

4th April 1945.

When I ceased my diary entries in 1939 after the invasion of Poland, I was still hoping for a triumph of reason and therefore a tolerable peace. In the five years and seven months since then, this country has been the site of a bloody, cruel and chequered war, rendering impossible the mere hope of a triumph of reason. Now, however, Germany has been thoroughly beaten and the enemy is just a few kilometres away from Göttingen. To the south, they are coming up the Werra, and to the west, they have reached the Weser. Something that has not happened since the days of Napoleon I is now taking place: the whole of Germany is being flooded with enemies. And yet, the National Socialist leadership has decreed: fight to the last! Guerrilla warfare, then, insofar as a regular war can no longer take place. However, this of course means that the last areas spared by the war and terror of bombs are now being laid to waste—and Göttingen was one of those places. This madness is becoming a permanent condition.

What of the domestic situation and the mood among the majority of German people at this time? The first thing to say is that almost everyone has become destitute, despite the fact that nobody has ever possessed as much money as they do now. But because nothing can be bought with this money—and this has been the case for years—everywhere, people are lacking in the essentials in terms of clothing, household objects etc. In contrast, a sufficient amount of food was available up until a week ago thanks to a good distribution committee, although many did still go hungry. Since the enemy has advanced almost to the heart of Germany, however, the food situation is becoming catastrophic. Bread, fat and meat are rationed in the extreme and people are living far below the breadline. A 'black market' as it exists in other countries has admittedly only established itself to the smallest extent up to now, as draconian laws and measures sensibly present obstacles. But it is clear that it will establish itself as soon as these measures are overruled (e.g. by occupation authorities). So we are going to be faced with a famine, the likes of which there has not been for centuries. And this in the glorious 20th century, that is to say at a time when man is supposedly celebrating his greatest triumph since the very beginning of mankind's existence! Madness!

And the mood among the people? It goes without saying that everybody is war-weary. But in addition to that, at least 90% of all Germans are experiencing a dull sense of hopelessness. The possibility of an uprising against this impending doom, the likes of which led to a revolution in 1918, is as good as non-existent at this time, as the National Socialist state has taken precautions against it: spying on suspects, terrorising and taking a draconian approach to 'traitors'—all of this has created the silence of a graveyard. In the area already occupied by the enemy, vigilantism rages. An uprising is therefore completely out of the question. That being said, enthusiasm for the National Socialist state has reached freezing point among the majority of the German population. One can discern without bias that Adolf Hitler's reputation has also taken a serious battering amid the public since the unfortunate winter campaign in Russia, and especially in Stalingrad. *Aura popularis!*¹

What will the coming days and weeks bring us? Acts of war, certainly. To some extent it is safe to say that the party will try to defend Göttingen too. The fact that this is pure madness, that such an enterprise can only create greater suffering, bloodshed, ruins and tears, without even a remotely corresponding success for the war being achieved, matters little to these men. They have nothing more to lose anyway, so why should the less compromised have it any better. That, at least, is the opinion of the people, against which a silent, but absolutely powerless fury rages. Whether my family and I will survive the rest of the war under these circumstances is at the very least extremely doubtful.

¹ 'The popular breeze' – Cicero

Göttingen

5th April 1945.

Göttingen is anticipating a battle in and around the town—although everybody is convinced of the pointlessness of this enterprise—but the order has come that the town is to be defended to the last, and nobody dares to kick against the pricks. Apparently there have been protests from the university and, above all, from the directors of the countless sickbays and clinics, but in vain: the men at the head of the party (and they are the only ones with any clout at the moment) have decided that the Göttingen area must be defended and therefore there will be a battle. The mood of the people reflects what is happening: a few fanatics are eager to fight, but the overwhelming majority of people consider such an evidently pointless battle to be madness and are resigning themselves to the inevitable, either complaining or gritting their teeth, depending on their temperament. Personally, I have braced myself for the worst: if it does not cost me my life, which is by no means certain, it will doubtless cost me most, if not all, of the possessions that I have acquired at great effort over the decades. This would make my life no longer worth living. But I still have to take responsibility for my wife and daughter. Hopefully I will find the strength to do this. My current state of health will certainly not make this task any easier for me.

We have, as far as possible, prepared ourselves for the approaching days of evil: our most important possessions have been taken down to the cellar, provisions have, as far as possible (almost impossible!), been set aside and every thinkable eventuality [of war] has been discussed. For now, our plan is to stay within our own four walls, since fleeing might not offer us any greater degree of safety. Fleeing might also only lead us as far as a neighbouring village (Herberhausen?), where we would possibly be outside the battle zone for the time being. But because the enemy is advancing from the south, west and east, nothing is safe in this regard either. So, once again heavy formations are in flight (6th April,² 10 o'clock), so it's down to the cellar! An hour later: we disappeared just in time, because immediately afterwards bombs were whooshing down on Göttingen and thick black clouds showed that another part of the town had been reduced to rubble. It was reportedly the German State Railway repair workshop, indeed a plant of strategic importance, but if this is the case then it is a mere exception, because in countless towns it is predominantly homes and cultural monuments that have been destroyed, and in the most barbaric way. I know for sure that I am no ultranationalist, but when I just think of the senseless and culturally disgraceful way in which above all the Americans have raged against our most beautiful and holy monuments in Germany, anger and disdain is the only response to this sort of warfare. We Germans have made the greatest effort in this war to spare and protect cultural monuments in France, Italy, Greece, etc. But the Americans in particular demonstrate their lack of culture time and again. Inferiority complex?

It really is peculiar, what apathy can befall entire cities when death is approaching. As if in a trance, they stare at fate as it creeps towards them. Only very few are in a position to do something energetic. But what is there to even be done??? Things are unfolding like natural disasters (which is basically what they are) and what could be done to oppose them? One has to let them run their course. Those who then survive are simply the lucky ones. What surprises me time and again is how huge majorities of peace-loving people in favour of an orderly and decent existence let themselves be driven into such insane adventures by a few fanatics (and sometimes psychopaths). It is becoming increasingly obvious that it is not human reason, of the development of which many people are so proud, that rules the earth; rather it is unearthly forces, the roots and meaning of which we know only very imperfectly. These are forces that at first build up cultures and civilisations, in order to simply destroy them again just as thoroughly! What insanity!

² 'April' is inferred from context; digit is illegible.

Göttingen, 7th April 1945

The tense and dangerous days continue: early this morning at 1 am, the County Leader [*Kreisleiter*] gave a speech to the people, saying that if the enemy should approach, women and children would have the chance to evacuate Göttingen in time. The sirens would sound for five minutes, whereupon the people would have to get themselves into the air raid shelters and sit tight until it was over. The political leaders would then take those who wanted to leave Göttingen to villages thought to be safe. Clashes are to be expected near and possibly in Göttingen in the immediate future, then. Of course, the rumour is also circulating that Göttingen will be declared an 'open city' and be vacated by all military. But it seems to me that once again the wish was father to the thought. Because after the *Gauleiter*'s fanatical proclamation to the people today, calling for a fight to the last, a peaceful surrender of the town is unthinkable. In our house, however, all the women have decided to stay and the same is true of both my sisters. It seems likely, then, that the majority of Göttingen's women will stay in the town, which is consistent with a woman's more passive nature. Meanwhile we are living under a permanent air raid warning, a disturbance that goes to the very core of one's being. In addition there are the housewives' concerns about food, as it is impossible to get hold of many groceries, particularly bread, meat and fat, in sufficient amounts. Where these things do exist, they are hoarded indiscriminately by existing grocery brands, so that bakers, butchers and tradesmen of foreign goods [*Kolonialwarenhändler*] are not in a position to cope with the increased demand. The biggest shortage is in fat, and my wife sacrificed her small, personal ration of butter long ago for the rest of us and can no longer be persuaded to partake of the meagre leftovers that my daughter and I have. In the long term, this state is sure to lead to the physical collapse of a large part of the population. And if we are to believe our propaganda, then such a collapse, leading to the extinction of millions of Germans, is absolutely the intention of our enemies. Since those on the enemy side remember precisely what we have done to the Jews, Polish and even the Russians, it seems very likely that a cold lack of sympathy and a sense of brutality predominate over there. However, what they are forgetting over there is that a people driven to extremes means a perpetuation of the war. What is more, it would be water for the Bolshevik mills. And I do not believe it would be beneficial for the Western powers, with their highly capitalistic outlook, if the Bolshevik flood were to continue to rise. I do not think the British and US leaders are short sighted enough to want to drive 80 million Germans—i.e. high-quality soldiers—into the arms of Bolshevism. But it is absolutely certain that 99% of all Germans would rather become Bolsheviks than starve. From this perspective, there is a slight hope that things are not as bad as they have been made to seem. There is no doubt that a few rather promising cracks are now already showing in the structure of the 'allied' house, and quite unperturbed, they are already talking of a 'Third World War', which would mean a conflict between capitalism and communism. Should it get to this point, I am sure that communism would win out; at least it has a guiding new concept, something that capitalism definitely lacks. For the staunch National Socialists, changing over to communism would not even mean such a great leap, as many communist ideas can also be found in National Socialism. Another reason for our Western enemies to be gentler towards Germany than they are currently threatening to be. Indeed: quem deus perdere vult, dementat prius [whom the Gods would destroy, they first make mad]. And if, to paraphrase Gamaliel, 'this work or this counsel be "of God", ye (the capitalists, that is) cannot overthrow it.' Qui vivra, verra!

Göttingen, 8th April 1945.

The time has come, then: this afternoon at 1.30 pm, the Americans moved in on Göttingen. This was, of course, preceded by tense and dramatic events. First of all, the evening before: we were subject to an almost three-hour aerial bombardment, the likes of which we have not yet had in Göttingen. 6 or 7 waves groaned over Göttingen, one after the other, throwing down carpets of bombs. Fortunately, they fell exclusively in the area around the railway station, so reasonably far away from us. But still we could really hear the crashing and time and again the house shook to its foundations. But I must say this: nobody lost their nerve, not even for a moment. Everybody was prepared for the worst, but nobody complained or cried. Once this action was over, everyone went to dinner, as if nothing had happened. We Germans have simply got used to misery. After the bombardment, delayed-action bombs kept exploding, of course. But nevertheless, my daughter went with some student friends to a previously arranged social gathering.

My wife and I went to bed early, as there were and still are gas, water and electricity outages. An ugly business, should this state of affairs continue—which is to be presumed, unfortunately. At around 3 am, a violent crash shook our house. My wife leapt out of bed and cried ‘Artillery fire!’ But because my elder brother heard yesterday evening from a reliable source that Göttingen had been declared an ‘open city’, I reassured my wife and said it could only be unexploded bombs or delayed-action bombs. And when more than 100 similar explosions followed, never accompanied by the whine of shells that was so familiar to me, my wife became calmer too and I fell back into a blissful sleep. Unfortunately, the full alarm then sounded and my wife deemed it necessary to wake me. I threw on the minimum amount of clothing out of obligation and got back in bed, but my sleep was unfortunately disturbed for the rest of the night.

In the morning, we had breakfast like on every other day, and waited for the events to come. There was not long to wait: first, the more pleasant. The ‘Security and Assistance Service’ barracked opposite us (which is being closed and held hostage by the Americans at this moment—4.50 pm), distributed its last supplies to the population: peas, beans and sugar). We received a decent amount too, but we did not keep it for ourselves, rather handing some of it to my siblings and to a neighbouring family. After that, the sounds of combat outside Göttingen began. The Americans attacked from the west (Dransfeld). It was clearly a smaller rearguard action, judging by the shots. At 12 o’clock, our Sunday lunch, which was still very opulent (green beans with mutton and potatoes, along with a beautiful pudding with the last of the preserved peaches and..... a glass of peach punch, made from Moselle wine that was given to us by a botanist professor friend in exchange for cigarettes!!!), was ready and we climbed up from the cellar, where we had stored the majority of our personal belongings, including our beds, and dined with relative enjoyment. Then back into the cellar. Only my daughter was still upstairs washing the dishes. Just as our landlady’s son was proudly showing off his new dovecote to the other two of us, we suddenly heard the still familiar whine of an artillery salvo, immediately followed by a detonation not too far away. A rain of splinters fell not far from us. Was Göttingen to be shot at after all? It went on like this for an hour, but only a few shells hit the town, two of which were very close to us, that is to say they hit the 82nd barracks, which had already suffered badly from an aerial bombardment. Soon we were also hearing scattered rifle fire within the town. Indeed, a shell even came down on Friedländerweg, close to my sister’s flat, because a fleeing German soldier was apparently shooting there. My sister told us that the houses there were searched straight afterwards, but the American who conducted the search behaved in a very respectful and upstanding manner. So we stayed in the cellar in the meantime, where once again everybody kept completely calm. Very soon, there were no longer any shells hitting the town and the sounds of combat became more and more distant, heading towards Hainberg and Herzberger Landstrasse. After a while, we found the courage to go out onto the street and soon saw American tanks, driving through Göttingen towards the east. After a while, three trucks, completely full of Americans (so probably a company)

drove past us, heading south on Reinhäuser Landstr. In general, the population behaved in a dignified and cool manner, except for one hysterical or fearful woman, waving a bed sheet out of a second-floor window in one of the houses opposite, which aroused indignation on the part of all the neighbours. In any case, Göttingen is henceforth in enemy hands and it is looking to the future with bleak expectations. If our propaganda has not lied shamelessly, worse times lie ahead of us.

At this moment (5 pm) a current of American cars, tanks etc. is pouring through Reinhäuser Landstr. towards the south. Wonderful equipment in comparison with ours, which is largely fairly decrepit. The Americans do not care if the population gapes at them; they drive on their street with unmoved faces. We certainly cannot reckon with benevolence on their part. Hopefully we will bear this final act of the war with dignity! Lootings have not yet taken place but we are not out of the woods yet. Above all, I am worried about the Russian prisoners of war, once they are freed!

9th April.

Today, the first day under American leadership, has not brought any big changes into our lives. For the first time in years we could sleep in the certainty that there would not be an alarm. Then, in the morning, I walked through the town and saw the monstrous equipment that they have. With such riches, there is truly no art to warfare or triumph! Sanctioned by the Americans, there were serious lootings at the goods station: Germans and foreigners looting side by side, in fact. However, it seems that the foreigners went ahead and fired at the Germans among their fellow looters. At the Grotefend off-licence, Poles (and Russians?) were looting and cheerfully swilling alcohol, which was clearly not weak. As a result, there were also drunks to be seen, who doubtless present the biggest danger to us. Today, the occupation is supposed to arrive. If our flat is then seized, we will be homeless! Pleasant prospects! A number of regulations, only partially readable due to the crowds, have been posted at the town hall. Subsequently, the NSDAP and all its subdivisions have been abolished and the National Socialist legislation abrogated. This includes the law 'for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service', that they used to throw me out. I could, therefore, consider myself an active civil servant once again. But I do not place any value on this. From 7 pm, the population must stay in their homes, and they must not leave until 6 am. And whatever else there is in terms of the usual freedom restrictions. It is like a bad dream that has the potential to get much worse. As we do not have any electricity and newspapers are not being published, we are completely in the dark about world affairs. So far, the Americans are behaving decently. How it will be farther down the line remains to be seen.

Göttingen, 11th April 1945

Yesterday was truly a day of horror for us: unsuspecting, we had eaten a disproportionately good and ample lunch, when I was suddenly called downstairs. A squad of Americans was already standing there, one of whom spoke a smattering of German and indicated to us that we all had to vacate the house within two hours as it was being seized for the troops. No amount of negotiation did any good: all of a sudden, we had to gather together our most important possessions and we were standing on the street with them. But then it became apparent that the people in our community were willing to help after all: within the shortest amount of time, accommodation was secured for each of us; however, each of the three of us would have to have found shelter separately. At a pinch, our sister in Friedländer Weg would have even put us up all on her own. But then, we were saved: opposite us, a Mrs Reiter, afraid to live on her own (her two children were far away on fatigue duty) had left her flat and fled to her relatives in Schildweg. This was told to me by a sympathetic young woman from the neighbourhood who put it to me that we should negotiate temporarily taking over the flat. I set off straight away and met a very nice and understanding woman, who, after brief consideration, was in agreement with my suggestion. She immediately came with me and, very touchingly, eased our moving-in process by energetically putting the house in order for hours on end. For the three of us, there was admittedly some hard work, as we had to haul all of our belongings across. But my siblings and neighbours came energetically to our aid, and by the evening we were actually in a position to lie down in made beds and to eat a good evening meal – admittedly one already prepared that morning by my wife. The Americans' behaviour had once again been extremely decent, they assured us that the seizure would only last a few days and they let us take what we wanted with us. They even allowed us to go back and pick up things we were missing, which we did today. That said, they later demanded that we only ever enter the house under military supervision. Furthermore, they assured my daughter, who still speaks the best English of all of us, that none of our property would be taken. If the people stay like they have been so far, we really will only suffer minimal loss of property, but who can say how everything will continue. The war is supposedly finally lost. The word is that Bremen, Hanover and perhaps even Hamburg have been lost. Which side will the 'turning point' come from? What we hear from our army smacks of complete demoralisation. And the new 'wonder-weapons'? Was this just a hoax, propaganda? Then it would really be criminal recklessness, no, a crime, to leave the rest of Germany at the mercy of total destruction. Our little neighbouring town of Northeim is supposedly just a pile of debris, because of the crazy idea of defending this absolutely defenceless nest. Göttingen, on the other hand, was [handwritten verb?] by its mayor who, although he was a high-ranking SS man and therefore extremely threatened, stuck to his guns and surrendered the town, something for which his former enemies give him great credit. He is supposedly being replaced by a circuit judge by the name of Schmidt, who admittedly only took on this thorny office when it was threatened that a Russian would otherwise be put in charge of the town. But of course it will be a very dangerous office that he is taking on, given the threat of vigilantism on the part of the extreme party members. But under these circumstances, the man's self-sacrifice and courage is of even greater value. Personally, I would only be willing to resume office again in the most extreme of emergencies, having had such [illegible] experiences with enemy and 'friend'.

Göttingen, 13th April 1945

I have been anticipating this 13th with some trepidation. And as the morning began with a tense quarrel with my wife before we even got up, the day seemed to become somewhat ominous. After coffee, I proceeded as usual to our house, anticipating some unpleasant altercations with the American occupiers, whose behaviour had become visibly less friendly. Evidently, the people who had stolen my beautiful camera, my binoculars and all manner of other things, and whose conduct while on our premises had also been quite rude, were feeling guilty; they had previously expressly stated that they would not take anything. But what an enormous surprise awaited me! The entire horrific episode had disappeared overnight and we were able to move back in!!! As we had the entire day to do so, we were able to take our time and did not need to rush around and haul our belongings across like crazy. Admittedly, we were met by unimaginable chaos and squalor to match: these people had rifled through everything, and I mean everything, in search of souvenirs and useful items, from the cellar to the attic, these good men had searched for drink and, to some extent, for food. Our cellar, which admittedly had not contained much of which they could have made use, was admittedly spared, but they had pounced on the fruit wine and the egg supplies belonging to our landlady and seemingly the meat preserves belonging to the doctor living beneath us. Evidently they had held a wild farewell feast, as they had thrown up all over the place. Not that I expected anything else. Yes, I must say, I expected worse. In the flat below us, they at least left a lot of chocolate and sweet things behind. At our place, they just left some tobacco and a faulty French radio, faulty boots and similarly worthless items. A second, albeit worthless camera had also been taken, as had darning wool, sewing thread, buttons and items of similar importance to us at this time. But the furniture was intact after all, and as for pictures, they had only taken a small miniature, admittedly one in a frame of precious stones (=coloured glass). They had looted my coin collection too. Despite these losses, which were certainly painful, we were still happy that more had not befallen us. We set to moving back in with happy hearts. Whether we would be permitted to continue living here from now on? Apparently the final—actually English—occupation moved in today. God grant that they do not resort to our house again!

A very important announcement has been doing the rounds today: apparently, Roosevelt has suddenly succumbed to a stroke! In itself, this would hardly have an effect on the progress of the war. At most, America's position would be somewhat weakened, as R was a formidable leader after all. He is the first of the 'BIG three' to depart. And he did not live to see the triumph of his idea! Who will be the next? Churchill is an old man, and Stalin is reportedly not healthy. On the other hand, Hitler's position could be described as desperate. But one does hear rumours that he is still pointing to the imminent 'turning point'. Is he bluffing or is this the truth? As a result of the lack of electricity, we are completely cut off from all world affairs and are completely in the dark. The Americans are making considerable advances, otherwise the horrific episode in our house would not have ended so quickly. I could imagine something akin to the Battle of the Marne along the banks of the Elbe, if we still had reserves and 'wonder-weapons' in reserve. In itself, this is very unlikely, but this is a war in which the unexpected has occurred at every juncture. So there is nothing to do but wait. If this 13th has actually been a rather lucky day for us, it was an important one at any rate!

Göttingen, 15th April 1945

For the first time in many months, I am sitting in my own room, at my writing desk, in front of my type writer. The room is even tolerably warm. Not that new fuel has suddenly appeared! But since this morning, I have been burning surplus books and letters. And as it is still +13 degrees C outside, I have been able to raise the temperature in this room to +17 degrees, which we are sufficiently hardened to endure as room temperature. We slaved all morning in order to get our flat back to its peacetime state, as the withdrawal of the Americans has freed us from our forced shared living situation with a woman from Cologne and her two little girls, so that at the moment we are completely alone in our own four walls. Admittedly, who knows for how long? Every moment, I think that a new phase of Americans is going to throw us out of our flat again. However, we now have the Red Cross flag on our house and I myself would also try to assert—on account of my political history—that we are not thrown out a second time. Because it is somewhat grotesque that as an enemy of the Nazis I was thrown out of office by the Nazis and then experienced the same fate at the hands of the ‘liberators’. I mean, one would be better off with the great Nazi leaders in the first instance! Incidentally, there is a rumour circulating today—albeit unconfirmed—that Germany has surrendered unconditionally; if this is true, the criminals who for weeks have burdened us with unspeakable devastation, despite surely knowing that this war was lost, can hang themselves on the next tree! Should the rumour turn out to be true, we are facing a bitter, evil time: hunger, suffering and unspeakable humiliation will be imposed upon a brave and cultivated people. Because it is absolutely certain that our enemies will not be chivalrous or even merciful. The Versailles disgrace, which was actually what caused Hitler and his band of criminals to come to power, ought to make it clear to every sensible person that the mistreatment of a people inevitably leads not to the pacification of the world, but rather to new unrest. But the fact that common sense does not rule the world has now been so often proven that it will not gain control this time either. Even for the simplest of reasons, because Russia, for example, has absolutely no interest in a peaceful Western Europe. To make Europe definitively ready for communism, the circumstances cannot be confused or wretched enough. And as the enemy western powers are definitely not capable of waging war on practically unassailable Russia for years on end, but are rather in a hurry at this point to end the East Asian war as quickly as possible, they will not be able to or want to put a stop to what Russia is doing. And so the next blows will be on our backs. Poor Germany!

Word is that the English administration is already installed here and has already started work. They are said to have spoken in a very reassuring manner, but I was a prisoner of war for too long and know the mentality of the victors too well to expect much good. We will be allowed to starve and freeze as we have never experienced it before. Millions of Germans will perish and further millions will be driven into forced labour or deported. The entire German people will have to atone for all the brutality and the atrocities that the Nazis visited on the Jews, Poles and Russians. Those who know the thirst for revenge among the victims of Nazi terror (and is this thirst for revenge in any way unjustified?), know what will happen to all of us, the innocent and the guilty. For me personally the only question that remains is whether I ‘suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune’ or put an end to it without further ado. If I did not have to take responsibility for my wife and child, the answer would be simple.

Göttingen, 18th April 1945

These first 10 days of the occupations have been relatively kind to Göttingen and to us: larger riots on the part of the occupation troops have not taken place, nor have large-scale lootings by foreigners. Of course, one cannot say that everything has proceeded decently. Robberies, lootings and thefts are happening in many places and unfortunately there is word of rapes by Negro soldiers. But I feared much bigger riots and have long pointed out to important party members among my acquaintances the danger of Göttingen being flooded by foreigners. But the party has utterly failed here, as it has elsewhere. Foreigners have not been deported in good time, nor have arrangements been made for a timely distribution of the vast amounts of army supplies among the population. As a result of this, the commissariat was opened just at the last minute and people who were in the right place at the right time were able to carry hundreds of fat supplies away with them, quite apart from the fact that the foreigners threw themselves at these supplies too. The worst of it took place at the goods station: alongside foreigners, numerous Germans shamelessly threw themselves at what was available. As a result, soon there will be no more fat to be distributed. Bread is also in short supply: each person is receiving half a loaf this week. Livestock has not arrived, so the meat rations will be tiny too, or non-existent. What is strange is this lethargy that has befallen everyone. For 10 days, we have had neither gas nor electricity, but at the electricity plant workers and engineers are sitting around inactive, waiting for orders from the occupation authorities. And so it is everywhere: nobody is working, everybody is completely numb and without energy. I just do not understand why the new acting mayor, a district court judge called Schmidt, who had to take on this thorny office quite against his will because the occupation threatened to otherwise put a Russian at the head of the city (!), is not taking more energetic measures. But who knows what restraints and obstacles are piling up in front of him.

Yesterday we got our first look at a newspaper published by the occupation: the *Kölner Kurier* [Cologne Courier]. It gives at least an impression of the current situation on the front. According to the paper, a 160-km stretch of the Elbe has been captured; there is a battle in Bremen; Hanover, Braunschweig, Magdeburg, Würzburg, Erfurt, Gotha and Weimar are lost. In the east, Vienna has been lost to the Russians who are nearing Brno, meanwhile, they have been unable to make any greater progress towards Berlin. In contrast, Königsberg surrendered and Hitler had the commanding general's family held hostage and hanged (!?!). If the latter should be true, it will be a new crime committed by the gang that hurled Germany into misfortune. Now that tongues are loosening, we are discovering the most terrible atrocities carried out by the Gestapo and the SS that is linked to it. If even a fraction of these things turns out to be true, all of the leaders and many of the implementing organs of the NSDAP deserve to die a thousand times over. They have brought shame on Germany's good name to such an extent that, for this reason alone, they do not deserve any mercy. Apart from that, many party bigwigs are still running free in Göttingen and trying to terrorise the population even from the underground. As there are provisionally two administrations—the American military administration and the English civil administration, as well as the third, absolutely powerless, German city administration—each sphere of influence is obviously still so poorly delimited that no single administration can take decisive action. Well, this will change soon enough.

Göttingen, 19th April 1945

Today I had an experience that alleviated my deep pessimism about the state of humanity at least a little. As is often the case these days, I was walking in the woods, collecting the firewood we need for the kitchen. As I approached the Kaiser-Wilhelm Park, with a heavy rucksack and two even heavier logs under my arms, my path crossed that of three young people, obviously foreigners, speaking French. One of them was whistling part of a Beethoven symphony to his companions. I turned around and said 'C'est de Beethoven, n'est ce pas?' The young man answered in the affirmative. When I had gone a little further, I sat down on a bench on the path and as the three walked past me, a conversation came about naturally. They were three young Belgians from Leuven. Two students and a businessman who were on fatigue duty in Germany. Very nice—but at the same time cultured—boys of about 20. It was a first-rate conversation. Their attitude to the great misfortune of Germany was one of sensitivity, of tact and of concern that won me over immediately. During the course of the conversation by the bench, it quickly became clear that they felt exactly the same way as me about the state of American and Russian culture. They were also clear in their minds about what a catastrophe this victory of the Western and Eastern peoples meant for European culture and for their generation, and they were also of the unanimous opinion that the Germans were not 'barbarians'. It was a joy to hear these calm, sensible young people speak. When we walked on, they took hold of my two heavy logs as if it were simply a matter of course. And as if that weren't enough: when they saw fallen trees in the woods, the nicest of them, a professor's son, declared: 'We'll take one of these trees back home for you!' And they would have done so, despite my protests, if the logs had not turned out to be too heavy! I must say, I was very moved by their decency. They then accompanied me almost all the way back to my apartment and we parted with the warmth of very old friends. This experience has transformed the entire evening for me, because I have now truly grasped that alongside the brutality and scurrility that is now spreading on all sides, there is still such a thing as decency and good people, thank God.

20th April

I have just seen on my calendar that today is Hitler's birthday. Can there still be people in Germany who celebrate it? Occasionally one hears a sentimental little old dame saying that she feels sorry for him: he knew nothing of all the rascality perpetrated in his name! Who seriously believes this? He is just as brutal as his cronies, those criminals Himmler, Ley, Göbbels, etc.

The more I think about our situation, the more confused I become by it. Only a blind fool could hope that the German people have any hope of mercy whatsoever. The English, who are not really interested in our annihilation in the least, have sunk to a level of insignificance compared with the USA and USSR. Our fate will be decided exclusively by these latter two world powers. And I suspect that the USA will become indifferent to our fate. Sooner or later, we will be handed over to Russia and then God help us! Admittedly, England would hardly be unperturbed by such a hand-over as Russia would soon be present in the Channel, in the Bosphorus, in the Persian Gulf and in the Suez Canal. But England will not be asked. Hitler was Germany's grave digger, and Churchill was England's. Perhaps these questions will lead to a third world war, which will be carried out at our expense (and that of others).

Göttingen, 27th April 1945

Now that Göttingen has been under Anglo-American occupation for almost 3 weeks, it is possible to offer a summary overview of this difficult initial period. To start with, one can state: actual starvation has not yet begun in Göttingen. Most people have had sufficient provisions to keep the wolf from the door relatively well, although the beginnings of malnourishment are already apparent. My family is among those to have come through this initial period almost unharmed. But now many provisions really are running out, even ours; and as for what the future holds—that is shrouded in darkness. I fear that we will not escape true starvation.

Cooking is quite another story, since there is no gas or electricity. Admittedly, we are in the fortunate position of having a coal range—albeit one that is highly defective and not fuel efficient—but many Göttingen residents, particularly those among the upper 10,000, are not in this position. Some have had to go without warm food for many days until they found some sort of workaround. But the absolute lack of fuel persists for everyone. If the doctor below us managed to get hold of 50 kg of lignite briquettes through rather nasty bribery or foul play (just as he hoarded groceries in a similarly unsavoury manner), then this is most certainly an exception—even if a ‘black market’ does, of course, exist in Göttingen. But the majority of Göttingen residents have to go into the woods and bring back firewood for cooking. The city is judiciously allowing its large quantities of alder trees to be felled and anyone can collect one or several pushcarts of really thick—albeit quickly combustible—wood, for the price of just one Mark. However, more recently one has to cut down and chop up the trees oneself. I have done this four times, at great effort, but now my hands are so sore that I have to take a break from it. Well, it was worth it though! Even more so because I had already carried a large amount of dry twigs and branches back with me previously. True, our sad oven eats up such large amounts that this drudgery is far from being over. All of Göttingen comes together to chop wood, from decent university professors to the simplest workers.

Meanwhile, the English have taken over the actual administration here, but we see almost exclusively Americans with unimaginably opulent equipment and corresponding weaponry and..... foreigners. The latter are a real menace, even if they are kept in check very well by the Americans. Recently, a publication called the *Göttinger Mitteilungsblatt* has been appearing from time to time, in which the military regulations, as well as the punishments of residents who have breached these regulations, are published. In the last paper, revealingly, only the names of six foreigners (Poles, Russians, Frenchmen and Spaniards) were published, credit for which must be given to the military administration, which obviously does not discriminate. Starting today, the evening curfew has been extended from what was 7 pm to 8.30 pm, which is doubtless a form of recognition on the part of the military administration of Göttingen’s ‘good behaviour’. Hopefully no idiots or fanatics will ruin this gradual transition to rather more reasonable circumstances!

Strange things have been said around Göttingen in the last few days: that a rift has developed between the Russians on the one hand and the Anglo-Americans on the other; that the San Francisco Conference was an utter failure; that ambassadors have been called up from Moscow, etc. What is more, it is said that either we, meaning Hitler (!!!), were going to go with the Russians, or alternatively (this was the other, generally more desirable interpretation) our generals were going to go with the Western powers, without Hitler. Well, both were unconfirmed rumours. A premonition? Mind you, I consider it probable that Roosevelt’s sudden death was a heavy blow for Russian-American relations.

Göttingen, 30th April 1945

Today is a more meaningful day in the respect that we have electricity again and can therefore also listen to the radio again, which fulfils a particularly great need in the absence of newspapers. The news on the Luxembourgish station is admittedly devastating for Germany: they report that Hitler is fatally wounded, Goebbels is dead, Göring has fled and Himmler has offered unconditional surrender to the Western powers. Battles are still ongoing in Berlin and also in Munich. The Hamburg station still seems to be functioning, so presumably Hamburg has not yet surrendered. But the German resistance in Italy has also collapsed. Mussolini has been 'executed' in Milan, along with those faithful to him. In short: the game is up! Now we are at the mercy of a pitiless enemy. *Finis Germaniae!*

And for all of this, we have a handful of political adventurers to thank: criminals and dilettantes! True, who was it that first put Hitler and his henchmen in the saddle? The majority of the German middle classes! Right-wing parties and the centre contributed directly to this outcome, social democrats and small, moderate left-wing parties contributed indirectly through weariness. But there is one thing that should never be forgotten: that without the insane 'Treaty' of Versailles, Hitler would never have come to power. So the blame for this crazy Second World War, which signifies the destruction of the entirety of Western culture, should not, in turn, be placed solely on Germany; rather our enemies carry a good portion of the same on their own shoulders. But once again, the usual falsification of history will take place, and the defeated will become the only guilty party.

There is no hope of this insight predominating on the other side; rather the entire people will be judged and 'punished' without regard for the admirable, brave and fundamentally decent behaviour of the German people. I am the last person who wants to protect the true criminals on our side or to deprive them of their well-deserved punishment. I am convinced that tens of thousands of evil wretches have earned the hardest of punishments and must die for the fact that they have brought shame on Germany's good name and thrown Germany into the deepest unhappiness. I do not believe that any punishment is too severe for these criminals. But many millions of Germans either fought the rise of Hitler, as I did (and hundreds of thousands fell victim to the wrath of the Nazis—as I did), or at the very least stood to one side, intimidated, during the Nazi terror. One could probably say this of almost half of the German people in 1933. And the young generation has been forced into the ranks of the Nazis whether they liked it or not. Both as a teacher and as an observer at the universities of Göttingen and Tübingen, I have seen for myself just how little enthusiasm and just how much reluctance was felt by large numbers of this young generation as they gave their allegiance to Hitler. And they will all be 'punished' too, as long as they have not already long since paid for their forced allegiance with their death either on the battle field or in bomb-damaged towns. And then: who will punish the war criminals on the other side, where they are no less numerous than they are in Germany???. Getting on a moral high horse and talking about 'punishment' is ludicrous if this punishment only affects the losers. Each of the warring countries has every reason to clean up its own back yard! And as this will not happen, I think that this is a case of satiating a craving for revenge rather than carrying out a justified punishment. Now the world has fallen victim to insanity and we few 'normal people' will not be able to change it either. If only they would at least leave us in peace! But we too will be forced to join in with these insane goings-on.

Göttingen, 2nd May 1945

May has moved in, bringing with it cool air and sad circumstances: on Walpurgis Night, which we would otherwise observe with the obligatory May punch, we heard a moving apotheosis of a dying Berlin on the radio. As wretched as this downfall is and as criminal as it was to defend this poor city when there was no more hope of changing the fortune of the war through its martyrdom, as a German one was still proud of the composure with which the downfall of this metropolis was endured. 1st May was no holiday this year. I observed it with one of my usual 'walks' to collect wood, from which I returned home not only with a large amount of good wood from a beech tree on Westerberg that had been shot to pieces (by bombs!), but also with a bunch of mayflowers. The official announcement of Hitler's death arrived today; he is said to have fallen in battle in the Reich Chancellery. If this is true and not just a red herring to cover up Hitler's escape. His successor is the Grand Admiral Dönitz whose first move has been to call for further resistance. On the other hand, however, the evil Himmler—by all appearances in agreement with Dönitz—has offered unconditional surrender to the three major powers through Swedish envoy Count Bernadotte. And according to Churchill's announcements in the House of Commons, it seems that the European war is considered as good as over on the enemy side, meaning that it seems to be true that the Nazi rulers themselves have given up the game for lost.

The game was lost long ago, and the Nazi criminals knew it! But to extend their own lives and their own grip on power a little longer, they allowed a precious half year to elapse and Germany to turn into a heap of rubble! These criminals slaughtered hundreds of thousands of good soldiers and hardly fewer women and children, just as they murdered hundreds of thousands, in fact millions of concentration camp inmates with animalistic cruelty and, in so doing, shamed the German name in the most ghastly way. Unfortunately, most of these villains are now escaping their punishment, which really could not be cruel enough, through cowardly suicide or through far too honourable a death on the battlefield. A few of these villains will hopefully be brought to justice in a fitting manner. And with them many of their direct or indirect hangman's assistants! One may say, however, in favour of the German people, that the majority of them did not know about these shameful goings-on. I too belong to the unsuspecting: as often as somebody came to me with these gruesome stories, I simply did not want to believe it, because I could not believe that these sorts of beasts could exist among our—for the most part—decent and good people. I am utterly appalled by these facts.

May will bring us still more misery and distress. Even now, food is starting to become scarcer and scarcer. This entire week, for example, there is no fat, neither for spreading on bread nor for cooking! And time and again the enemy powers indicate that they will not help us with food. This means famine for the coming winter without a doubt. And as sufficient coal cannot be delivered, hunger will be joined by cold. Further hundreds of thousands will perish in misery and.... the floodgates will open on secret Nazi propaganda. I fear that world democracy will fail once again in the most miserable way, and in its place, communism or Bolshevism will take control. The Anglo-Americans may distance themselves from Europe in the first instance and be indifferent to its fate, but worldwide communism will soon prove their foolishness to them. Because it will certainly not stay in the areas it currently occupies. A Third World War is inevitable, despite the San Francisco Conference! In the meantime, I too am beginning to take an interest in political happenings once again, insofar as they affect the school.

Göttingen, 7th May 1945

It seems that we all agree on one point: we all reject National Socialist education. So we agree on a negative point.

However, we are also in need of a positive common goal and we have come together today in order to clarify this. But first of all we need to have a fairly clear idea of the current situation, that is the political situation in general and, more specifically, the school situation. Germany's defeat is total and final. Here in Göttingen, we are up against the victorious Anglo-Saxon powers in the first instance. Their differences with Soviet Russia are doubtless becoming increasingly acute. This is evident in Greece and in Trieste, where Marshall Tito protested in vain against the ongoing occupation of the town by Anglo-Saxon troops, but above all it is evident in yesterday's radio announcement about the Polish negotiator arrested by the Russians and in the abandonment of negotiations on Poland in San Francisco. We must plan for the fact that these differences will become more acute, but we cannot share in the hopes that the Hitler government placed on this. Because even a potential armed conflict would doubtless be fought at Germany's expense and that would mean the complete destruction of our country. Besides, the Soviet Union would presumably emerge victorious from this battle as it is to all intents and purposes unassailable, does not need to take public feeling into consideration (something on which the democratic states are dependent) and is also the only contending power that represents a new and indeed compelling concept. Should there be a battle between the victorious powers, sooner or later, Germany would become communist. This is the general political situation as far as I can see. —. Mr Küchemann and Mr Carstenn are in the best position to inform us about the specific situation regarding Göttingen school politics and about current prospects.

What is now required?

- a.) Changes to personnel. Compare Treitschke: 'One must change people if one wants to change measures.' No weak compromises may be made here. Compare also yesterday's interview with Cardinal Faulhaber in Munich, who requires above all reliable teachers. Teachers who have been strongly engaged in National Socialism must either withdraw entirely or at least be transferred to a different workplace. The teaching councils of each establishment must be fundamentally changed. Only completely unencumbered individuals are allowed to stay, those who guarantee to be able to work successfully and smoothly with either the new or the reliable existing director.
- b.) How should the student body look? The upper classes, from Class 5 upwards, are to be excluded entirely for the time being as they are, for the most part, so contaminated by National Socialist ideas that special measures must be taken to reverse their education (special courses, special camps, strict screening, etc.). That means that Classes 1 – 4 will remain. In their case too we must proceed with great caution and vigilance. Attempts at sabotage—even from the family home—must be punished with immediate expulsion. I am dubious about whether Class 4 will still be educable in school, as I know of several cases in which boys are utterly disturbed by the reversal of things and are, in some cases, stubborn. Perhaps one should proceed year group by year group and only allow the 1930 and 31 year groups into secondary school?
- c.) What can be achieved by means of education? One thing is clear from the outset: at this time, the school's goal is to emphasise political and ethical education rather than the transfer of knowledge. To this end, National Socialist misdeeds must be highlighted ruthlessly and unconditionally: mendacious propaganda, Byzantinism, the culture of denunciation, brutal treatment of humans and murder (concentration camps!), racial lies, etc. From a positive point of view, reconciliation between people, pacifism, an upstanding ethos, social thinking, tolerance etc. should be instilled into them.

d.) Lessons: Lessons in ethics are only part of it. First and foremost, history, *geography* [*handwritten*] and German lessons will not take place yet until certain books and reading sheets are available. Throwing light on misguided National Socialist politics and its horrific methods will take the place of history lessons. There is no way around the fact that first of all, the Germans will have to say a 'pater peccavi', clearly and unreservedly. The culpability on the other side, of which there is of course no doubt, should be emphasised much less than our own in this instance. As unpleasant, even despicable, as such self-incriminations are, there is no way around them if we ever want to win back the world's trust. At the end of the day, the Christian confessions are familiar with unreserved self-incrimination in the form of confession. Perhaps this task would be best left altogether to religion class, which has to be permitted again across the board; in fact it must be obligatory. Regarding the other subjects, languages, mathematics, natural sciences (biology of course without the study of race and similar National Socialist falsifications), art lessons and physical education will be administered without major limitations. At any rate, we must demand supervision of lessons by a third party, above all colleagues and parents from reliable circles, so that any sabotage of educational goals will be made impossible once and for all.

[Followed by largely illegible handwritten notes]

Göttingen, 10th May 1945

The day before yesterday, on 8th May, Germany finally and unconditionally surrendered. This draws a line under a tragedy that has thrown Germany back to the level of 1648. I expected this catastrophe from the first days of the war, just as I considered Hitler and his cronies to be criminals and the misfortune of Germany from their first days in power. Nevertheless I am just as affected by this catastrophe of my Fatherland, whose ingratitude I have experienced abundantly and at first hand, as is every other German who loves the Fatherland. I am also completely aware that the really evil days are still ahead of us: hunger and cold will bring about a bitter time for Germany. We cannot reckon with sympathy or mercy on the part of the victors. The chaos created by this insane war is so monstrous that even if the victors are well meaning (which I do not presume to be the case at all), it is inconceivable that this adversity will be quickly overcome. Add to that the bitter problem of the economy, which is utterly destroyed: our money will have to be devalued to such an extent that it will bring to mind the inflation of unblest memory. Meaning that, for the second time, we have not only lost the war but also our hard-earned savings. And without credit from the victorious foreign countries, the import of essential goods is inconceivable. But why should foreign countries give us credit??? We have, after all, become destitute, and we will certainly not be granted any credit on the strength of our workforce. Therefore we are completely reliant on ourselves. Us? How big will Germany still be? Our country will be cut up all over the place and the most valuable areas will be taken from us. It is unimaginable what hardship and confusion is still in store for the rest of Germany, of which Göttingen would presumably be a part.

In the first instance, small groups are attempting to find their bearings in their respective fields. In the field of school and of education, this means finding a path away from National Socialism and towards a reasonable world order. I, too, have come together with a small group of colleagues from Göttingen's secondary schools to create a committee, and first of all we are trying to take appropriate steps in the new situation. I enclose an outline of my suggestions, which admittedly were modified during the meeting. My colleagues were less hopeless than I was about how educable the older year groups in our schools would be. But the five of us agreed completely on all the fundamental points. As long as the schools remain closed, we now want to teach at least small groups of pupils in private, with the approval of the military administration. What is more, we will campaign with all our energy for the school to be thoroughly cleansed of all the teachers who in any way lent strong support to Hitler and his madness. Alongside our group, which is specifically concerned with school, another larger group has come together, consisting of university teachers, my elder brother and a local bookseller. This group is in close touch with the English and the Americans to tackle 'reversing the education' of the German people. My brother has written a series of outlines, the last and shortest of which is expected to appear in a newspaper published by the American army for the German population. First and foremost, it contains a resolute renunciation of Hitler and of National Socialism, as well as an admission of guilt. The last point is unfortunately necessary, even if there can be no doubt that the German people are not the only ones to blame for this war. But it goes without saying that the occupation authorities would not tolerate a discussion on the question of guilt. And now what is most important is that we win the trust of the world once more. – Incidentally, it was astounding how little clamour and noise accompanied the victors' triumph in Göttingen. Was this down to their tact or to their emotional constitution? Either way, we have noticed nothing in the way of victory celebrations, and at present, the victor has eased some of its measures (the black-out has been lifted and we are allowed to spend longer outside).

Göttingen, 20th May 1945, First Day of Pentecost:

The first Pentecost in 'peace' and after six weeks of occupation! One might think that the situation would have consolidated itself to a certain extent in these one-and-a-half months, especially as our erstwhile opponents had been able to reckon with our utter defeat with reasonable certainty for a year leading up to it and were therefore in a position to take measures well in advance. But one does not get the impression that the three major powers have reached an agreement yet on our intended fate—in spite of Yalta, Moscow and San Francisco. In fact, with regard to Russia, one could even say that the differences have intensified—as expected, incidentally!—and the possibility even of armed conflict (which unfortunately would be fought at our expense, and is as such as undesirable for us as could be!) is certainly in the realm of the possible. But this slow and uninterested approach is being taken to domestic German political problems in other ways as well, above all regarding the 're-education' of the German people and the urgently needed economic reconstruction. This approach is astonishing and, for us, very regrettable. Official radio programmes from London take a very energetic tone, but unfortunately they lack tact, spooking large parts of the German population with never-ending sermons instead of winning them over for reconstruction work and notions of freedom. At the same time, we have to put up with the fact that the reaction is raising its head, allowing a large number of evil Nazis to run free and continue their underground operations, and there is no support for those of us who would be ready to participate actively in the reconstruction work. So our situation is becoming somewhat hopeless. And should calorie intake really be limited to 1,200 – 1,500 for Germans, which is the same as a slow but sure starvation 'diet', that is to say the slow starvation of millions of Germans—as a biologist, of course, I know this very well—it would make a mockery of the nice things that are being said to the German people, like there is humanity, etc., from the outset. Which would mean, incidentally, that the survivors among the German population would, with one accord, turn to the Bolshevik front. I daresay that this would not be pleasant for the Western powers. What is also alarming is this endless moralising, which really is just the quite un-psychological continuation of the late Mister Goebbels' propaganda (only in reverse). Preaching sermons does not satiate people, nor does it make them moral, it makes them into cynics! Everyone will soon laugh about the moral cacophony coming out of London, just as they laughed about the stupid and clumsy moral falsifications of the former ministry of propaganda. And the hidden Nazis will raise their heads and say: 'See, they can't offer you anything better than we once could'. And they would not even be wrong in saying that.

On today's Pentecost, one should really remember the *hagion pneuma*, the Holy Spirit of reason, justice, truth and freedom! But I fear I will be proven right in my pessimism: 'rien oublié, rien appris'. As much as I missed the triumph of reason in this war, in turn I miss it just as much during this 'peace'! If the German (and Russian?) concentration camps and similar beastlinesses have already shown well enough that 20th-century civilisation (or rather culture) has not been capable of raising the beast within man even just a small amount above the level of the Thirty Years' War or the terrible cruelty that showed its face again and again over the past three or four millennia of human history, then the intentional starvation and subjugation of the German people will show that there can be no talk of a triumph of reason and humanity or of moral victory this time either. The *bête humaine* will triumph once again! Who still believes in 'progress' in terms of human development?!?

Göttingen, 30th May 1945

Now the 'wonderful month of May' is over and our situation actually has not changed at all: things have not taken a turn for the worse, the food situation, the treatment by the victors etc. have stayed the same, that is to say they are tolerable; and things have not taken a turn for the better either, the victors' cluelessness and indecision about fighting the National Socialist bigwigs and villains remains the same. This means that Nazis are already starting to quietly regain strength—many of them are still in their posts and are helping like-minded people so that, in many places, a secret sabotage of the restoration attempts is certainly being carried out. This is accompanied by very boorish propaganda from London: attempts are being made to 'educate' the German people, partially through moral hyperbole, partially through threats, each of which is as foolish as the other. It would be sensible on the one hand for the Allies to take strong action against the truly compromised Nazis, but on the other hand, the entire population should not be lumped together. Because every contemporary who lived between 1933 and 1945 with any awareness knows that large parts of the population really are innocent because going up against the terror of the Nazis would have been definite suicide. The hundreds of thousands of innocents murdered by the Nazis must make it clear to the Allies that any resistance would have been drowned in blood by the Gestapo, SS and other implicitly authoritative organisations, as in fact happened a thousand times over. Making the entire German people collectively responsible is a very comfortable but also a thoroughly unjust approach. And have the Allies not fought for a triumph of justice, humanity and freedom? Now, however, they themselves are highly unjust, inhumane (threats of starvation—they now want to authorise 1,150 calories, but this means death by starvation!) and the repression of every freedom. And what of their love of the truth? I doubt anybody would accuse me of being a protector of Goebbels's economy of lies, but when reading the newspapers published by the American army and when listening to London Radio I often have to shake my head because they do violence to the truth. *C'est la guerre?* I think that after the war at least, no more lies should be needed.

The food situation is, of course, much improved by the increasing produce from the gardens. We too have already started to make preserves, predominantly marmalade. There are also lettuces, radishes and much more. What is less pleasant is that we are still forced to fetch wood from the forest for heating and cooking purposes—an unspeakable nuisance that I must endure every few days. At the age of 61, it is no fun to carry home 40 to 50 pounds of wood in a rucksack or over my shoulder and at relatively long distances, as the closest part of Göttingen Forest has already been completely cleared of wood. For a while now, as a botanist, I have had a pass for a 30 km radius. That means I could, theoretically, go as far as my beloved Werra Valley, to Edesheim and Herzberg. But unfortunately I do not have a bike, meaning that such undertakings remain theories.

The day before yesterday, we experienced the great joy of seeing one of our best friends—a law professor at the University of Prague—return in relatively good health after we had almost given him up for lost. He had admittedly experienced some terrible things in Prague, where the Czech mob rules: he, his wife and his small children were made to face a wall and were threatened with death by shooting in the back of the neck. They were only rescued from this terrible situation by their Czech neighbours. His wife was hit in the face and he was kicked, and so on. His wife and children were recognised as Dutch by the Swedish consul, but he himself as a citizen of the German Reich was in constant fear for his life, so he left the town at his wife's request and, after a hazardous journey, arrived with us.

Göttingen, 14th June 1945

The sixty-first year of my life is coming to an end amid chaos and anxiety. Walking through the streets of Göttingen, one rarely sees a carefree German face. Only the numerous foreigners are carefree, above all the American soldiers and the Eastern peoples. Not even the English, who are now taking over the occupation of Göttingen, are consistently carefree and jolly, which admittedly is probably partly due to their nature. But the Germans are anxious and haggard, with very few exceptions. The dark clouds of the immediate future hang over them: starvation? Freezing [to death]? The arrival of the Russians? etc. It is as though everything is paralysed and waiting, hypnotised, for an inescapable catastrophe. At the same time, a peculiar relationship—towards the Eastern people and the Italians in particular—has established itself. These strangers wander through the streets with sacks and packages and offer (doubtless stolen) goods: sugar, all manner of preserves, wheels, fabrics, etc. in exchange for watches, jewellery, items of clothing etc. and they often pay reasonably well. Germans of all stations from famous university professors through to uneducated workers take part in such exchanges without a moment's thought, because everyone has the same needs: everywhere there is a lack of meat, fat, sugar, soap and much more. There is no doubt about it: our youth is being morally corrupted in exactly the same way as they once were in the deplorable days after 1918. A somewhat apocalyptic mood predominates. We have given up hope of a triumph of reason on the part of the Western enemies and look on, paralysed, as their cluelessness and helplessness in the face of urgent problems drives us into the arms of Bolshevism. Personally, I simply cannot comprehend how a country such as England could fail to see the dangers with which it (and then doubtless the USA too) is threatened. If there were a more cultivated, Western alternative to the Asian and in method and practice unfortunately barbaric Eastern Bolshevism, I would not be anywhere near as pessimistic: I have always taken a staunchly anti-capitalist position, socialist in the reasonable sense, and would by all means participate in a Bolshevism without cruelty or anarchy but with discipline. But what we are hearing from the increasing areas of Germany that are occupied by the Russians (they are now occupying Thuringia and the Province of Saxony and are only a few km away from Göttingen!) is often so atrocious that one would rather be dead than experience those conditions here: *Vogelfreiheit*³ for women of all ages, complete enslavement of all men capable of work, concrete pro-Bolshevik propaganda, and so on. And it is unmistakable: as clueless as our Western victors are, and as boorish as their attempts to 'democratise' Germany have been, the Russian approach to Bolshevising Germany has been skilful and purposeful: they are taking the basic necessary food resources away from the Western provinces in that they are securing the large agricultural areas for themselves so that the overpopulated West will certainly be driven to starvation, and for that reason alone, will be ripe for Bolshevism. Their agents have long been operating to that end in Western areas, which can only mean that a union between the old parties—the social democrats, the Centre Party and the bourgeois right—is possible, but not with the communists. They tend to lurk threateningly on the sidelines. At the same time, they are making use of the 'oil spill tactic', in that they are claiming and obtaining one area after the other from the Allies. The latter are obviously quite powerless in the face of Russian advances and would rather sacrifice Germany than risk locking horns with the enormous continental power in the East. They—the English, especially—prefer a policy of helping out and of taking things one day at a time, rather than considering the longer term. Is there not a chance that they themselves are being seriously taken in???

Incidentally, yesterday I went for my first big car journey in a long time: I went to Hanover and Hildesheim with two colleagues, partly for personal reasons and partly on behalf of the school, then to the executive council [*Oberpräsidium*] and to the regional council [*Regierungspräsidium*]. At the executive

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vogelfrei> '...none can be made liable for any crimes committed against [them]...'

council, an old head teacher and fierce ally of the [...] republic, Dr. R. Brill was in charge [...] of school affairs for the province. [...]⁴

... I took advantage of the opportunity that presented itself and participated in this journey. At the executive council, disappointment awaited us: it was clear that 'new wine was being poured into old skins' as numerous old faces were in evidence. Some people had been allowed to remain on or had been appointed to the board of education although they did not appear to offer us any guarantee or show any serious intention of making a genuine new start. Cluelessness and helplessness seemed to be the name of the game there too. The new director admittedly did demonstrate such an intention but in such surroundings he is unlikely to succeed. He actually demonstrated a certain (not exaggerated) benevolence towards me personally and also offered me some guidance on my own reinstatement. Aberich still had the feeling that he would not respond to my radical demands but would rather choose the path of compromise. If that happens, we will soon be back where we were around 1925: looking at a new victory of the government⁵. Even more devastating were the impressions that we took away from the regional council in Hildesheim: apart from the energetic director, who surely has the best intentions, all the bureaucracy and reactionaries have stayed and will be sure to sabotage any real democratisation. It would not help at all, of course, if—like at our school, for example—nine colleagues were let go (who have more or less 'earned' it, as I did at one time as an evil democrat). As long as the untouchable reactionary powers remain in charge, any radical approach among the lower echelons will be unsuccessful.

Hanover made a ghastly impression, Hildesheim perhaps even more so: the cities lie in ruins. Some parts of the outskirts of Hanover were at least still relatively habitable, whereas Hildesheim was completely destroyed, perhaps with the exception of the eastern half. The cathedral was in ruins; the churches of St. Godehard and St. Michael were at least still repairable. The beautiful buildings in the town centre were destroyed. Only a few factories, barracks and part of the railway (not the station itself) were still intact, so precisely those parts of the town that were of military significance had been spared. It was clearly a case of barbaric attacks (in Dresden, where hundreds of thousands of poor people were slaughtered, this barbarianism was admittedly far exceeded). The thought of how those who defeated us will one day justify this in the face of history is despicable to me! We breathed a sigh of relief as we left these drab cities behind us and drove through the almost completely untouched smaller places on our way, for example Northeim, Einbeck, Alfeld, Elze and then our own almost intact Göttingen. The Leinetal region has remained almost untouched by war, which to my delight was finally confirmed when we drove through my home village of Edesheim. Thanks to the wise and prescient leadership of my youth-time companion, fellow member of the students' society and friend, the mayor Gustav Berner (who has now unfortunately been deposed because of his many years of party membership—although he belonged to our anti-Nazi front for many years), everything was in the best possible shape. Poles and other foreign peoples were still in their jobs, thefts and lootings were not taking place anywhere and the entire village made a splendid, well-ordered impression. It ought to erect a memorial in honour of its former mayor, its true saviour.

⁴ Bottom of page is torn and some words are missing

⁵ *Raktion* in the German is presumed here to be a typing error of *Rektion* (government).

Göttingen, 29th June 1945

Almost a quarter of a year has elapsed since the Americans invaded Göttingen and it is already two months since Germany was finally beaten, and yet this torpor and helplessness still persists among most Germans. Admittedly, the situation is suitably desperate: Germany is being—there is no overlooking it now—‘punished’ and humiliated in a way only seen in the likes of Carthage and Jerusalem in the very olden days. Despite Stalin’s loud assurances that Germany should not be carved up, it now seems that he wants to give the majority of East Germany to his loyal Poland. Including the Sudeten Germans, about 20 million people of German descent will be displaced from that area. France is going to recoup itself in the west and even Holland, that clever country, is making territorial demands. If we were a nation without space [*Volk ohne Raum*] before, we will now be a seething mass of people in the smallest space, in comparison with which even an ant hill would look empty. Göttingen is already getting a taste of this situation: to enter our streets is to enter a fray like that of a very busy street in a major city. About 10,000 foreigners and about 40,000 German refugees are said to have joined the 50,000 normal inhabitants! This has resulted in a confusion of languages. The Poles appear to be far and away the least pleasant: there are many lowlifes among them and, as a result, criminal offences such as robbery, theft and other acts of violence are the order of the day. And the occupation authorities are quite obviously aiding and abetting these Poles, and indeed the foreigners in general, who receive preferential treatment regarding food and clothing. It is a miracle that it has so far been possible to feed—albeit in meagre amounts—a population that has grown by 100% and it has only been possible because it is summer and the gardens are doing well. But every German living in a city like Göttingen looks emaciated and more or less miserable (a few exceptions only serve to prove this rule!). Curiously enough, there is one type of grocery that has so far been disproportionately ample: sugar! Probably because we live in a sugar beet area. But fat, meat and processed foods are all the scarcer or are being withheld in the extreme. This week there was absolutely no meat, but 85 grams of butter in its stead (which is currently in curiously ample supply as a result of the fact that it comes from Denmark). This replacement was carried out in a very mechanical manner, calorie for calorie, meaning that 9 x 85 grams of butter was given in lieu of 4 x 175 grams meat, without a thought for the fact that it is not just about the number of calories in a given food item, but about its composition, that protein is not the same as fat. The body may well be able to endure this for a week, although it goes without saying that in the context of a generally insufficient amount of protein, this lack of protein will also be felt. In the long term, such dietary experiments imposed by the authorities are catastrophic. And unfortunately the English are, to a great extent, bureaucrats and pedants—not just when it comes to food but also when it comes to ‘re-educating’ the people. But they have already sussed that one out: restricting people to 1,300 or 1,500 calories could quickly lead to a hunger catastrophe and the political consequences that go with it (only the latter has a persuasive effect on them! Despite their Christian views!). 2,000 calories are now being permitted—of course, this is still far too little, although it does postpone starvation. But the air of confusion is increasingly gaining ground, and when the Russians one day advance into Germany, which is to be expected, Bolshevism will find that the English have prepared the way for them. The Russians seem to me to be the only victorious power that knows precisely what it wants and that has a systematic and clever approach. They are already allowing the Communist Party that has formed in East Germany to declare on the radio that they reject Russian communism for Germany and will be carrying out a Western European alternative. This will appease those fearful minds that are afraid of Asian barbarianism and pave the way for communism. The way things are now, one seriously has to ask oneself if it would perhaps be better to throw out the old democratic ideal and join communism, which is at least a new and a triumphant idea. Personally, I see so much pathetic uncertainty and helplessness among the ‘neo-democrats’, that I am by no means sure whether I should keep trying with such a fickle and listless community. Today, we had our first conference at school since the collapse. As no fewer than 10 colleagues have been removed, we were a round dozen, among whom only six or seven were permanent employees (and I myself am not one of them). But my impression of this gathering was devastating. I did not notice any kind of concrete plan or genuine determination to rebuild.

Nobody (except for me and two colleagues) risked taking a clear stand. The conversation danced fearfully around the actual situation. My attempt to force a stand to be taken was rejected by the very colleagues who share my views. The only colleague who spoke forcefully (because he is now climbing the career ladder) spoke in such a didactic and threatening tone that he hardly made a case for democracy. In general, it seems to me that in matters of personnel, the usual tomfoolery is at play: teachers who should have become cobblers and those who did not dare to stick their necks out either before or after 1933 out of fear, but who were downright scatterbrains, cowards or even reactionaries when it came to politics, continue to be unleashed on the youth. People like me, on the other hand, who have demonstrated a concrete democratic standpoint throughout their entire lives, must watch as political opportunists and overachievers adopt leadership positions. Personally, I have completely lost any political ambition or desire for a 'career'. I would prefer to just work in my beloved botany and tell them, like the late Augustus of Saxony once advised, to take care of their own dirty work⁶. But I fear that if the few dependable ones also sulk off, disgusted, into a corner, the cart will get stuck in the mud even more quickly than it would otherwise. All the same, I find it rather embarrassing to have received the following letter from my former ally in Leer (whom I seconded often enough in political battles in those days), the Head of the Regional Council [*Regierungsdirektor*] Dr Brill, written at the behest of the President of the Executive Council [*Oberpräsident*] of the Province of Hanover regarding my request for reinstatement into active service: 'I will come back to your request as soon as it is clear how many teachers are needed'. Meanwhile Mr Brill, who is precisely aware of my stance, knows very well that truly reliable teachers are few and far between and that he ought to be happy to have as efficient a teacher and educator, not to mention politician, as me (je sais, que je vau! [I know my worth!]). I have the greatest desire to withdraw my request and to respond as follows: 'Dear Mr *Regierungsdirektor*! I was delighted to deduce from your letter, dated 16.06.45, that my assumption that there is currently a lack of suitable, reliable, democratic teachers was unfounded. It was only under these circumstances that I put myself forward for reinstatement into active service. But since you obviously have a sufficient number of such teachers, I withdraw my request from the thirteenth of this month (!). It goes completely without saying that under these circumstances I would rather dedicate myself to the fundamentally less exciting botanical science as I am obviously not needed in the teaching profession. Please forgive me for taking up your valuable time in such a superfluous manner. Your old friend K.W.' As Brill and I know each other personally to some extent, he will resent me for writing such a letter. But should one unquestioningly swallow 'the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes'⁷, time and time again? Of course such a step must be carefully considered and carried out sine ira et studio [without anger or fondness]. But it is certainly worth considering.

⁶ Written here as '*Macht euren Dreck alleene!*' The original Saxon was '*Machd doch eiern Drägg alleene!*' literally 'Do your dirt alone!' See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Augustus_III_of_Saxony

⁷ Taken from 'To be or not to be', Hamlet, Shakespeare

Göttingen, 29th July 1945

Another month of 'peace' is coming to an end and we are still far away from peaceful conditions. The dull strain of defeat, humiliation and utter impoverishment is everywhere, and with it, the threat of the approaching winter, which we are facing without heating and with very meagre provisions. Only a few people have the courage to oppose this fate, all the fewer because another, much worse threat to our lives has undeniably emerged: the slow yet unswerving approach of the Russians. According to everything one hears about them, the destruction of European culture creeps along with them, quite apart from the fact that they are unashamedly robbing Germany blind in broad daylight: they gather up tools, engines, livestock, means of transport (including the railway tracks), precious metals etc., and transport them eastwards. It will be a looting of Germany, the likes of which we have not seen since the Huns and similar groups of people during the Migration Period. And with it will come a mass deportation of German people and an enslavement that will far exceed that of the Nazis. Meanwhile the calming tones of propaganda ring out, telling only of the blessings of Bolshevism. As the Russians did not stop at the Elbe, but went on to annex the Province of Saxony, the Free State of Saxony and Mecklenburg and in so doing, added Germany's most important agricultural provinces to the area they already occupied, they can exercise a considerable amount of pressure over the Anglo-Americans, who are lumbered with the concern of feeding the densely populated western areas. As the Western powers are obviously not in the position to feed these areas, it is to be feared, unfortunately, that they will gradually let the rest of Germany fall to the Russians too. Meanwhile in England, the Conservatives have been sent packing at the parliamentary elections and the social democratic party has taken the helm. A catastrophe for us too, no doubt, as the Labour Party is doubtless friendlier towards Russia than the Conservatives and for the sake of their domestic policy, they will dispatch Germany to the Russians without a thought, as threatening as that is for England itself. The storm clouds of the Third World War are already gathering threateningly in the skies!

And it does not look good for us from within either! The demoralisation that was to be expected following the dreadful defeat is becoming more and more noticeable. Many fellow Germans forget that they owe it to the dignity of our broken-down nation to now exercise restraint towards our victors. I am certainly the last person who would be against understanding and reconciliation between nations, but at the moment it is dishonourable to the German nation to see our girls walking around and flirting with Tommies and Amis en masse. How is a young soldier to feel, returning home from captivity, when he encounters such images at every turn! Meanwhile, of course, the other consequences of collapse are thriving: naked self-interest, profiteering, forcing up of prices, etc. And those who do still have money just loaf around. Admittedly, there are fewer and fewer of them as many people are destitute and have to live off their savings. Nobody is living off interest any more, as there are next to no companies, not even banks or the like, that pay it. The food situation is slightly better now that it is the beginning of autumn, as a reasonable amount of vegetables and also new potatoes are coming through—at least here in Göttingen; in the Ruhr region things apparently still look bleak. But what winter may bring is admittedly quite a different story! And we certainly cannot be sure of having any fuel for heating!!! It is clear to every thinking German that the despair born of this plight must lead to catastrophe and will benefit Bolshevism tremendously, while the Western powers are not aware of this or of the threat towards them, or are not interested in us because we make them uncomfortable. Also in school matters, apart from (often completely nonsensical) cutbacks on teaching staff, nothing constructive is being done and we truly democratic people continue to be put in a corner, while opportunists are everywhere.

Göttingen, 9th August 1945

Little by little, people are getting back in touch with the majority of their relatives and acquaintances. News even comes through from the Russian zone occasionally, despite the Russians' attempts to seal off this zone hermetically. The news from there is, in part, harrowing, no less so than the crimes perpetrated by the Nazis: looting, murder and rape on a massive scale, evidently carried out predominantly by the combat troops, which seem to be made up of the most uncultivated tribes and brutal people. Since Russia declared war on Japan early this morning, one can hope that this group will soon be sent to East Asia. But there are said to be such shortages in Russia itself that further plundering of Germany will not cease. All precious metals have been seized in that region, the majority of the livestock has been carried off to Russia, railways are running on one track as the other section of the track has also been transported to Russia, the food situation is very difficult as the gardens have been seized by the foreigners, etc. At the same time, more favourable reports are once again coming through, from Berlin and Leipzig, for example. My youngest sister lives in the latter city and she managed to smuggle a detailed report into Göttingen for me, which contains better news in every respect. She has remained there, thus far completely undisturbed, with her two daughters and the fiancé of the eldest and is not suffering from any acute hardship, although things are difficult enough. In cultural matters (concerts, theatre), the Russians are actually making a visible point not to be seen as barbarians (and are they any more barbaric than the Americans who destroyed all the cultural monuments—some of which without good cause?), as they allow and encourage these activities and artists very markedly. It is difficult, therefore, to get an accurate picture of them. Nevertheless, happy are the Germans who have nothing to do with them.

Numerous shops in the city now have a peculiar look about them: 'exchange centres', in which anything can be exchanged for anything else, have sprung up all over the place like mushrooms. As have countless offers of lessons of all kinds, especially in English, of course. Now that the ban on fraternisation has been lifted, countless girls are seen together with English soldiers. The majority have the clear intention of 'flirting' to a more or less concrete extent. At the same time, there are also serious conversations, for example, those that are becoming customary between my own daughter (much to my displeasure!) and an English engineer. There is a certain curiosity on both sides about the mentality of the other and in general the desire to get to know the 'other side'. Today, this young man (approx. 32 years old) was here until late in the evening as a guest for my daughter's birthday. A very pleasant person, calm and intelligent. Does not speak German, I hardly speak English, so the task of interpreting fell to my daughter. We discussed every possible subject: war, politics, technology (the new atom bomb and our V-weapons, both of which he considers very dangerous and effective inventions), but of course we also discussed less serious subjects. He gave the impression of having a not disrespectful attitude, a certain sympathy, in fact, towards Germany. He is a member of the English Conservative Party, while all his close friends belong to the Labour Party. He was obviously less happy about the spectacular victory of the workers' party and I, too, believe that we can expect even less from that party than from the conservatives. Nevertheless, he expects that the atom bomb and our V-weapons, which the English and the Americans have 'acquired' along with the associated engineers, will have a strong impact on the Russians and their expansion aspirations. Will he be proved right about this??? I believe not. The Russians still have some aces up their sleeve, which are effective enough: above all, the war weariness of the Western powers and their own almost unassailable continental position. Also the fact that they, as a dictatorship, do not need to take their citizens into consideration is a powerful trump card for the Russians. And as dictatorships do not care to stop once they have started down a certain path, I fear that we have not heard the last of the Russian demands. But then the Germans would bear the brunt of this conflict too! Our future is already so dark, almost hopeless in fact, but this outcome would see Germany faced with total and horrible destruction. The fact that such outcomes are a possibility shows once again how little man can do when faced with forces of nature (as that is what lies at the root of this madness).

Göttingen, 24th August 1945:

Although the weather has been mild, it has been raining almost incessantly for more than 14 days and only now is the weather starting to settle down to a certain extent. It is not difficult to imagine what this means for the harvested grain that is standing in our fields. Even the English radio reckoned with a loss of around 20%! In reality the loss will be even greater. Many of the stooks of wheat and oats are completely green! In addition to the threat of freezing weather, we are now also faced with the threat of famine. There is a prevailing feeling that the majority of the German race is facing extinction. In the Russian-occupied area, the famine is already in full swing. The food rations permitted by the Russians are inherently utterly insufficient, and in reality they are not even adequately distributed. A man who had fled from Wittenberge told me, among other things, that around 60 infants are dying of malnutrition in this small town every month. Conditions are inhumane in other respects, too. The people are being terrorised in a way that makes the crimes of the Nazis look like child's play. And everything is shrouded in humane language, despite the fact that it is obviously intended to bring about the eradication of the Germans. It is quite clear to me that this is the aim of the Russians, at least. I am absolutely not labouring under any anti-Russian propaganda, especially considering the fact that I have always sought a union between Germany and Russia, but I have heard so many untainted and objective reports of Russian barbarianism that it is clear to me that Stalin has ordered the eradication of the Germans just as Hitler ordered that of the Jews. It is even possible that Stalin is being backed by a vengeful, powerful Jew. This would make sense, even though it is sheer madness to perpetuate such a blood feud. Because it goes without saying that the sense of bitterness towards our enemies is reaching boiling point among the German people, and it has to add fuel to the desire for revenge and ultranationalism. Despite the atom bomb and fleets of aircraft! Finis Germaniae!

In the meantime, there have been severe clashes between marauding Poles, self-defending Germans and interfering Englishmen at the town hall here in Göttingen, where there is said to have been a high death toll, both on the German and on the Russian side. There is also talk of a dead Englishman. At any rate, this 'incident' shines an abrupt light on the situation: the Poles, who have thus far been coddled, are conducting themselves like lords of the land. They are constantly looting and stealing and committing manslaughter, to the extent that the English Commander-in-Chief Montgomery has had to give a strict order against the foreigners' attacks. Whether he will have any success is still very much undetermined, as the energy among the English towards us Germans is still acrimonious to a certain degree, while the 'poor' foreigners (some of whom fled to us from the Russians) get as much freedom as they could wish for (I know of a large number of such cases, in which the Poles etc. in question wanted to go anywhere other than to the Russians!). The chaos in the 'liberated' states (of which we are allegedly one) is monstrous and neither the democracies nor the tyranny of Russia are in a position to create orderly, humane conditions. And we true democrats, who had hoped finally to return to humane circumstances, are bitterly disappointed and are the subject of derision.

I expect the coming winter to bring the ultimate collapse. Demoralised by hunger and cold, the German people will commit one act of folly after another and in so doing will provide the cue for the next wave of propaganda on the part of our Eastern and Western neighbours: 'The Germans have still not learnt from their collapse, they are incurable militarists, nationalists and opportunists; away with them!' And, like Pontius Pilate, our enemies—above all the pious English—will wash their hands of any guilt and consign us to the cross and to destruction. But world history will note that precisely these pious people, together with the 'godless' Russians, have done everything possible in order to bring about our ultimate destruction. A second—only much larger—case of Carthage! What a wise and merciful world government!!!

Göttingen, 4th September 1945

31 years ago, I experienced the bloodiest battle of my active duty during the First World War and, on 5.9., buried around 130 comrades from my regiment. That was a day of deepest depression for me. And now, a mere generation later, I have a second world war behind me, a war that was a thousand times more catastrophic for Germany with at least three million Germans dead! If this is not madness on a global scale, I do not know what could be described as madness! And I fear that humanity has still not learnt anything from these catastrophes. It is already as that Frenchman once frivolously said: '10 deaths is a catastrophe; two million is a statistic.' 'Rien appris, rien oublié.' What could still bring us to believe in a 'sense of world history'? The triumph of stupidity and selfishness is so evident everywhere that one can only identify the 'bête humaine', the wild animal (or the animal that has once again gone wild) in man. Though the victorious powers, particularly the English, continue to use the most humane language on the radio and in the newspaper, clear-sighted people can still see that there can be no talk of 'humane' peace for the poor and disgraced Germany. The entire East up to the Oder and Neisse is being relinquished to the Russians and Poles, that is to say, precisely those areas that are indispensable for feeding and heating German cities. The inhabitants are being herded together into the western regions, which have always been overpopulated. One would only need to walk through Göttingen once, a city that suddenly has 100,000 inhabitants instead of 50,000, to become aware of the enormous extent of hardship and misery with which we have been blessed by our 'humane' conquerors. And when one then hears tell of the bullying and all the misery that predominates, particularly in the Russian and French-occupied areas, one can only sneer at being showered with all of this humane language. Certainly, a victory for Hitler would have also been a catastrophe for Germany, but this must still be held true: the organisation of such a peace would have brought about significantly less human misery and loss of human life than will be brought about by the victory of our enemies. In truth, all humane and decent-thinking Russians, Americans and Englishmen find this sufficiently shameful. But this group finds itself in a hopeless minority. The imperialists and the capitalists have triumphed, people with ice-cold hearts and—insofar as it concerns Jews and other races who were mistreated by the Germans—a fierce desire for destruction. These—certainly influential—people are determining our future fate, and as a result it will be absolutely hopeless. And hopelessness is the hallmark of all thinking Germans. As things lie, only a 'miracle' can save us. But, just as Goethe rightly said, 'Do not wait for miracles!' At any rate, I expect this winter to bring a collapse, the likes of which Germany has never seen. It is fortunate that the occupation is here, in order to maintain external order, otherwise the Germans would eat each other alive. And I am convinced that in the French and Russian zone, they will watch and sneer as they do just that. Perhaps, for their part, they will then fire shots in between, in order to reduce the number of Germans further. But the hatred towards the Germans will also be encouraged where possible in the other zones, in order to dispose of the nation in its entirety. If I did not have to live for my family, I would remove myself as quickly as possible from this unworthy existence. The sum of the feelings of listlessness from this time has become simply unbearable for me! 'It is enough, Lord; take my life,' I often think of the words of the prophet Elijah, who incidentally did not find himself in as difficult a position as the German people at this time. It is all well and good to preach valour, if there were even a possibility that one could thus summon 'the arms of the gods', but it seems to me that there are no gods that come to the rescue, nor is there sufficient valour. A dull and stupid fate is rolling over the unfortunate German people with the indifference of an avalanche. Some people, especially the 'flexible' (i.e., spineless) and cunning (i.e., an elite of indecent people), will remain, but for the rest of us, life will become completely worthless, I fear. May my pessimism be proved wrong!

Göttingen, 6th October 1945

On 1st October, I was appointed to the position of senior teacher at the local grammar school. I expressed a desire for this promotion myself and let myself be put forward by a good acquaintance, Adolf Grimme, the incumbent 'Cultural Minister of Hanover', who was well known to me from the period before 1933 when he was the Cultural Minister of Prussia. He fulfilled my wish promptly. This goes at least some way towards making up for the injustice that was inflicted on me in 1933, and Grimme has proven his feelings of goodwill towards me, which I had very much begun to doubt in 1933. If I had made a serious effort, I do not doubt that I could have even achieved a 'higher' post (head teacher), but that would have meant leaving Göttingen and taking on a lot of vile clerical work. And as I am free of any ambition, the position of senior teacher was perfectly sufficient for me. My feeling is that this small promotion is intended to demonstrate that I would also have been equal to a greater task, had I wanted one.

Which tasks lie ahead of me in Göttingen? In the first instance, I am charged with educating the youth to become decent-minded people who strive above all else for truthfulness, justice, human kindness and also bravery in the struggle for survival, which has become very difficult. I always endeavoured to provide this sort of education before 1933 and I believe I can build directly on my work from that time. Back then I spent 10 years as a 'consultant' for the school community and I hope I will be able to have a similar influence now. This will admittedly not be particularly easy: I am still an unknown quantity at this school, many colleagues will doubtless be disapproving of my appointment and, most significantly, pro-Nazi, reactionary feeling is on the increase in Göttingen—and elsewhere in Germany. This is really no surprise as the psychologically opportune moment for making a radical anti-Nazi impact on public feeling has been missed—no heed was paid to our alerts and warnings and those of others who share our perspective. Now the task is twice as difficult, as the ineptitude (and, in part, deliberate ill-will, particularly of the Russians and French) of the victorious powers and the hardship of these times have led to people saying of National Socialism: 'Everything was much better under Hitler.' And now unconcealed propaganda for Hitler and National Socialism (which is sometimes disguised as communism) is widespread. The period from 1918–24 is experiencing a revival, and it will not be long before we hear of vigilante murders and similar things. The student body is particularly active in this regard, especially the young former officers and officer candidates. Pro-Nazi demonstrations are taking place across all the faculties and the professors are powerless to stop them—that is, if they are not encouraging them. If this continues, the university will be closed again sooner or later. There is perhaps a relatively effective antidote: to have each student and each university professor sign a declaration, making a commitment, under oath, a) to refrain from any action in word, speech or deed that is directed against the current German government or against the military, or b) that is in any way in favour of National Socialism; c) to campaign for reconciliation between nations and against race-baiting; d) to do their utmost to support the endeavours and the actions of the current government. The following sentence could be used as 'preamble': 'Filled with love for our beloved, unhappy fatherland, I will do everything I can to facilitate Germany's reconstruction in conjunction with the current German government and in accordance with the occupation authority. I therefore declare, that I...' It goes without saying that there will be many people who have been ethically completely uprooted and demoralised by the war and who will not shy away from a false oath or from going back on their word. But the large majority of signatories will feel strongly bound by such a solemn oath.

Of course, we will still have to remain extremely vigilant and should not be afraid of using secret surveillance. This looks like a return to Nazi methods. But: à la guerre comme à la guerre! One should not be afraid of using Beelzebub to drive out the devil! As the war is being fought with deceit on the other side, it would be foolish to commit suicide out of decency:

‘Mules will be mules, by the law of their mulishness;
Then be advised, and leave fools to their foolishness,
What from an ass can you get but a bray?’⁸

or something along those lines, as Goethe once wrote. Indeed, it would be good if all adult Germans were to sign such a declaration. Should it become clear that this oath has been violated, I would intervene with harsh measures, predominantly with forced labour. Students (and lecturers!) would be allocated—individually, to avoid the emergence of new cells and trouble spots—to the most diverse and widely separated undertakings and, of course, excluded from any further study. This would doubtless have a beneficial and cooling effect. But of course: only the utmost consistency and the greatest resolve can help here. The phrase ‘*principiis obsta*’⁹ will still be potent—if things are allowed to continue breaking down, it will soon be too late for any countermeasures.

What is more, things are escalating more and more between the Russians on the one side and the Western powers on the other: one conflict and one difference of opinion is followed by another, even many of the Englishmen around here now also believe in the possibility of an armed conflict! As if we had not already warned them of this long ago! It was clear to every thinking person that the Bolsheviks would not relinquish the world revolution, just as Hitler—despite his reassuring and peaceful speeches—did not relinquish his wide-reaching plans. And as Germany was the only truly dangerous opponent of Bolshevism in Europe, this power had to be destroyed first of all. So the Second World War fit splendidly with the Kremlin’s plans. It is quite certainly just as clear to Stalin that the next power to be destroyed must be England, a country with which Russia certainly has a series of important points of conflict (the Dardanelles, the Balkans, India etc.). And even the atom bomb and the Anglo-American superiority in the air will be no hindrance for Russia in the long term. An authoritarian power such as Bolshevik Russia (which strangely still calls itself a ‘democratic’ power, laughable though that is) need not fear resistance in its own country; meanwhile the truly democratic Western powers are entirely dependent on the mood of the people. And in those countries, there is a war weariness that will paralyse even their armies, while Russia, which as I said is in a position to do so, will perpetuate the war. Russia will first of all destroy Germany through atom bombs and air raids, and then retreat back to its unassailable steppes from whence it can wage a never-ending war and wait until the Western powers are Bolshevik, I suspect. So the temper tantrum of the people is by no means over! But the clever people continue to babble about the ‘sense of world history’! It is all I can do not to laugh!

Meanwhile, after six months of ‘peace’ here in Göttingen, we are experiencing the ever-worsening tragedy of the German people. The streets are still full of refugees—groups and individuals. They are often wretched figures and everywhere there is the greatest sense of hopelessness. And some of the victorious states stand by, utterly cold and unmoved (Russia and France); to some extent they are completely helpless (that is, if they are not deliberately ‘helpless’, which I often suspect), and they fob us off with teachings, warnings and threats, but with very little actual help. What is more, they spread propaganda that is so clumsy that the many remaining Nazis take great delight in taking advantage of it for their own (whispered) propaganda. If things in Germany are not going the way the ‘Allies’ would like, it is of course once again Germany’s fault. Germany is accused of having an ‘evil will’ and it will eventually be nailed to the cross. And how easy it would be for the world to find peace if there were goodwill on all sides! But it is just not to be!

⁸ The above is the published translation. A more literal translation of this passage (to highlight the pertinence of its inclusion) would be as follows: ‘Idiotic to hope for the improvement of idiots / Children of wisdom, let the fools / Be made fools of, as is proper!’

⁹ ‘Nip it in the bud’

Göttingen, 25th October 1945

In the meantime, new storm clouds are gathering over the miserable Germany: a serious threat of war between the Western powers and Russia! But perhaps the USA is already secretly in league with Russia? It is certainly possible! But even if not, the war, which is very likely about to break out, will affect Germany even more than the Western powers. And it will affect us in Göttingen first of all, as we are only a few kilometres away from the 'Russian border'! As the English covering detachment is much too weak to withstand an energetic Russian attack, Göttingen is surely on the verge of becoming Russian. And woe betide us then! We have heard enough about the barbaric methods of the Russian hordes, and of the Asian troops in particular. Their approach to warfare is reminiscent of the time of Genghis Khan. Pillaging and burning, looting, rape and torture of every kind. Faced with this, there is no more sense in living. The best thing would be to set fire to one's own house and give oneself up to death. A young girl is about to leave us having just arrived from Saxony where she was forced to experience the Asian barbarianism of the Russians firsthand. She was arrested under false pretences and imprisoned for days. There she was raped five times every night and subjected to the most gruesome torture in other ways, too. Hearing such accounts, which are reminiscent of the most grisly periods of the Thirty Years War, one does ask oneself whether it even makes sense to fight for culture and the advancement of human civilisation if, every few centuries, one must reckon with a complete descent of humanity to the most primitive level.

Everyone is already talking of a new war. The English are said to be training former German SS troops with English weapons for this battle. Their newspapers and radio are already irresponsibly reporting on the mounting conflicts with Russia, which every person in Germany predicted, incidentally, during the height of National Socialism. I also believe that England took leave of its senses when it rejected Hitler's offer of peace in 1940. Because then, in league with Germany, it would have had the opportunity to stave off a Russian attack, a particular threat to its empire. The coming winter will be the big opportunity for Russia: its troops are used to a harsher climate than that in Western Europe, so they will be in fine form for battle. The Westerners, on the other hand, cannot use their colonial troops and are not all that able to cope with a war in Central Europe. The Russian army in Europe has barely decreased, while the Western army has. The Russians do not need to worry about any war weariness among their people or about their mood at all. Russia is a dictatorship with an authoritarian government. Western peoples are 'democracies', impeded by underground communist propaganda on the one hand and the severe war weariness of their people on the other. And even if they have the atom bomb and the better air force, they will still struggle to wage war in the winter, quite apart from the fact that we in Germany (and especially those of us in Göttingen!) will be the first victims of these weapons, and therefore cannot look forward to a potential victory of the Western powers, as the majority of us would no longer be allowed to exist.

If I am now once again to go to school every day as a well-employed senior teacher and work there as if a better time really were on its way, I would feel like a sleepwalker, risking his life by walking on the roof of his house. And yet living life 'as if', that is to say, living as if everything really is exactly as it should be and as if life has meaning, is still the only possible way to endure life. But one still sees—even if one does not even want to see it—signs of disorganisation and impending chaos everywhere: hopelessness, self-neglect, the decrease of moral inhibitions, etc. The insanity, the raving madness of humanity, will triumph once again!

Göttingen, 21st March 1946:

I made my last diary entry on 25th October 1945. At that time, two concerns loomed threateningly large: war with Russia and starvation and cold during the winter. Of these, it was only the cold that hit as anticipated, above all in the school, where we almost always had to teach without heating, sometimes at a 'warmth' of +2 degrees. The heating situation at home was so bad in the run-up to Christmas that we spent most of our time in the shabby kitchen, using the furnace both for cooking and heating as gas was only available again just before the festivities. And for winter itself the outlook was severe; the little wood that had been delivered in exchange for housekeeping cards was nowhere near enough. During this time, therefore, I had to go to the forest in search of wood more frequently, and often I felt like Christ carrying his own cross (because I almost always had to carry the wood home in a rucksack and over my shoulder). But all the swearing and moaning did not help: *dira necessitas!* But immediately before Christmas we got our first real cartload of wood, for which I had to pay 200 Marks (the same again for a load that arrived a few days ago) and then two additional loads followed, in exchange for which I gave private lessons. That is how we came to have a—relatively—warm living room for the entire calendar winter! Only someone like me, who is so susceptible to the cold and who was perpetually completely frozen at school, could truly gauge the significance of this!

We did not starve either, in fact we were even able to enjoy a downright 'opulent' Christmas (for these times, of course!), with help from friends and food procured by other means. We also had a beautiful tree, some homemade sweets and even a bottle of exquisite Rhine wine on Christmas Eve and again on New Year's Eve! So the festivities really were a feast. The fact that starvation did not set in after that was down to the stores of potatoes and pulses that we had carefully saved up. More than anything else, it was the ample supplies of broad beans (*vicia faba*), given to us by a friend, that helped. To this day, we are eating them not only in the form of a very nourishing soup but also as *Frikadelle*¹⁰. And until recently, there was also sufficient bread.

The most important thing, of course, is that to this day, the Third World War has not broken out. Why everything in politics has gone so well up to now, despite expectation, is beyond my knowledge. Because my perception of the situation was that it was quite hopeless. But perhaps war weariness was too bad even among the Russians. Or were they not yet ready? Or were they afraid of the atom bomb? God knows! What is certain is that the only aspect of this coming summer not to be feared is the cold. Starvation is now sure to come, as there is now an enormous worldwide food deficit. How this came to be is something else known only to the gods, as it must have been possible to anticipate it! But the victors—above all England—have been living without a thought for tomorrow, with unbelievable negligence and carelessness, and are now themselves faced with this (admittedly surprisingly bitter) reality. Bread and other foodstuffs have been reduced by half and the number of calories, which was almost half as much as it should have been when it was 1,500 calories, has now been reduced to 1,000 calories. But this represents approximately one third (!!!) of what is biologically necessary. This means, of course, starvation and death for hundreds of thousands (if not millions!). But no power is taking a strong stand on Germany's behalf; it is only our turn when all the others have helped themselves. This fact also means that Bolshevism is experiencing tremendous growth in Germany, however. But now the relations between the Western powers and Russia are so tense that the whole world is waiting for the resentment to boil over. And unless there is a miracle, this war will one day be a reality! Poor Germany! Because this war will be fought at our expense.

¹⁰ Small (in this case meat-free) meatballs

Göttingen, 13th October 1947:

I last wrote about ‘contemporary events’ on 21st March 1946. At that time, I confirmed that we neither froze nor starved in the winter of 45/46. I could not have made the same assertion on 21st March 1947. True, we did not really starve in the winter of 46/47. This time, too, the Christmas festivities were fine from a material standpoint, thanks to ‘help from friends’ (not particularly cheap help!) and even half of a ‘care package’ from America (sent not by relatives, who could also have sent one, but by Jews who were just friends of ours and who were not obliged!). But for all that food, we froze all the more. Not at Christmas, as we had saved wood for the occasion. But all the more beforehand and afterwards. Because alongside all of the other misfortune, we experienced one of the hardest and longest winters of the century. And there was only very little fuel. Nonetheless, we were able at least to keep the furnace in our living room warm all winter, but not the living room itself: the temperature was, on average, between 15 and 16 degrees C. In school, it was even worse: we sometimes had to teach in temperatures of 4 to 5 degrees C, until even those schools that had had at least some heating ran out of fuel and the schools had to be temporarily closed due to the cold. Nobody could grasp that such a thing could be possible and it was a clear sign of the lack of foresight and organisational skills on the part of the occupation authorities. Many people perceived it as a sign of the lack of goodwill on the part of the aforementioned powers, and I will not comment on this. Personally, I tend to believe in the ineptitude of these powers, which is not exactly a compliment for them.

This cold winter was followed—but not until the middle of April!—by the longest and sunniest summer that I have so far experienced in the 63 years of my life. This summer began on the 13th April and has lasted (interrupted, of course, by short periods of inclement and cold weather) until today, the 13th October. Even today I was able to lie in the sun on our balcony until 5 pm. This has been possible at least 150 times over the past 180 summer days. Weather the likes of which I only experienced during my captivity in 1918 and 19 in the Mediterranean area near Avignon. The effect of this summer has been twofold: wonderful for the fruits that are harvested early, bad for those that are harvested late. Which is most of them, unfortunately, meaning that on the whole the harvest has failed across Europe (but not in Southern Hanover, where we have had a moderate harvest thanks to occasional rainfall) and that we are now faced with hardship. Personally, I am reasonably well provided for with potatoes, but there is very little in the way of vegetables. What is more, the supply of fat has completely broken down. We are getting 150 grams per person each month at best, almost no (skimmed!) milk and only 400 grams of meat! We are therefore reliant on the ‘black market’, where the prices are rising so much that soon I will be unable to compete. Regarding the supply of fuel, I have been able to provide for myself to some extent (in exchange for two radio sets!), and many people in Göttingen have done similar things, but there are certainly millions of Germans who will have to freeze even more this winter than they did in the last. Whether this is a case of ineptitude, indifference or ill-will on the part of the occupation authorities, I do not know, maybe all three are at play. In any case, they have shown an absolute lack of human kindness towards us (certainly before their victory!). And even though one must admit that England, for example, is not a bed of roses either, a less devastating result could have been achieved with goodwill and some organisational talent. We are now looking towards the third post-war winter with the worst expectations.

In high politics the situation looks no less menacing: the Western and Eastern powers are eyeing each other so threateningly that in theory a war could break out any day. One does not know if their points of conflict are of an idealistic or materialistic nature. Personally, I am of the opinion that it is the material conflict—so the possession of power and the riches of the world—with which both groups are baiting each other, conflicts that in my opinion confirm the prevailing senselessness in the world. Because it can only be described as senseless when people are killing each other over who has more and who has less, when they could all live well if the Earth’s goods were distributed sensibly. Idealistic conflicts (here Eastern, here Western ‘democracy’!) only function as a cover. I doubt that ‘religious wars’ are still possible in our time.

And still both sides pretend that they are only interested in the ‘holiest aspects of humanity’. It is all I can do not to laugh! Anyway, it seems to me that the risk inherent in a Third World War would be so high for both power groups that I currently do not believe such a war will take place. True, who knows whether there are not other (cosmic?) powers at play that are inducing a period of human insanity. In that case there would be no more stopping it: *finis humanitatis!*

We have not progressed even one step in the lesser matters of our culture either: school is stagnating. While lesson outcomes are relatively satisfactory, from a ‘re-educational’ standpoint, we are still where we were in April 1945. ‘Rien oublié, rien appris!’ There is no noticeable re-education towards democracy. People who point out time and again, as I do, that it is finally time to begin in earnest are pushed aside—just like in 1932. The church alone has seen its chance and is trying to win back its lost sway over people’s souls. But its successes are only superficial. As soon as the conditions favourable to the church are over (the depression that follows defeat; the material and perhaps even spiritual need), it will quickly realise that the ‘ecclesia triumphans’ will amount to nothing. We are still living in the Age of Enlightenment and of the decline of religion.

Göttingen, 4th July 1948:

From time to time over the past few years, I provided a general overview of the preceding period of time, and I want to continue with this habit: the dreaded winter 1947/48 was considerably milder than we had feared. Personally, I was so well provided for with fuel that I was almost always able to heat two rooms. And as the winter was particularly mild, nobody in Göttingen needed to freeze. We also had relatively sufficient food, supported as we were not only by three villages, but also by packages from England and occasionally from America, especially since I managed to get hold of plenty of potatoes and sugar beet (for producing sugar!). All of this was overpriced of course, although certainly not as expensive as it would have been on the official 'black market'. Even so, a considerable portion of my savings has been spent on the 'grey market', meaning with farmers, over these past three years. Our health would be in a serious state if we had not helped ourselves in this manner, as official rations for normal consumers sunk to less than 1,000 calories at certain points. Personally, it is true that I was mostly in the fortunate position of having a considerable supplement to my diet in the form of excellent school meals, but my wife and daughter would have gone desperately hungry had I not make frequent trips to the country. According to my records, I made 30 such food expeditions in 1947, so more than two per month, carrying home considerable amounts of food. (Incl. 212 eggs, 22 pounds of meat, 7 pounds of sausage, 38 bottles of milk, 45 pounds of peas, 29 pounds of flour, 72 pounds of bread, 62 pounds of onions, 75 pounds of cucumbers, 26 pounds of wheat, 11 pounds of rye, 12 pounds of beet juice, etc., etc.). All on my own back and often across hills and valleys in wretched weather with paths to match. As everybody was taking such measures to help themselves, any sense of the immorality of such acts was completely lost. The newspapers reported quite openly on the current black market prices and nobody judged anyone else for doing business on the black market. It goes without saying that this state of affairs had a pernicious effect on morality in general. For this reason, the 'currency reform' implemented on 21st June 1948 felt like nothing less than redemption. True, it was a financial catastrophe of the worst kind for many, many Germans, above all for pensioners, evacuees and refugees, who lost 90% of their savings in one fell swoop. The state must launch an aid programme for these people if they are not to be driven to despair. But for the general economic situation, the newly introduced 'Deutsche Mark' represents the arrival of normal monetary relations, the stifling of the majority of the black market and the beginning of a new economic life, built on a solid and morally irreproachable foundation. Now, all at once, a vast number of stockpiled goods hit the market: goods that had been stored up, apparently with the tacit permission of the state in anticipation of more orderly circumstances. It was downright 'wonderful' to see all the shops quite suddenly heaped full of goods of every kind. There was simply nothing that was not available to buy! From cars to sewing needles, from typewriter paper to typewriters, from elegant leather bags to suitcases. All things that were 'unfortunately completely sold out' on the 19th June. But on the 21st, everything was available! The vegetable market looked best of all: a select few types of vegetable had been available in the shops, but certainly not on the market, but on the 22nd there was an almost life-threatening throng of... vegetable merchants with mountains of goods at our marketplace and the shops were all but drowning in vegetables. There was also the occasional piece of fruit and eggs!!! It is easy to comprehend why this turnaround did not exactly provoke a friendly reaction among the public: first the loss of almost all savings, and now the appearance of countless much sought-after goods! It is fortunate that everyone, from newborns to old men, was given a 40 DM allowance in the first instance: this did a lot to nip resentment in the bud. These 40 Marks, with the prospect of another 20 Deutschmarks over the next four weeks, was the state's way of bribing its citizens, robbed of their assets. A psychological stroke of genius! The first impact that this gift had on the poorest citizens was a wild stampede on the shops (because the money (equivalent to 600 old Reichsmarks) does not have to be paid back). People who never knew how to handle money anyway bought the most nonsensical things without thinking, and were then suddenly faced with the bewildering fact that they no longer had money for the vital things (food, rent, etc.). But gradually, common sense is starting to return: people are starting to spend their money more

carefully. There is a sort of buyers' strike in the making, in the hope that the prices, which are still much too high, will go down. Let us hope that this common sense continues to gain momentum.

On the other hand, the Western currency reform has made the political situation even more uncertain than it already was. As the Eastern and Western zones now each have a different currency (although the promptly introduced currency reform in the Eastern zone looks very similar to the one in the West), it would seem that Russia wants to use this fact as an opportunity to effect a final separation of the Eastern from the Western zone and to make East Germany into a Soviet vassal state. For this to happen, it would have to incorporate Berlin into its Eastern state. But the city is occupied by the Western powers who—along with their 2 million 'subjects'—are a major thorn in the side of the Soviet Union. So the Russians are employing concrete bullying tactics in an attempt to push the Western powers out of Berlin: they are completely constricting the supply of food and goods to the city! The intention is to starve out the Berliners and their patrons. True, the Western powers immediately deployed a gigantic air force to Berlin, building a powerful 'air bridge'. But how long will such impoverished states as France and England be able to keep up such a costly undertaking??? Meanwhile Russia is looking on with a gleeful grin and is keeping the Western powers dangling. Admittedly, even for the Soviet Union the situation is not without risk: the Western powers are obviously determined to go to war over Berlin should it be necessary! And the Russians still cannot take such a risk! They are not ready, nor do the Russian people want a war. What is more, a conflict has broken out in the Eastern bloc, and this is an unexpected stroke of luck for the Western powers: Yugoslavia has been expelled from the Cominform and is not taking this expulsion lying down! And Yugoslavia's recalcitrant attitude is finding support in some of Russia's other vassal states. Even though Stalin would presumably remain victorious in this duel, the acute threat of war has nevertheless abated for the time being. That is, if this is not all an act concocted to lull the Western powers into a false sense of security. But in all probability it is not. Rather it seems that the leaders of the Cominform have not stayed sufficiently in line with the Russian Foreign Ministry's approach and are now being called off. This will be settled in the next few days, I believe.

Göttingen, 31st October 1949:

The year 1948 seemed to be coming to a very pleasant close, as from the end of September to the beginning of October I was able to return to my beloved old university city of Tübingen and live there in very pleasant conditions. The journey on the express train was almost like it was in peacetime: a buffet car, plenty of room and a good connection. But then came the setback: in the middle of November I suddenly spat blood: lung tuberculosis! From the middle of January I had to go to a lung sanatorium in Braunlage (Harz) where the head doctor ascertained that it was a very old infection that had returned as a result of exhaustion and malnourishment. I enjoyed a very good standard of care and board in Braunlage and was allowed to return to Göttingen in the middle of April. My wife did not have to suffer any hardship or even worry about the cold during this time, even if she did not have it as good as I did. As we had lost all but 6% of our savings as a result of the currency reform, this illness would have been a serious financial burden had it not been for very substantial subsidies from the state and the decency of the health insurance company. So I came out of the situation with ± 0 , and this had a pleasant effect in the period that followed. The year 1949 up to June was not particularly kind, as it was often cold and wet. At least it was the right weather for farming, as became clear later on. In the middle of June I travelled to Tübingen once again. This time, I was accompanied by a friend from my student days, the agriculturalist Gustav Berner from my home village of Edesheim. We went with the intention of re-establishing our old student fraternity. Not in the old form, of course, as this would not have been approved by the university or by the French occupation authorities. The statutes that we were required to submit took into account the completely altered circumstances, quite apart from the fact that today's students would also have rejected a corporation in the old style. The living conditions in Southern Germany were also easily the most pleasant and also somewhat cheaper than here. In general the prices were still far too high both here and there. One could say that our money is now worth at most half as much as it was, while our income (particularly that of civil servants!) has remained the same. This of course results in a considerably lower standard of living. Goods are mounting up in the markets and shops and one can buy whatever the heart desires..... if one has money. Happily, the harvest at least has been excellent, because from July to the present day we have had summer weather that is the best we have seen since 1947, 1921 and 1911! Even the root crops have at least had a normal harvest, although there has been rather too little rainfall for them. As there has been a gradual move towards free-ranging (meaning not managed) prices for groceries too, groceries are currently subject to scandalous profiteering, particularly for meat, but recently also for potatoes. While 'my' farmer was still delivering me 50 kg for 5 Deutschmarks, suddenly and without reason, the price went up to 7 Deutschmarks! The locations, farmers and merchants (or, to be precise, butchers) in question blame one another, but of course they are all to blame. Each of them wants to earn money quickly, completely mindless of the plight of the majority of consumers. This selfishness cannot really be restricted by retroactive state measures either, as everyone became acquainted with the loopholes and cunning tricks during the worst times, and now knows how to evade state controls. In this instance, a buyers' strike on the largest scale is the only thing that can help.

Politically, things are still touch and go: if things develop logically, a war of East against West will be unavoidable. But politics does not play out according to the rules of logic. We must therefore continue to live life on the edge.

Göttingen, 28th June 1950

On 31.10.1949 I concluded my entry with 'We must therefore continue to live life on the edge'! And today, we are teetering on the precipice: in Korea, the USA is marching on Korea in defence of its sphere of interest there, after the North Koreans, who are part of the Russia sphere of interest—evidently acting on instructions from Moscow—suddenly launched an attack on South Korea. As the consequences of such a clash are of course clear to Moscow, and one can hardly presume that the communist North Koreans are acting on their own, the situation is very serious, particularly as clashes have clearly already occurred between the American and Russian air forces. Of course, the Eastern press has declared that the South Koreans started it. This is now par for the course: the sheep attacks the wolf, every time! Even Hitler was 'attacked' by Poland! Although it is clear that a new world war would be a catastrophe for the potential victors and losers alike, and although one could certainly say it would be suicide on both sides, all rational grounds for not going to war are being ignored, because in our time it is insanity and not common sense that prevails. Biologically, this is an issue that still needs to be resolved. Obviously the hypertrophy of the human brain has developed so far that any instincts encouraging the preservation of the species are becoming weaker and weaker.

This is also a particular catastrophe for us personally, as our children have been visiting us from England for the past few days and now they will probably have to rush back at a moment's notice! One can imagine what a heavy heart we all have!

[Followed by largely illegible handwritten update from 6th May 1955]

[MISCELLANEOUS: this page starts mid-sentence. It does not follow on from the previous page and its date is unclear.]

...came [to me?] with a request for support and eventually considerable funds were made available for this purpose. I received the order from my university to arrange the rehabilitation of this garden. This assignment continues to this day, as can be seen in the enclosed document no. 2.

From 1938 to 1941, I was also a lecturer in biology at the holiday courses held at the local *Physikalische Werkstätten A.G.* (now known as 'Phywe'), which have long been held at this plant for teachers of natural sciences. My book 'School pilot projects in plant physiology' (Heymann, Berlin 1939), which is intended for teachers and is now in use in many secondary schools and colleges, was written as a result of this work.

When war broke out, I reported for duty as I was obligated to do and was employed at the local grammar school for boys from May 1940 (document 3).

According to the governor's decree no. 1506 II/2.1., from 23rd July 1945 all supporting staff had to be dismissed at the first opportunity and, as a result, my obligation to this establishment came to an end on 31st August of the same year. For me, this raises the issue of adjusting my length of service. I was released from service at a relatively young age and my length of service was determined as 26 years and 193 days (document 4). In the third decree regarding measures in the field of civil service law, 07.10.1942 § 8b, it states 'If the retired civil servant has been employed in public service for a minimum of 6 months since 01.09.1939 and had not yet reached the highest percentage of pensionable emoluments, the retirement pay is to be re-determined..... after his dismissal.' 'The time spent in public service since 01.09.1939 is to be included when calculating the pensionable length of service.' This is applicable in my case and I request that the time from May 1940 to August 1945 be included when calculating my length of service. What is more, I ask that you consider whether it might be reasonable to include the entire period since 01.10.1933 in my length of service, as my dismissal from service was clearly a gross injustice, while I on the other hand have spent my retirement years for the most part making myself useful in service to the general public. I probably need not even mention that my work on the Brocken Garden was carried out on an unpaid and voluntary basis.

School teacher, retired