant there was insufficient hard currency within Germany for importers to bring foreign goods into the country,³⁰⁸ thereby reducing the availability of coffee, bananas and oranges. The *ersatz* nature of many goods lowered their quality and desirability, while luxuries commanded high prices. Even eggs and cheaper cuts of meat were hard to come by,³⁰⁹ because "*everything is being stored for the army*," surmised Klemperer in his Dresden diary in June 1939. A few months later and on the eve of war, food ration cards were then being distributed to ordinary civilians.³¹⁰

Six weeks after Hitler's invasion of Bohemia and Moravia, at the end of April Leipzig's Jews were forced into "*Judenhauser*" and before long the area west of the *Hauptbahnhof* became the Leipzig ghetto.³¹¹ It was almost impossible now for Jews to escape and by May 1st, only 6,000 of the 18,000 Jews who had lived there in the early 1930s remained.³¹² A last ditch attempt to flee the Reich was made some two weeks later by more than 900, mostly German Jewish citizens, aboard a ship called the *St. Louis*. The very same transatlantic liner which had carried the Tjëralla sisters almost ten years earlier from Havana back to New York, set sail for Cuba from underneath *Mama's* nose, probably without her even realizing it. Their journey, the so-called '*Voyage of the Damned*' is retold within textbox 12.5 of Chapter XII.

As late as summer 1939, Hitler retained a belief that *Britain* and *France* would not go to war,³¹³ leaving him to deem the greater threat to come from the *Soviet Union*. Celebrations therefore followed when he agreed 'a decade's peace' with Stalin on August 23rd through the signing of the *Molotov-Ribbentrop pact*, most Berliners subsequently crying '*Heil Stalin*' from the terraces and full cafes there. In the event of a conflict that meant Germany would only need focus on its western front. However, the agreement's real purpose was a secret protocol which defined spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. Germany was to have *Lithuania* and western *Poland*, whilst the *Soviet Union* was to have *Finland*, *Estonia*, *Latvia*, the eastern part of *Poland* and the Romanian province of *Bessarabia*. "*The Nazi-Soviet pact was, in one sense*," writes David Thomson, "*Russia's Munich*."³¹⁴

³⁰⁷ *Trams or Tailfins: Public and Private Prosperity in Postwar West Germany and the United States*. Jan L. Logemann. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012. Pg. 17. Online [here](#).

³⁰⁸ Writes Klemperer on November 28th, 1938: "*German money is almost valueless abroad, the mark is worth sixpence halfpenny sterling*."

See: *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. Pg. 276

³⁰⁹ *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. M. Whittock. Constable&Robinson, 2011. Pg. 94-95

³¹⁰ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. June 7th, 1939 and August 29th. Pg. 301

³¹¹ Located in *Packhoff*, *Keil Strasse*, *Eberhard*, *Parthen*, *Funkenberg Strasse*, and *Humboldt Strasse*.

³¹² *Lest We Forget: Growing up in Nazi Leipzig, 1933-1939*. Rabbi S. Wahrman. Mesorah Publications Ltd. 1991. Pg. 131

³¹³ *The Jews and Germans of Hamburg. The Destruction of a Civilisation 1790-1945*. J. Grenville. Routledge. 2012. Pg. 194

³¹⁴ *England in the Twentieth Century*. David Thomson. Second Ed. By Geoffrey Warner. 1981. Pg. 179

A little over a week later, on September 1st, 1939, troop transports rolled through Leipzig on their way to Poland.³¹⁵ That same day it was *Lothar Hinsch's* tenth birthday. I wonder what he made of the spectacle or to what extent he celebrated, knowing that he now qualified to join his elder siblings in the *Hitler Youth*, a movement which now counted 8.7 million young people, including 98 percent of all those aged between 10 and 18 years old.³¹⁶

Many Berliners sobered up, however, at 11 o'clock on the morning of September 3rd, when news came through that Britain and France were mobilising in Poland's defence, Chamberlain squarely summarizing the status quo in a phrase:

"...a situation in which no word given by Germany's ruler could be trusted, and no people or country could feel themselves safe, had become intolerable."

The fact that war was now necessary, however, should really have come as no surprise. As early as spring 1932, *Ernst Thalmann*, Hitler's rival in the Presidential elections had already proclaimed: *"A vote for Hitler is a vote for war."*

For my grandmother, that declaration couldn't have come at a worse time. A little over a week earlier, on August 26th, 1939, she had given birth to a second daughter, *Irene Alexandra*. How curious that she bore the same name that her cousin's daughter had and I wondered whether there was anything to it?

"No, I don't think my mother knew that Heinz had a daughter named Irene," she told me in 2011. "Eirene came from the Greek goddess of peace, while Alexandra paid homage to Cor's boss, Alex Wunnink."

It was the family's own declaration of hope, one week prior to the start of World War Two. *Kleine Tiny*, now six, pitched down at *René and Rietje Sleswijk's* with their boys, *René Andre*, eight, and *Hans*, four and a half, till *Nannj* returned home with *Irene*. Her parents were no doubt praying Germany would continue to respect Holland's neutrality, having *"been on the political sidelines of Europe for centuries."*³¹⁷

In Germany, there must have been no doubt, however, Klemperer observing how *"the news of the guarantees of neutrality to Holland and Belgium...were kept under a cloak of secrecy"* at home.³¹⁸



And Then There Were Three. Irene Alexandra joined Kleine Tiny and Nannj in August 1939

³¹⁵ See: leipzig-sachsen.de/leipzig-stadtchronik/leipzig-geschichte-1900-heute.html

³¹⁶ Membership was compulsory from March 1939. *A Brief History of the Third Reich: The Rise and Fall of the Nazis*. Martyn Whittock. Constable & Robinson, 2011. Pg. 141-143

³¹⁷ *Amsterdam: A Brief Life of the City*. Geert Mak. Vintage, 2001. Pg. 248

³¹⁸ *I Will Bear Witness 1933-1941: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. V. Klemperer. Modern Lib. Inc. 1999. Aug. 29, 1939. Pg. 306

Over the water in England, Margot's time was increasingly spent being drilled in evacuation plans, escapes into air raid shelters and in lessons in how to put on a gas-mask.³¹⁹ She had gotten used by now to taking care of herself, while Harvey was increasingly controlled by her mother-in-law. She stifled a smile when she recalled a press clipping about her husband that had said: "*Riscoe delighted with his eccentricities and impressions*" and how in March 1938 his ads had claimed he was "*STILL GOING STRONG!*"³²⁰ when not many months later he was forced to spend eight weeks out of work due to blood poisoning, a condition necessitating several operations.³²¹ She despised him for leaving her alone, but she'd still rather have him at her side.

Come the end of 1938, her husband was back to "*drawing laughs...with his pantomimic and dancing eccentricities*"³²² when he joined a variety show put on by *British Doorlay Revues Ltd* called '*Doorlay's Wonder Rocket*.'³²³ It ran for six months, after which it was due to show in *Berlin* during June and July and *Leipzig* during August and until September 18th.³²⁴ Would you believe it, she thought to herself. Now he's heading for my hometown, being Jewish and all.

Curiously, however, Riscoe's contribution to the revue was 'cut short' when "*he was taken to hospital...suspected to be suffering from scarlet fever.*"³²⁵ Margot knew all about scarlet fever, having suffered it aged eleven.³²⁶ But despite the call; "*should any friends wish to write him his address is No.4, Side Ward, North Western Hospital, Lawn-road, Hampstead, London, NW3,*" even if she had wished to head south to nurse Johnnie, she was Leeds-bound.

Whose Side
Are You On?
Harvey
Riscoe reveals
his loyalties
in autumn
1939, posing
in an HMS
Rodney outfit,
recalling a
similar look
worn by Theo
Tyralla at the
outbreak of
World War



Strangely enough, Johnnie's name mysteriously vanishes from *The Performer* thereafter, although the London telephone books affirm the capital remained his home throughout 1939. Margot had less and less to do with him anyway as the days and months passed by. Life had taken on a mediocre routine by this point and was far from that she'd envisaged when the couple stole away from Holland in late 1934 to be wed. True, she'd provided Johnnie with a son but she'd not counted upon being left alone and preyed upon by her mother-in-law.³²⁷

³¹⁹ *England in the Twentieth Century*. David Thomson. Second Ed. By Geoffrey Warner. 1981. Pg. 177

³²⁰ *Chiswick Empire. The Performer*. March 3rd, 1938. Pg. 11 and Pg. 20

³²¹ *Johnnie Riscoe. The Performer*. July 7th, 1938, Pg. 12 and August 18th, 1938, Pg. 17

³²² *Johnnie Riscoe. The Performer*. December 29th, 1938. Pg. 10

³²³ During the Christmas and New Year period it had been referred to as '*Doorlay's "Christmas Rocket"*.' See: editthis.info/uktvsschedules/?title=13_January_1939&redirect=no. Ten days later (January 16th-28th, 1939) it was on stage at the Bristol Hippodrome then Manchester, Ilford, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Leeds (March 27th and April 3rd), Nottingham, Coventry and Kingston come May 15th, according to an ad in *The Performer* on February 2nd, 1939. Pg. 13. It was also broadcast by the BBC: see: hippodromebristol.co.uk/index.html and hippodromebristol.co.uk/page6.html.

³²⁴ *The Performer*. February 2nd, 1939. Pg. 13 (Doorlay Advertisement); *With Doorlay Abroad. The Performer*. August 3rd, 1939. Pg. 9 and *Doorlay's Shows. The Performer*. August 24th, 1939. Pg. 4

³²⁵ *Johnnie Riscoe III. The Performer*. June 15th, 1939. Pg. 12

³²⁶ See Chapter IX, Pt. 2. Pg. 279

³²⁷ Riscoe's home remained: 3 White Heather House in Cromer St. while his electoral register was *St Pancras South East*, according to ancestry.com

With declarations of war ringing in their ears, the Hinsch cousins, ranging in age from their mid-20s to early 30s, relatively settled and all with young families, were about to face a Second World War. Involuntarily stranded on opposing sides, Nannj and Margot were initially spectators, watching, waiting to see whether their *Heimat* was about to bring Europe to its knees and if it did, how would they as 'foreigners'³²⁸ explain that to their family members and neighbours? (And one may wonder too, how their German kin looked upon them in September 1939, recalling how they'd already been left fatherless during the First World War)?

They and their Hinsch cousins were scattered across the German Empire and beyond, from Vienna to Frankfurt, Machern to Dresden, and in Holland and England; six cousins in five lands (counting Saxony). They were already part of a generation who had lost much, but were about to suffer a great deal more.

The stage that had brought their seniors together in Chapter V and during the period 1900-1907, was now devoid of its 'stars,' the stage lights about to be blacked out. There would be no more rehearsals.

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³²⁸ Even if the Tyrallas had each rescinded their German citizenship and been out of the country for a decade or more, they will still have felt strong ties to the place of their birth, not least with close family still there.