

RONNIE GOLZ



*I Was
Happy
Right to
the End*

...

*THE LIFE
AND
DEATH OF
MARIANNE
GOLZ-
GOLDLUST*

31st January 1895 - 8th October 1943

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The Big Day

“My Darling, I loved your letter. I read it four times and blushed each time.” - “My heart and all my thoughts go out to you.” – “I see love and friendship deep in your eyes. Till death parts us.”

Your M.”

A few lines from love letters, the sort of lines lovers write every day all over the world. But these lines come from letters that are uniquely tragic. They are written to another prisoner likewise awaiting execution. They are letters full of hope and resignation, courage and despair. They were written with the express intention of loving one last time in this life, and of having that love ease the waiting for death.

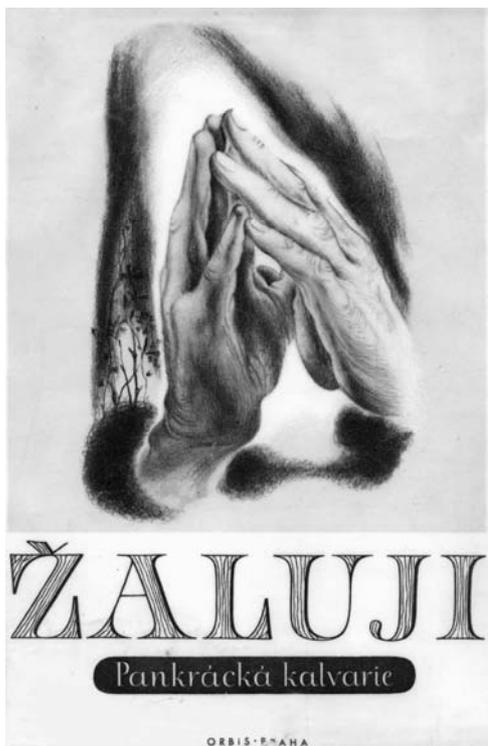
If we wanted to give you a picture of these letters, we would have to tear the pages into strips only four inches wide and hide them in a boiled potato, or a piece of bread. Or on paper headed with the printed words; “Write clearly. Write only on the lines. Leave the left margin clear.” And to complete the picture we would have to send these pages by secret, dangerous methods through prison walls to end up in oblivion. The intention of this book is to rescue them from oblivion and let them tell the story of an extraordinary woman, an extraordinary love affair, and a piece of German history.

They are the letters of Marianne Golz, a woman unknown today. In the 1920’s she was a light opera singer, celebrated in the newspaper reviews. Barely two decades later she died a cruel, tragic death that passed unnoticed – the famous artist had become, in the intervening years, an enemy of the Reich. On October 8th 1943 Marianne Golz was executed by the Nazis in Pankraz Prison in Prague. Five months earlier the Special German Court in Prague had condemned her to death for “activities hostile to the Reich”, “sabotage”, and “aiding and abetting enemies of the Reich.”

Marianne Golz belonged to the far too few who had the courage to do the right thing at that time, at least in her own circle: to help people who were threatened with persecution and death. Her “crime” was to be in contact with people who in Nazi-occupied Prague helped Jewish friends and acquaintances to safety. This group used secret contacts and false papers to enable Jewish men and women threatened with deportation to the camps, to escape abroad to safety.

Marianne Golz was no resistance fighter of the kind we read about in history books, albeit only too rarely. She belonged to no political organization, and we do not even know if she was aware of the risks she was taking. She was simply reacting to the things she saw going on around her, simply being human. She could not just stand by and watch her friends and neighbours be stripped of their human rights merely because they were Jewish. And so she helped them out of danger by getting them out of the country, with the co-operation of like-minded others, and then sending money to help them start their lives anew in exile. The judges at the Special German Court in Prague called these actions “Jew-smuggling” and “a crime against the prevention of sabotage” and condemned Marianne, and nine people accused with her, to death in May 1943.

In the last months before her execution, knowing that she was going to die yet with hope ever fluttering inside her, Marianne wrote letters practically every day: news to her sister Rosi in Vienna describing life in the death cell, and, what makes these letters unusually poignant, love letters. In the face of certain death, she decided to fall in love one last time. With the help of a trustworthy prison officer she sent secret messages, little rolled up strips of paper hidden in pieces of bread, to Cell 41 next door. Whoever replied would be her lover, she wrote upfront. And similarly condemned Dr Richard (Riša) Mächa answered her. A love grew and flourished between them that could only be lived out in writing, a love they both knew could have no future. But it was the one thing that could make the present bearable.



These letters of Marianne Golz survived her, and they also survived the war. But although they were unusually poignant documents, on both personal and historical grounds, nobody paid any attention to them. That they were dragged out of obscurity at all was a matter of mere chance initially, later of intensive research. Ronnie Golz discovered references in his family papers to a first wife of his father Hans Golz, who had changed his name from Goldlust. Ronnie Golz wanted to find out what had happened to this wife who had stayed behind in Prague when his father had to flee Hitler-occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939 as a Jew. So he set out to find her. In the course of his search he stumbled on a book written in Czech by a certain R. Karel called “Žaluji”, which translates as “I accuse”. It came out in 1946 in a small edition by a Czech publisher, and was never reprinted.

The name R. Karel turned out to be the pen-name of the former assistant to the prison photographer at Prague-Pankraz, the place where Marianne spent the last months of her life. In his book, Karel, whose real name was Rames, described in detail what life was like for the prisoners in Pankraz under the Nazis, including some of the correspondence between Marianne and her lover Riša.

Karel himself was arrested during the Nazi occupation on a politically trumped up charge, and in his function as a prison assistant he had considerable freedom of movement inside. He also worked in Block IIa, the death block, where Marianne was held. He was the go-between, he wrote, for somewhere around fifty prisoners and their families. He smuggled the prisoners’ secret messages from cell to cell and passed the letters out to their families and friends that they didn’t want the German censor to read. “A letter meant more than a meal or cigarettes,” writes Karel in the foreword to his book. “Anyone holed up in a cell in Pankraz would agree.



Letters were food for the soul. A letter from your own family was worth more than anything.”

Karel smuggled out of the prison some of the letters Marianne wrote to her sister Rosi in Vienna. He also sent her Marianne’s last letter, along with a note signed “A friend” informing her of Marianne’s death.

Karel was not only a secret courier for Marianne Golz but also a friend and faithful witness. Shortly before her death she gave him some of the letters with which she and Riša had sent little bits of life to each other in the death cells. Her personality and the unusual love affair between these two condemned people had made such an impression on him that he incorporated their letters into his book. It was the last thing he was able to do for them.

Karel himself said that he only published some of the letters in his book. It is no longer possible to find out just how many letters Marianne and Riša actually did exchange, for inquiries in Prague have established that he died a few years ago, leaving no letters behind from Marianne Golz and Riša Mächa. What is documented here is therefore the writings that he selected to save from oblivion.

Who was this Marianne Golz, then, whose pride fascinated her friends and whose intelligence provoked the anger of the Nazi judges? What kind of woman was this who risked her life for others and then, when death finally became inevitable, wanted to love one last time?



She was born in Vienna on January 31st 1895, the daughter of Josef Belokostolsky, a Polish craftsman, and his wife Amalie, whose family originated from Czechoslovakia. Marianne grew up in Vienna with her brother Josef and sister Rosemarie, who later became Rosi Haala. She trained to be an actress and light opera singer, and already in her mid-twenties had reached the position of leading singer at the Municipal Theatre in Salzburg under her stage name of Marianne Tolska. Euphoric reviews from this time praised “Miss Tolska” as “utterly charming” “just to look at”. “She acts, sings and dances enchantingly, and wears sinfully beautiful costumes,” enthused one reviewer after Marianne’s entry as Madame Pompadour in 1923. In that same year she took the stage with the most famous singer in the German opera world, Richard Tauber, partnering him in “Die Fledermaus”.

She was married at this time to the well-known music publisher Ernst Weingraf. However, a short time after this, she left him and in 1924 met her third husband, Hans Goldlust, in Berlin. He was seven years her junior. They had a big wedding there in 1929, and from this time on she lived close to her husband’s family. Hans’ parents Josef and Rosa Goldlust eventually moved into the same building, and his sister and her family had a flat there as well. This close family contact was to be an important factor in Marianne’s later life decisions, for the Goldlusts were Jewish.



When Hitler came to power in 1933, the carefree times came to an end for the Goldlusts. The mere fact of being Jewish brought the family into danger, but on top of that Hans’ professional activities were a thorn in the eye for the Nazis. Having changed his name by now to Hans Golz, he had become managing director of the “Literarische Welt”, a literary journal owned by the Rowohlt publishing company. Many of their contributions came from writers hated by the Nazis, Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin among them. In the face of this threat, Hans and Marianne moved to Prague, and a year later the Goldlust parents followed them into Czechoslovakia, and after that his sister’s family, too.



In Prague Hans Golz worked for several different foreign journals, among them the Mitropress agency in Paris. Marianne also took up journalistic activities at this time. She described herself later to Karel, her go-between, as “known to all the editors in Prague”.

When the Nazis occupied the Bohemian part of the Czechoslovak Republic on March 15th 1939 and declared it a German “protectorate”, Hans Golz stood exposed as a Jew on their political arrest list, and he was duly taken into custody a few days after the invasion. But, as he later wrote, Marianne “created such a furore” with the examining magistrates that they let him home after the first hearing in the gymnasium turned magistrates’ court, on condition he reappeared the next morning. On the next day, too, Marianne succeeded in getting her husband released by the evening. On the third day, however, Hans did not appear and this saved him from being sent to a

concentration camp. His colleagues at Mitropress had got him a visa for Poland. He was unable to stay there, however, and eventually managed to get from Warsaw to England along with other emigrants.



Marianne stayed behind in Prague at her own wish. She wanted to be there to take care of her parents-in-law, Rosa & Josef Goldlust. With the optimism that she held onto right to the end of her life, she believed nothing could happen to her because she was “Aryan”. And indeed nothing might have happened if she had taken no notice of what was



going on around her. For what Marianne Golz saw was no different from what other people saw or could have seen. But unlike other people Marianne not only saw, she took action, as more and more Jewish neighbours and friends were forced to leave to be “evacuated” – sent in transports to the concentration camps.

In the winter of 1941/2 the first systematic mass transports began of the Czech Jews. One year before, the Czech government, subservient now to German authority, had acceded to the German demand for a census of the population with the Jews registered separately. Registered precisely by name and address, several hundreds of them now had to report to the “Central Office for the Regulation of the Jewish Question” for transport to a concentration camp. Despite this some of them managed to disappear under false papers or even to escape abroad. But every month several thousand more were forced onto the track to the concentration camp and among them was Marianne’s mother-in-law, who was deported on 20th June 1942 to Theresienstadt. All trace of her was lost in the death camp at Treblinka.

On 3rd July 1942 Heydrich issued a decree called “The Prevention of Support for Enemies of the Reich”. It was specifically aimed at those who had helped Jews to escape or disappear. It was this decree that would form the case against Marianne Golz a few months later.

We can only infer from the verdict of the court and from hints in Marianne’s letters just how far and by what means this “saboteur and enemy of the Reich”, as she was labelled by the Special German Court, had helped Jewish women and men to “evade their evacuation”. The people convicted along with her for supporting enemies of the Reich were also condemned to death. The only other witnesses, the people who owe their lives to her, have not come forward to date.

Only this much, therefore, is clear: Marianne was arrested in her home in Prague



together with several friends on 19th November 1942, a Thursday. A circle of people met regularly in her home on Thursdays, according to the confession of one of the people arrested with her, to discuss politics – “political agitation” according to the judges. At these meetings of German speaking Jews, artists and intellectuals, there would probably also have been discussion of how best to help which Jewish friends and acquaintances. Marianne and other members of this circle then set up contact with people who, partly for money, facilitated a way over the border. Marianne later believed with certainty that it was a Jewish woman friend who informed the Gestapo of these Thursday meetings, Evzenie Synkova. In the hope of saving her own family from death, Synkova betrayed the group and their helpers and jeopardised the lives of ten people”.

Ottokar Zapotecky from Prague was arrested with Marianne, the official whom the Court later accused of taking a Jewish couple, the Levits, into his home shortly before the proclamation of martial law, and of obtaining false citizenship papers for them so that

they could escape to Leipzig under false names. The Levit family had received the notice to report to “the Trade Fair assembly centre” shortly before. It was an unmistakable declaration of forcible deportation.

Emilie Flunk, the 47-year-old maidservant to the Levit family, was also taken into custody and later condemned to death with Marianne. She had lived with them for a short while and obtained false papers for them with the help of stolen official forms and stamps.

The Gestapo also took the confectioner Ladislaus Dlesk, from Vienna, whom the judges convicted of smuggling two men across the border into Austria in a railway train in November 1942.

Another of Marianne’s associates taken at that time was the Czech Jew Emil Samek who had committed the “crime”, in the eyes of the law, of not delivering up to the Gestapo the Jewish businessman and fellow accused Josef Goldschmidt, on his visit to Vienna. Although he knew that Goldschmidt had fled shortly before his deportation, Samek had not denounced him, and had even given him money and food. This was termed “aiding and abetting enemies of the Reich” in judicial language and meant certain death for Emil Samek.

Josef Goldschmidt also was condemned, for his act of sabotage in not reporting for “evacuation” and in “hiding from the authorities after having illegally crossed the border.”

The picture these verdicts indicate of Marianne’s circle must, in the absence of witnesses, remain vague. But what is clear is that these were mostly simple people who were offering crucial help in cases of dire need, without any background support from a political organization. And they were doing it against a background of martial law after the assassination of Reichsprotector Heydrich, with shootings and compulsory arrests creating a climate of ongoing tension.

When the group was arrested in November 1942, several of the people accused alongside Marianne incriminated their friends and colleagues in wide-ranging confessions, under the pressure of interrogation by the Gestapo. It is only from their statements that we can establish today what Marianne’s actual part was in helping the Jewish refugees. Marianne herself denied all guilt in court and, as the judges noted irritably in their verdict, presented herself as a “naïve woman with illusions”. One of her fellow accused, whom she herself had previously helped to escape, incriminated her definitively: she had offered him protection in her home, he confessed, when he came to her in fear of deportation, and she had arranged contacts for him with members of her so-called “Thursday club”. They had then got him over the border into Austria. After his escape, Marianne had forwarded money to him through her sister Rosi in Vienna. However, the police had also found Marianne’s signature on a money transfer chit held by a Jew they arrested in Vienna, and that same day the Gestapo were outside her door.

The judges at the Special German Court in Prague levelled their strongest censure against Marianne, however, for arranging the escape to Vienna of her old friend Josef Goldschmidt. According to the judges, Goldschmidt “maintained regular contact with shady groups who made it their business to smuggle Jews across the border to other countries.” Another of the accused had called his former friend Goldschmidt “the leader of a centre for illegal Jewish emigration”. When Josef Goldschmidt himself escaped to Vienna shortly before his deportation, Marianne had known about it, the judges decided. “It was the duty of the accused to inform the authorities of Goldschmidt’s presence in Vienna. In the opinion of this court, the accused was fully aware of her duty in this respect in spite of her protests.” And the verdict continues: “She not only failed in her duty to report, she also offered the accused Goldschmidt every support in her power.” Letters and money transfers were the means Marianne had used to help her friend Goldschmidt. According to the Nazi judges this was “Aiding and abetting enemies of the Reich and assisting with passport offences”.

From the moment of their arrest in November 1942 it was clear that Marianne and her associates would never again be in a position to help Jews under threat. They were in the same position themselves.

After her own arrest, Marianne was interrogated several times by Gestapo Commissar Röllich, and spent two months in solitary confinement. She was allowed no contact with the outside world until January 24th, when they gave her permission to write a letter to her sister Rosi Haala in Vienna. These first lines begin the collection of her letters that is documented in this book. Some of them only came to light when Ronnie Golz found them in Vienna during his researches. For decades Marianne's sister had kept them hidden, away from her memory and away from her relatives. Marianne's first letters are agitated, fragmentary and abrupt. They mirror some of the disruption the prisoners must have been feeling after what they had just been through. However, at the same time she was clearly trying to adapt to the reality of prison life. The first letters may therefore seem banal at first glance, with their lists of urgently needed utilities. But these everyday objects are extremely important for survival in prison. And for Marianne they provided a subject that she could write about without fear under the scrutiny of the prison censor.

The prisoners in Prague were allowed to write and receive one letter a month. But Marianne soon found friends who could enable her to send extra, uncensored letters to her sister. In these letters she was able to talk in detail about her arrest, and also about what she thought would happen. In these letters that by-passed the censor she could write about her fears, and also about her hopes.

Because for Marianne Golz it was still inconceivable that anything bad could happen to her. As a woman who until now had succeeded with strength and glamour at everything she had ever attempted, she plainly could not believe that there were situations which, however much she exerted herself, she could not influence. And so it was perhaps a mixture of political naïvety and boundless self confidence that made Marianne assert again and again to her sister that in her case there had to be something that could be done, that what she had done was not political, that her brother-in-law Hellmuth should be able to use his contacts as an officer to get her out, and her niece Erika, "Mimi", also lend a hand. The house in Lichterfelde, in Berlin, could be sold, her sister was still the proprietor, and with money everything is possible, even with the Nazis – so Marianne believed. She even hoped that Gestapo Commissar Röllich, who had interrogated herself and her circle, might be approachable. "Röllich can do anything," she wrote in a letter to her sister. But Gestapo officer Röllich only did one thing: prepare reports of the damning interrogations which were to provide the basis for Marianne's eventual death sentence.

Again and again right up to her death Marianne Golz asked her sister to visit her, but only her niece Mimi made the attempt, and even that failed because she was not allowed a passport into the protectorate. And Marianne's brother-in-law Hellmuth refused categorically to intervene on his sister-in-law's behalf. "It's bad enough having her for a sister-in-law. I cannot and will not help her," he declared.

From as early as January 1943, as private letters document, Marianne's family tried from Vienna to organize a lawyer for her. After a lot of asking around they finally succeeded in finding one in Prague. Dr. Schramek, a female lawyer, offered to take her case and Marianne was happy to be represented by a woman. "Just think, this woman is acting out of pure selflessness," she reminded her sister Rosi. "She has given me so much courage, she is a real woman. Women have hearts, and when they also have good minds they are better than men." In the following weeks Dr Schramek became an important and trusted friend. She even managed to get herself appointed as Marianne's defence counsel in the trial. But in the end even the committed lawyer was not able to do much for the accused.

On the morning of 18th May the Special German Court in Prague convened to pass sentence on Marianne and those accused with her. It was stated afterwards in the verdict that the hearing had been public, but Marianne's counsel was sworn to absolute

secrecy on the proceedings. All she could tell Rosa Haala at the end of May was “that your sister’s case has turned out to be very grave and the death sentence has been passed.”

From this moment of clarity on, Marianne’s letters changed. She still went on hoping she would not die, but she was calmer. There was the occasional demand that her sister try to organize a mercy visit and her brother-in-law Hellmuth use his connections as an officer, but equally pressing now was the request for poison, which her sister could perhaps hide in shampoo for her. If she had to lose her life, Marianne had decided, then at least she should not also have to lose her body to the Nazis. At the same time that she began to come to terms with death, she started to live in the present – the prison present. For she was living and suffering with the five women who shared Cell 38 in Pankraz with her and had, like her, to wait the months out till death took them.



It was at this time, somewhere around the beginning of July 1943, that Marianne wrote her first letter to The Stranger in Cell 41 and began her love affair with Riša Mächa. Dr. Mächa, a thirty-year-old insurance clerk, had like Marianne been condemned to death for violating the “prohibition of support for activities hostile to the Reich”. And he, too, was led to the execution chamber of



Pankraz Prison, although not until May 1944. There was still time, therefore, for the two of them to give each other, with a determination born of despair, the courage to go on living. They wrote a couple of lines to each other almost every day, and there was always a prison officer around to carry these love letters between Cells 38 and 41, hidden in food or a newspaper. Once Riša even managed to persuade an officer to lead him past Marianne’s cell on his way to be shaved, and to open the cell door for a few moments. The couple, who knew each other only through letters, were able for one precious moment to touch hands and look at each other.



GOLTZOVÁ MARIANNE

The prisoners in Pankraz were allowed to receive visits and parcels at long intervals, and, importantly for Marianne’s and Riša’s letters, their prison officers also gave them the newspapers they had finished with. These news reports brought new hope to them all. In contrast to Riša, Marianne understood German, and she kept him posted on the war front, as far as she understood it from the reports. Every suggestion of a German defeat, every



Dr. MÄCHA RICHARD

advance of the Allies, brought everyone a new glint of hope. Every day that staved off execution brought the prisoners that little bit closer to the end of war and to the freedom they longed for. In the summer of 1943 Marianne guessed that she and her cellmates would not be able to win this race against time, but she could hardly have imagined that she would have to endure another two years before Prague and its prison would be liberated.

The nervous hoping for a quick political change became an important element in her letters to Riša, for their future hung on the downfall of the Nazis. But this hope was repeatedly dashed by the knowledge that their deaths had already been pronounced, and that it was only a matter of time now, an interminable wait for the inevitable to happen. Thanks to good contact with a small number of reliable prison officers, however, it was possible for Marianne and her cellmates in No. 38 to learn a week ahead of time who was

next due for “the big day”, the day of execution. And they would weep, and say their goodbyes, and sing and laugh together, to lighten the road to death for each other. It was an ordeal that Marianne had to endure several times over, having one of her cellmates taken away at 9 in the morning for her “big day”. Once a week, always on a Friday, Prison Superintendent “Papa” Sauer would walk the length of the corridors of Pankraz Prison, and the prisoners would hold their breath and listen for which door he stopped at. The names of those to be executed would be called, and the women led out of their cells, often with incredulous faces. They would then be left for several horrific hours in a so-called preparation cell, waiting to die. To preserve the appearance of decency and morality they were given paper and pencil to write last letters to their families. But the bulk of these letters never arrived. When Pankraz prison was liberated in May 1945, hundreds of them were found stapled together in a corner.

Many of the prisoners were brought before a committee of lawyers and government officials before their execution, to give an impression of formal correctness to the occasion. But the men in black robes and uniforms only checked the numbers on the handcuffs to see if the executioner was leading the “right” prisoner at the right time to the guillotine. This stood in the next room hidden only by a curtain. Every two minutes, as Alois Weiss, the executioner, recorded in his careful handwriting in the execution register, a prisoner was led into the execution cell, seized from behind before the eyes of the state prosecutors, blindfolded with a black cloth, and laid forcibly under the guillotine. The execution chamber was fitted out with thorough efficiency for its sole purpose: the walls were tiled as for a slaughterhouse, the floor was raked to allow the blood to flow easily down, and every evening the tiles were hosed down so that everything would be clean and orderly when the killing began again the next Friday. The execution itself took exactly one minute – even that was carefully checked by the executioners. They received thirty marks for each severed head.

It was Pankraz prison policy that the other prisoners should hear their companions’ final moans and shrieks in the seconds before they died, or their farewell calls to those they were leaving behind. Marianne and the women in her cell would call back and try to sing to drown out the dreadful noise of the guillotine crashing down.

When the superintendents came to fetch “enemy of the Reich” Golz from her cell on the morning of 8th October, Marianne had pre-empted her executioners. The hope she had expressed in her letters to her sister had materialised, and she had been able to get hold of poison for her last moments. But there was no place in this highly organized mechanised killing system for her wish not to be barbarously mutilated under the axe, and she was dragged into the execution chamber half dead already, and laid unconscious on the guillotine. Whether they wanted to keep it secret that the prisoner had managed to get hold of poison, or whether they wanted to prove to the bitter end who was boss here, Marianne’s judges and executioners refused to allow this strong and clever woman to deprive them of the satisfaction of destroying her body.

A sad letter from Marianne’s cellmate Ottylie Hynek describing her last hours, and a few sympathetic lines to Rosa from Karel, the go-between, are the last traces to be found of Marianne.

But the story of Marianne Golz is not over yet, for what happened to her killers is also a part of it. And decades after her death attempts to research what became of these men are still being resisted. In local government offices they are manifestly as reluctant to trace her judges and executioners as they are to uncover any traces of Marianne herself. The official concern that meets one’s inquiries is impressive: “Regrettably no information is available on this matter,” declares the central office for crimes committed by the judiciary during the Third Reich in Ludwigsburg. But they were prepared to offer information on Dr. Franz Josef Ludwig, the state prosecutor in charge of the case, who originally condemned Marianne Golz to death for “assisting in the smuggling of people.” “He has been dead since 1970,” they offer. “In 1966 a formal investigation was mounted

in Düsseldorf against Dr. Ludwig for ‘suspected participation in homicide in the practice of his office’, but it never came to court.” What the central office does not mention is that Dr Ludwig had by then been long reinstated not only as a lawyer but as a state prosecutor. So the case against him for assisting in multiple murders would have had to be brought by one state prosecutor against another.

And what about the others who brought Marianne Golz under the guillotine – and not only her – for practising a bit of humanity and bravery? The Ludwigsburg central office will admit only that none of their own lawyers ever held responsibility in a German court for these death sentences. Regrettably, no other details can be given, under the Protection of Information Act.

However research in another place shows that it is not only the Protection of Information Act of 1945 that extends its protective hand over the lawyers. Judge Robert Hartmann, who passed the death sentence against Marianne “in the name of the German people”, took up office in Königswinter immediately after the end of the war as presiding judge over the local criminal court. How many of his judicial colleagues did Hartman lean on at the beginning of the nineteen sixties to get himself retired early on full pension? He owed this quiet and honourable departure to a federal law passed in 1961, with which the German federal parliament sought to lay their past to rest. In order to meet growing criticism that Nazi high judges had been almost without exception given leading positions in the German courts, these men of the law were offered an ultimatum: if they took their retirement within a certain time, they could pre-empt dishonourable dismissal.

Marianne’s state prosecutor Dr. Wolfgang Zeynek, who was responsible for no less than 117 death sentences during his service at the Special German Court in Prague, no doubt took advantage of this well paid escape route. Born in Czechoslovakia, Zeynek was the only one who did not take the opportunity in 1945 to make a judicious escape from Prague. He was prosecuted and condemned as a war criminal for his actions in the Special German Court in Prague. In the fifties he was allowed to leave for Germany, where within a short time he attained a position as a state prosecutor in the Nuremberg county courts. In 1959 his colleagues subpoenaed him after conducting an investigation against this committed Nazi, but surprise, surprise, no case was ever brought against him, and he got off scot-free.

Dr. Erwin Albrecht, who was one of the signatories to Marianne’s death sentence, likewise never stood trial. Dr. Albrecht, who had been a member of both the Nazi party and the S.S., and praised for the “correctness of his attitude” in his service record, and for his active contributions towards “the goals of the National Socialist movement”, became after the war a founding member of the Christian Democratic Party in the Saarland. As member of the state parliament of Saarland and chairman of the local Christian Democrat Party he was a board member of the regional broadcasting company, and sat on the committee for political culture where he displayed his partiality for constitutional questions. In 1957 he resigned his party offices, however, and in 1959 was dismissed from the party for his extreme right-wing views. One year later the Saarland parliament cancelled his parliamentary immunity and began proceedings against him for his activities in Prague. But this action also never came to court.

And finally, the last person involved in Marianne’s execution, the executioner himself, received a similar exoneration to that of the people who had instigated it. Alois Weiss, who was employed as the standing executioner in Pankraz Prison, moved to Germany after the war and lived in Regensburg without ever being called to account for his gruesome wartime activities. When he reached retirement age, he wrote to his previous employers at Pankraz Prison, which was still functioning, asking them to send a written statement of his employment there from 1943 to 1944 as executioner, in order to claim a higher rated pension from the state.

Marianne Golz did not need a pension. But her family tried to obtain some sort of official acknowledgement of her pain and suffering. In 1958 her husband, Hans Golz,

who had by now married again, brought a claim for compensation against the Berlin Reparations Department. There they decided that Marianne's fate fitted the "damages to freedom" category of the Federal Reparations Act (Clauses 43-50). Two years later a conscientious civil servant had calculated Marianne's pain and suffering in figures. Under the heading "Damage to freedom, i.e. restriction of such" he entered ten whole months and nineteen days on the grant form, which had no column for the category "Being killed" or "Fear of Death". The politically correct civil servant valued Marianne Golz's pain and suffering on being held in prison for ten whole months and nineteen days at 1500 marks.

Vera Gaserow

The Letters and Secret Messages

The papers of Marianne Golz-Goldlust and those condemned with her come from three different sources:

*The bulk of them can be found in the book *Žaluji*, which R. Karel published in Prague in 1946 in Czech. A collection of letters, some passed by the prison censor and some secret and therefore smuggled out, was found in Vienna in the home of Marianne's niece, Erika Haala (Mimi), the daughter of Marianne's sister, Rosi Haala in 1985. In 1996 [50 years after the publication of Karel's book,] a third bundle of secret messages in the original was discovered in the archives of the Czech Ministry of the Interior. This seems to contain part of the missing archives of Karel.*

The letters are given in chronological order wherever possible. Occasionally this has not been followed where the content made more sense that way.

In her letters to Riša, Marianne reports about the war based on articles in the German newspapers she gets from the prison warders. In this context she often quotes the text as it stands and therefore speaks of 'our army' or 'our front' or 'the enemy' - being the allies.

To Rosi Haala, Marianne's sister

Censored prisoner's letter

Prague-Pankraz

24.1.43

DEUTSCHE UNTERSUCHUNGSHAFTANSTALT. *Prag, den 24. 1. 1943*

Prag, den 24. 1. 1943

ZUR BEACHTUNG!

1. Es ist verboten, Tabakwaren jeglicher Art, Lebens- und Genussmittel oder sonstige Sachen den Gefangenen mitzubringen oder zu schicken. Lediglich Seife und Zahnpulver sind während des Krieges genehmigt.
2. Die Gefangenen dürfen höchstens alle 4 Wochen einen Brief absenden und in derselben Zeit einen Brief empfangen. Briefe, die häufiger eintreffen, werden nicht ausgehändigt. Mit Bleistift oder unleserlich geschriebene Briefe werden zurückgehalten. Deutsche Schrift, nur auf den Zellen schreiben.
3. Untersuchungshäftlinge und Strafgefangene dürfen nur alle 2 Monate Besuch empfangen.
4. Anfragen an die Haftanstalt werden nur beantwortet, wenn Rücksicht besteht.

Samstag 24. 1.

DER VORSTAND.

*Liebe - Mutter, ich darf schreiben, obwohl sie ist ein -
meine Weihnachtswünsche - bitte sende mir sofort eine
schwarze Bluse, eine Arbeitsstrümpfe, 1 Handtuch, 1 Handtuch
oder Hand, einen Kamm, ein Seife, ein gutes Stück,
Korsetts, 1 Paar Schuhe, ich muss auch meine
Lacke einmal raus - bitte die Sachen so, dass ich sie
selber waschen kann, ich muss nicht, sie lange meine
Reise bis zum Ende der Nacht noch dauert - jetzt noch
den Kaminputz - bitte göhre Hilfe, Telefon, und hoch -
für mich - in g. sende dich von meinem Kommissar
für Reust über gn, Röllich, er hat den Schlüssel
zur Wohnung und die Post - er ist lieb und freundlich
und sehr gutkennend, ich hoffe das hast es bereits
gesehen - wenn er die Post nicht hat - der Hausverwalter
wohnt im selben Haus wie ich - heißt Säger und
wenn du einen sehr lieben Brief schickst, so
wird er dir helfen, früher wenn die Leute noch zu*

Darling,

Hurray, I'm allowed to write! Forgive my selfishness, but here is my Christmas wish-list - please send me as soon as possible: a black blouse, a work apron, a nightdress, camisole or a shirt, a suspender-belt, soap, a big bar, toilet paper, toothbrush and toothpaste, indoor shoes. I just have to get out of these clothes at last. The underwear needs to be things I can wash myself. I don't know yet how long this nightmare will last.

Money matters: Could you please pay my rent, telephone and electricity bills. Ask my interrogator, Gestapo Kommissar Röllich, you've met him. He has the key to the flat and the post box; he is sweet and very obliging. With luck you'll already have done this. If he doesn't have the post, the janitor will. He lives in the same building, his name is Säger, and if

you write him a nice letter he will help you.

Everyone was nice to me before, but I don't know how they'll feel about me now. There is plenty of money with the Kommissar, but I have none here. Please, Rosi, do this. And now, darling, after all this, I send you my best wishes for a happy new year and happy birthday all rolled together in one.

My own Christmas holidays were worse than anything I could have imagined, even in my worst dreams -- I don't think I shall ever forget them. I was horribly afraid for you. I hope they didn't put you through too much unpleasantness. Don't worry about me. So far I am holding out. I have only cried once, and that was out of anger.

The food is actually good; I have lost a lot of weight, but that has nothing to do with the food. My nerves are still holding, but I will feel all the better once I have heard from you. It will all sort itself out, Rosi, you'll see, and then you will get a long letter.

Right: Vaseline, sewing thread, black and coloured, needle, no scissors. I am sure you will do it.

Cheer up Aunt Agathe (...) How is Hellmuth? I hope he's not too cross with me.

Love and kisses. I shall stay true to myself, have no fear.

Marianne

Franz Säger to Rosi¹

Prague, 1.3.43

In answer to your letter of 24th February 1943 I have to inform you that there is nothing more to settle regarding the lodgings of your sister, Mrs. Marianne Golz.

The Gestapo sealed the flat and later it was cleared. It is now occupied by a new tenant, a Mr. A. Herbst, a government official.

If this information is not satisfactory, I would ask you to direct your inquiries to the Gestapo in Prague.

Heil Hitler
Säger

To Rosi

Censored prisoner's letter written in the women's prison at Rübén near Prague

Rübén 31.1.43

My Dear,

My second letter. I hope I'm not just writing to the censor - or the waste paper basket. I'm all right. Don't worry about me. It's not beautiful here, but it is bearable. It was hard at first, but now things are all right.

There are things I need urgently. Please send as soon as possible a nightdress, suspender belt, underwear – all easily washable. Also two towels, soap, washing powder, toothpaste, Vaseline, toilet paper, needle and thread, nail file, aprons, two if possible.

I would sleep better if I was sure that you have paid all my bills: rent, telephone, electricity. As I wrote before, Mr. Säger in the same building, or Röllich, the Gestapo Officer.

Indoor shoes, and outdoor ones, too, if things turn out to last longer, also a dress. I hope not, I'm just not thinking about it. Not thinking is something you can get used to. Ask Dr. Neubauer at 8 Hermann Square, Prague VII, if the dogs are being cared for. I worry about them, and once I start worrying I never stop. It would be good to hear from you at last.

Ask Mr. Röllich if there is anything you can do for me, but I doubt it. My own experience has been bad enough, that's life - but seeing others weep their way through things I couldn't even imagine having to endure, well, that's also experience. Other people's troubles so easily become my own. One day the whole story



will be told – or forgotten. And perhaps it would be better that way because it is all so very sad. Even with the best will in the world it's hard to find cheer here. Hunger is not a problem, though. I'm in a sort of prison, a nunnery with big windows and beautiful views. I sleep terribly – if only I could sleep for three hours at a stretch, just once. It's one's thoughts that make life unbearable.

¹Franz Säger was the janitor at Marianne's house in Strossmayer Street in Prague.

Write now, my lovely. Remember me to the aunts. Hope to God you don't have any bad news for me.

When you're packing the parcel up please don't forget a black blouse – I've nothing else to wear.

Dearest, it's incredible how much I think of you. Many kisses -

Marianne

To Rosi

Censored prisoner's letter

Rüben 1.3.43

Darling Rosi

Here is my third letter, but none yet from you. Should I be making a fuss? Should I be worrying? Ah, but I have your lovely parcel now, bursting with goodies, and I feel like a princess in heaven. The lovely work overall, everything just as I wanted, the sewing things, thank you so much.

And now, please, shoes, towel, Vaseline, black thread, two big handkerchiefs, soap powder. I wish I could hear from the world outside – what's happening with Hans, whether he's paid my rent again; whether I can do it myself, I don't know yet. I'm racking my brains trying to work out why Hellmuth wrote his address down. Apart from all this I try to push everything as far away as possible.

Rosi, darling, ask Dr. Neubauer about my dogs, he's a good friend of mine. The dogs were with the landlord at first but I asked Dr. N. to come to an agreement with him. You are all I have, little sister, and I know you can move mountains when you have to.

Everyone here apart from me has received replies, I'm the only one not to, I'm getting desperate. Write to Glindowiez, 1421 Reich Street, Prague-Brevnov, tell him to do something for me, and apply to see me. I've no idea how I look now, but I'm sure he will be able to put up with what he sees.

I don't know when I'm due to appear in Court. All I know about is making cardboard boxes, nothing about what's going on outside. I study faces, though. The nuns have really beautiful, pure faces. No one else does. They must have prayed away all unclean thoughts. It's lovely to look at them – only I don't see them very often.

Just now I am in bed with a cough and having difficulty breathing. But it's not my lungs, I've just got a cold. Rosi, darling, are you going to keep me waiting for ever? Please, I'm so longing to hear from you, you really are all I have. I am sure Gusti Glindowiez and Neubauer will be happy to have news of me, they'll be happy to do something for me. By next month I'm bound to know more. Till then, lots of kisses, and don't think too much about me. It really is bearable and everything will pass. Kiss the family and think kindly of me.

Marianne

To Rosi

Censored prisoner's letter

Rüben 28.3.43

Rosi,

Here is my fourth letter, but the pen I'm writing with is so awful that that one loses all interest in writing. I'm losing the pleasure of communication. I've received your letter, but why is it so short? Why so little news? I'm going mad trying to understand – and longing to hear from you again.

If you haven't sent them already: urgent, shoes and one of your black dresses – I've grown very, very slim. Write to Glindowiez, tell him to visit me.

And black thread for stockings, Vaseline, towel, soap powder, a pair of black stockings. And regards to Aunt Johanna. Glindowiez can bring me news of everyone. I want to give him the boots that I don't need here.

You're concerned about the dogs and my flat. I hope you're also worried about me, because you're all I have. I'm going to get myself a lawyer so I can have better contact with you. You'll get a letter quicker from there than from me. I'm trying to think what I need, but my mind's getting slow and stupid. I keep forgetting things and then all of a sudden I remember.

The work overall is doing good service, I am extremely grateful to have it. Let's hope this ordeal will soon be over, and you can get it back – but not by April, as far as I know.

You want to know how I am? Perhaps better than you imagine. I haven't given in to despair; I'm even beginning to feel the spring. I can see violets and the buds on the trees and the sun all day. I've given up thinking. I read books that an eleven-year-old would turn her nose up at. But then, I'm in somewhat nervous company. But it's all right, Rosi.

I didn't want a lawyer at first because I really thought my case was minor and I assumed you were doing something about it yourself, especially with Röllich. Don't underestimate his influence. Could Hellmuth write to him? Come to that, what was Hellmuth doing in Prague at all? You'll send the lawyer to me again, won't you? She's a very nice woman. But I'll have to send her to you for her cash. And could you send 20 Marks to me for the dentist?

Well, I'll say goodbye for this month. Think of me often, and do everything you can for me. There are things I long for so much that it goes beyond words, but the day will come, won't it? Love to everybody.

Marianne

Dr. Schramek, lawyer, to Lieutenant-Colonel Haala²

Prague XII, 7.4.43

Dear Lieutenant-Colonel Haala,

This is to inform you that your sister-in-law Marianne Golz, who is in Rügen Prison, signed a contract yesterday authorising me to represent her in the criminal court.

Heil Hitler

Dr. Schramek

Rosi to Dr. Schramek

Vienna, 10th April 1943

Dear Dr. Schramek,

I am very pleased that you have undertaken to represent my sister. I am extremely grateful to you, and beg you to help her as much as you can in this serious situation.

I would appreciate it if you would keep me informed of your opinion on the course of the proceedings and on your meetings. Please tell me on what grounds she has been charged.

I am very worried about my sister and beg you to do whatever you can for her.

R. Haala

² Hellmuth Haala was Marianne's brother-in-law, married to her sister Rosi.

Dr. Schramek to RosiPrague XII 15th April 1943

Re: Marianne Golz – Criminal Charge

Following on your letter of the 10th inst. I beg to inform you that I visited your sister in the prison yesterday. She is bright and cheerful, accepts her imprisonment as one reconciled to her fate, and retains her sense of humour. She wants things from her home, but I do not know how I should get hold of them. I shall contact her former housemaid and if she still has access it is possible that she will bring the required articles to me.

I shall keep you informed.

Heil Hitler

Dr. Schramek**To Rosi***Censored prisoner's letter*

Prague, Easter Sunday 1943

My Dear,

When I used to feel homesick for my sister I would go to the telephone and just listen to your voice. So what can I do about it now? Well, an Easter that I once spent with you in



Vienna comes to my mind.. This Easter is a sad one, but I have fruit trees in blossom right before my eyes, and a garden with flowers and a view into the distance. It's just that one's longings get so much greater in the spring.

I have your second letter with the things, thank you for that – I am delighted with Mother's handkerchief. You know, of course, that I was wearing winter clothes when I arrived in prison and it will be summer before anything happens.

I have commissioned a lawyer; she has already been here once. I must have contact with the outside world, which means you. The address I gave you for Neubauer is not right. Write to my housemaid, Steffi Piackova, 22 Johannis von Saaz Street, Prague VII, ask her what's happening with my dogs. Tell me through the lawyer what you have done with the flat and everything. You have to understand, the flat is everything that I possess.

You write so little. You could give me so much more detail. It's sad that you don't use the space. I know I can rely on you, but have you done everything I asked you to? Have you chased up Röllich, has he answered you? You can talk about all details with the lawyer. She will also be able to tell you when I am to appear in court, and telephone you afterwards to let you know how it went. I am terribly afraid now that it will go badly, not so much for me as for a host of others. I have many, many difficult children under my wing, as usual. But I haven't sunk so low yet as to start feeling sorry for myself.

It's a great relief to me that you're with your family. My wish-list: comb, Vaseline, or an unscented cream, soap powder, cotton wool, dress, shoes, could be sandals, have you any black ones? Stockings, I don't need many, I can make do with just two pairs. Let Steffi deal with my winter things.

So, my dear, send the lawyer to me often, no one else is allowed to visit. You are the only person I'm allowed to write to. My love to you and everyone, I long so much to see you.

Marianne

Note from prison translator to the prison censor: "I draw the underlined words to your attention, since the details referred to in them are unknown to the translator.

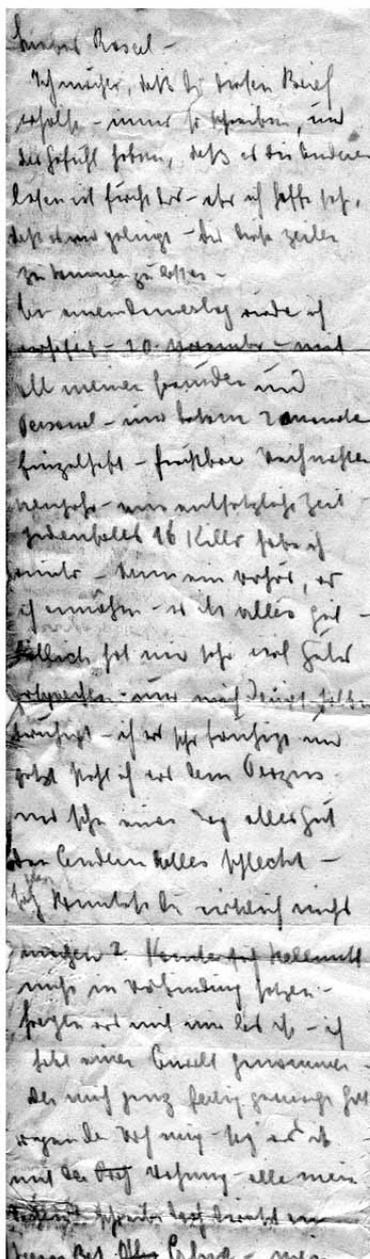
Dr. Kuhn, prison translator.

8th May 1943

Censor's comment: Passed

To Rosi

Secret letter, undated



Dearest Rosi,

I want you to get this letter. It's awful to write knowing that it'll be read by others. I hope these lines get to you.

I was arrested on a Thursday – November 20th³ - with all my friends and staff. We had two months in isolation cells, a horrible Christmas and New Year. It was a ghastly time. Still, I did lose 30 pounds. Then there was a hearing, which I assumed went well. Röllich testified for me and reassured me about you. I calmed down a lot, and now I'm up for trial. Things look good one day, and bad the next.

Tell me, can you really do nothing? Can't Hellmuth use his contacts, find out about my situation? I've taken a lawyer, but she leaves me frantic over what's happened to my flat. Tell me what's happened to it – and to all my belongings. Write to Herr Ahne. Write to my neighbour at my Prague address. And also write to my judge, give him my address in Prague, and ask him what you can do. Röllich was really decent – at least to my face.

Our case is going to involve a number of death sentences. I would really rather not have to see that, but I'm hardly in a position to choose my own fate. Things aren't too bad here, I am respected, and I even have a "position" were it not for the fact that I'm in prison. It's all bearable.

My maid is the only person taking care of me. Write to her: Steffi Packova, 22 Johann von Saaz Alley. Send her money to buy me something decent to eat.

I beg you, be more detailed in your letters. Please, please, don't leave me in the lurch, do everything in your power to help me. I'm losing everything I possess, maybe even my head. You just never know what people

will do. I've been through so much...

³ Marianne was wrong here. The Thursday she is referring to here was 19th November 1943.

I don't know what has happened to Levit and Kühnel. (...) I've been living on pills for so long now that one forgets everything.

My darling, do everything you can, and have my love.

Marianne

Dr. Schramek to Rosi

Prague XII, 28.4.43

Re: Marianne Golz – Criminal charge

I have to inform you regarding your letter of 21st April 1943 that your sister's case is very grave. The charge against her has already been lodged, and in a few days I shall obtain sight of the court documents.

Your sister's home has been sequestered and a new tenant has already moved in. I do not know where her things have been taken, so I cannot obtain shoes or clothes for her. Since she possesses nothing now apart from snow boots, may I suggest that you send some shoes to my address that I can bring her myself?

As soon as I learn more I will let you know.

Heil Hitler

Dr. Schramek

Dr Schramek to Rosi

Prague XII, 10.5.43

Re: Marianne Golz – Criminal Charge

In the above mentioned matter I have to inform you that the charge against your sister is already being heard at the Special German Court. As a Court Counsel has been appointed I shall not be defending her and I can therefore do nothing more in this case, which is a very serious one.

Your sister's flat in Prague is already let, and as you wrote to her some time ago that you have been paying the rent yourself quite regularly, she would like to know whom you have rented her flat to.

As soon as I hear the result of the trial I shall not fail to inform you.

Heil Hitler

Dr. Schramek

Dr. Schramek to Rosi

Prague XII 13.5.43

Re: Marianne Golz – Criminal Charge

In reply to your letter of 12th May 1943 I beg to inform you that I have been appointed to defend your sister in Court, from which you can conclude that the case is very serious as I have already told you. The shoes have already arrived and I shall take them to your sister myself.

The trial will take place on

18th May at 9 a.m.

Your sister is now in Růben Prison near Prague, where the women awaiting trial are kept. I shall of course make every effort to comfort her and keep her in good spirits. However I must also prepare her for the heavy fate that awaits her.

Heil Hitler

Dr. Schramek

Dr. Schramek to Rosi

Prague XII 21.5.43

By express messenger

Re: Marianne Golz – Criminal Charge

Following on my letter to you of 13th May I hereby inform you that the charge against your sister was brought on 18th May. The State prosecutor demanded the highest penalty. Judgement was not passed, and the trial was adjourned till

25th May 1943 at 8.45 a.m.

when the verdict will be pronounced.

As I have been unable to reach you on the telephone, I am sending this to you by post.

Heil Hitler

Dr. Schramek

To Rosi

Censored prisoner's letter

Prague, Sunday 23.5.43.

My beloved sister – so close to my heart

I write to you with an aching heart. I know I'm causing you a lot of worry, but if God gives one a sister, worry is part of the package. By the time you receive this letter, the decision will have fallen one way or the other. Take it, therefore, as a reflection of what I am thinking now, for Dr. Schramek will have given you the most important facts. What a wonderful person she is! Think about it, Rosi darling, I have nothing of my own left to offer this woman, yet she goes on representing me without any thought for her own advantage. She's given me so much courage – she's a real woman. Women have hearts, and when they also have good minds they are far superior to men. I'm glad that I have her and not a man for my lawyer.

Things weren't too bad before, when I was awaiting trial. I'm not saying they were easy months, but at least they were bearable, however things turn out in the end. I got on well with some of the women, and the officials were all good to me. You can console yourself that at least it wasn't too bitter.

I haven't had a letter from you for a month now. Didn't you write in April? If I hadn't had my lawyer I would have felt completely abandoned. Of course I had friends, but no one I got really close to. What would be the point? My house girl turned up, she's a loyal soul.

Please send: Vaseline, mine is running out, soap, soap powder, black darning wool. I got the shoes, thank you. Steffi took the boots, my lawyer has her address. I would have liked a change of clothes but I'm still freezing, and glad I have the warm things. I feel quite ill, I haven't eaten for weeks and have been in bed for 14 days. When Tuesday is over I shall have a better sense of where I am and what to think.

I pray often and remember the time I sang Ave Maria solo in church. I'm not in the convent any more, it was nice there. But everything passes, everything will pass. Love to Mimi and the others, kisses to you, as ever.

Marianne

Dr. Schramek to Rosi

Prague XII, 29.5.43

Re: Marianne Golz – Criminal trial

As I have already informed you, your sister's case is now very grave and the death sentence has been passed. I have been trying to reach you since then by telephone but could not get through and am therefore only now able to inform you.

Your sister requests that you visit her. I will lodge an appeal for clemency today.

Heil Hitler

*Dr. Schramek***Dr. Schramek to Rosi**Prague XII, 9th June 1943

Re: Marianne Golz – Criminal Case

With regard to your letter of the 5th inst. I unfortunately cannot inform you further on the proceedings of the trial or send you the formal charge sheet, as the trial was held in secret and I am sworn to secrecy myself.

Your sister is now being held in prison in Prague and very much wants you to visit her, but I believe it would be very disturbing for you and in any event you can do nothing to help her.

I am gladly willing to give you any further information I can, as long as it is not related to the court proceedings.

Heil Hitler

*Dr. Schramek***To Rosi***Secret letter, undated*

Rosi dearest – I got your June letter today. The post was fast, it only took three days.

Courage, hope, these words do not translate easily into feelings. I am horribly helpless here. If I had only known before how things would turn out – I'm sure I could have worked miracles! If you do come, you must speak to Röllich, only you mustn't believe what he says. He is responsible. The Court is nothing but a farce! Say that you'll give the house⁴ to the Red Cross or something like that - after all, everything has its price - but don't give it till you hold the pardon in your hands and are sure I will live.



If you really can't face doing this, you must send me something from your brother-in-law in a bottle of shampoo. I'll soldier on as long as I can, but I'm not putting myself through that execution scene. Things (...) will turn out fine because heads are rolling for Germany's victory.

Ask Ahne what you should do. Go to Berlin - I thought you had been there already. There's very little time left for me. Hellmuth must be able to do something. Don't even think about an ordinary plea for clemency - it definitely wouldn't work. But you can buy anything now, my life included. If you can't do it, go to Berlin, I beseech you, go to the highest judicial office. Hellmuth must lodge an appeal. My case isn't political. He can do it.

⁴ Marianne is referring to a house in Berlin-Lichterfelde belonging to Rosi from her first marriage.

I'm still hoping I'll die first. I'm eating nothing. We'll see how long I can bear it. I feel quite ill in other ways, too. Just bring what you can with you.

And don't count on a plea for clemency. That won't work for me. It can only be bought. You have to go down on your knees in front of Röllich. But I honestly don't think you can face all these vulgarities.

Well, my precious, the race with death has begun. Who will be the winner?

Love

M.

To Rosi

Censored prisoner's letter

Prague, 4.7.43

Dearest Rosi,

Your letter was lovely, thank you so much. You want to know whether it helps? Well, it's difficult for anyone to think their way into my situation, it's too bizarre.

If you're coming, please come soon. Stay with my housemaid. Let Saxi know so that you're not alone in Prague. Stay in touch with Dr. Schramek, but don't waste time, write straight away.

I'm not doing too well, I feel as though I'm not really in this world any more. My mind has gone blank. I push away all thoughts of the past, of my youth, of my lovely life – none of that can ever come back, you're right. Today I almost understood the meaning of life. That's quite an achievement. Philosophers have gone mad looking for it, but you have to stand almost at the end of life before you can understand its totality. My journey through the night has reached its last station. I don't believe there'll be another one. I surrender myself – there are powers greater than mine.

What about your and Hellmuth's powers? And Mimi – although she's like me - will learn a lot from this affair: never trust your best friend. Bitter, but true. Having a heart makes unnecessary ballast. Dr. Schramek hopes it will help to prove I am a "lady". Don't be surprised, don't be surprised about anything, these are strange times. And stand by me. I need you more than ever before, and blood simply is the strongest bond. Come soon, before it's too late. It should still be possible to help, but I am losing my optimism. I either know nothing any more or else too much and just keep on thinking about everything. Send my love above all to Hans. Maybe things are better this way and have to be the way they are. Affectionate hugs to all the aunts. (...)

A kiss,

Marianne

To Rosi

Secret letter, undated

My darling,

I'm organizing my life and my death. If you can, contact Saxi, c/o Schnickert & Schütte, 5 or 15 Kleegasse, Prague, tel. 23 480, so that you're not alone in Prague. Stay with Steffi Piackova, 22 Joahnn von Saaz-Gasse, Prague 7. She has room.

Write the things you cannot say in books – you'll be allowed to bring in whatever you have with you. They are generous before death. Let Steffi pack it all together. I'll give you some things from here to take with you.

And please bring a reliable remedy from your brother-in-law. I'm ill anyway and no one will suspect anything. It's actually a peculiar situation. Approximately 100 people are

awaiting death. We know that 5 women have already gone since I've been here. I know the exact procedure, and you've got to spare me that. I'm not afraid to die, but I do not deserve the guillotine. If you love me, help me. In the neighbouring cell a woman is slowly going mad; her time is approaching – dreadful! You can write more often now, letters reach me.

And now about my life: An old friend has me on her conscience - Evie Synek, her husband works for Germany in England. She's Jewish. She has put 30 heads on the line to save herself and her family. But Röllich can do anything. Mimi should go on her knees to him, and phone Hans - or you should. But Röllich is very tricky, so be careful. He tricked me into feeling safe; otherwise I would have asked you before. He is expecting me to contact you. It's not money he's interested in, it's the house. Hellmuth must lodge an appeal for clemency, must say that it's impossible for him to have a death like this in the family. That my good nature was exploited. He can save me. Contact the highest authorities: Berlin, the Führer's office. Doesn't he have contacts? My lawyer is good. Write to her more often. Ahne is a judge. He can give you advice, but the sentence was already fixed on May 18th. Judges are a waste of time. Clemency pleas have to go to the right place. Mimi must play her part as the young German girl. She must go to him personally. Outside I could have organised everything, but it's difficult from in here. I'm really depending on you. Apply for a half-hour visit. Don't take 'no' for an answer. Go to the prosecutor too. Talk to Schramek, she must be able to do something. In 4 weeks it'll be too late. Rosi, dearest, there's only 4 weeks left. I'm prepared to die, but bring the remedy in hair powder or shampoo. I'll take it right at the end. Please help, one way or another.

A kiss

Marianne

To Rosi

Censored prisoner's letter

Prague, 15.7.43

My Darlings,

Someone must surely answer this letter, I expect your promised arrival every day. Dr. Schramek has told me she has written you a letter about my will. Looking at the date on it I reckon you must have made your arrangements with God and be feeling very sure of yourselves, because no one has turned up here yet. Perhaps you know more than I do. I realise it would be a grim meeting for both of us. It's not that I want it for myself - I'm having enough trouble as it is with my weak heart. I even wonder whether you would be able to bear seeing me the way I look now. I used to be a good-looking woman – and now I'm a criminal. How is Rosi's health?

It's possible that our case will be re-opened. The prosecutor mentioned it to one of the women. But Dr. Schramek is more in the picture. I assume you know everything.

I desperately need soap, and anything else you can send. Believe me, one can get used to anything, and unfortunately we humans have an infinite capacity for endurance. My faith in destiny and fate is unshakable. I refuse to believe that what I have had most of in my life – luck – should have deserted me now. But then even that is destiny.

How are things with Hellmuth? Is he well? (...)

Do I want to know in detail? No and yes, the way you've been doing things is fine.

Lots of kisses

Marianne

To Rosi*Secret letter, undated*

Frau Rosi Haala
 34 Böcklin Street
 Vienna II

Dearest Rosi,

More ideas on how to get out of this hell on earth, which makes leaving this life easy. Big men or big money could help. The whole thing is all about money in the end, not justice.

I hope you've managed to do something by now. You can write now, send food or anything. We get everything in this cell. I haven't had a letter from you please write more often. I'm beginning to despair, and not hearing from you, my last hope, is terrible.

Listen, if all else fails at least come and visit me, and bring a strong remedy from your brother-in-law so that I can pre-empt this ghastly show. You must. You must help me one way or another. I've had enough. Or do you think I should slowly starve to death?

Stay in touch with my lawyer, she's an angel, and rack your pretty brains to find a way to help me. Please write, and send my love to everyone. Finally I'm a big subject, the stuff of novels – what a gruesome leading role for me!

A kiss

Marianne

Dr Schramek to Rosi

Prague XII, 1st September 1943

Re: Marianne Golz – Criminal Charge

With regard to your letter to your sister, I would like to ask you to come to Prague and get a permit to visit her.

Your sister is in prison and urgently requires your visit to lodge an appeal for retrial of her case.

Heil Hitler

Dr. Schramek

Richard Mächa (Riša) to Karel*Secret letter, undated*

Marianne, I first got to know her through letters, the same way I got to know you. On 7th July (1943) we had a newcomer in the cell from Brno, Frantisek Janousek. There were five of us in the cell: Frantisek Mensik (robbery, age 40, Prague), Frantisek Kadlec (illegal grain trading, age 40, Pribram), Josef Vejmelka (safe-breaking, age 32, Prague), Alois Hlavicka (political, age 33, Brünn, my accomplice) and me. So now there were six of us. It couldn't stay like that for long, and the next day our first cellmate went to the guillotine: Frantisek Mensik.



Janaousek's wife Marie also came to Block IIa, and was placed in the cell next to us, No. 40. The very next day she sent us some leftover bread. We often got bread after that, and one day it all started.

Frantisek found two secret letters in the bread. One was from Marie and the other one was from Marianne, in German. It was a sad letter from an unhappy woman about the cruelty and hopelessness of the world, full of bitterness and tears. It made me feel enormous compassion for her, and great sorrow. I realised for the first time what it means to be waiting for death – and what it means for a woman, who lives much more in her feelings and her instincts than men do, and who cannot suppress her instinct for life with cold intellectual analysis, with rational observation of the insane times we live in. At the end of her letter Marianne asked for a reply. What could I write? I knew it was beyond my power to heal this wounded soul, only a return to normal life could do that, and even then only after a very long time. I just wanted to bring peace to her tormented soul.

So I wrote about myself and my cellmates, about the peace I derived from the political situation and my conviction that it would all come to an end. If I had to die, I would die peacefully. I got a reply, an analysis of the political situation. There was a far-sightedness in it that I had never sought to find in a woman. And then she added something at the end that she had no one in the world, and that whoever replied to her would become her lover, and she would share her every thought with him.

I didn't know what my new "lover" looked like. I didn't know her age or anything personal. Just two little pieces of paper with a couple of sentences that showed something of her. I agreed to her request, but added that I was married and that it could therefore only be a platonic "prison romance"; it was not a free decision, in the last analysis, but a consequence of the limited framework in which our love evolved: through writing.

And that is how our love began and grew, in letters. It was so innocent, so pure that I never had the feeling it was an act of infidelity to my wife. Marianne understood me just as I understood her. We were everything for one another that the opposite sex meant to each of us - she embodied all my earlier loves for me, all my longings and feelings were concentrated on her, and it was the same for her with me.

We exchanged letters practically every day. Marianne would send me her prison lunch, and I would take from the gravy, the stew or the vegetables, something that was more precious to me than the food – her letters! I sent my letters to her in presents from the parcels from home, or with the secret letters Janousek exchanged with his wife Marie.

Riša

To Riša

Secret letter

6.9.43 Monday

My dearest,

I am so excited today - my heart is aching terribly because the Sunday paper is just so wonderful! It's such a pity you can't share this pleasure, but I'll get Marie to shout the contents out loud this evening so you can hear some of it. It was very difficult for me to get the newspaper at all.

So, the Germans are holding the English so much at bay that they have only got as far as Naples, with heavy losses. But Russia says Naples is a long way from Russia. Partial breakthroughs west of Chukov. Everything brought to a halt. Heavy fighting going on everywhere. Paris and Berlin bombed heavily. Severe losses. War of nerves in Turkey – the rotten English are trying to upset the friendship between Turkey and Germany. The situation there is serious. Massive sabotage in Denmark. Reinforced state of emergency – all weapons to be handed in by 7th Oct. The wicked Swedes are letting the English fly over Sweden on their way to Berlin. Smuts says to pull all forces together, the end is near. There's no room for fatigue.

Can you already see your picture of 3 to 4 fronts? You sweet, clever man, I am so happy to have heard such lovely things on your birthday. The German reports are so miserable and ridiculous. Mind you, I should apologise because I could do better - I could wait till Monday's news arrives. But no, child. Monday's news won't be here till midday, and Sunday's is so important that I want you to enjoy it on your birthday.

I got a German letter today in my cake. The man brought it to me himself wearing long johns. He wanted to see "Marianne". Sauer asked why everybody wants to know Marianne. Since I don't go round the corridors myself, it's easy to explain. I supply the whole of Pankraz with the news, and so I get asked to explain what it all means. I always get Marie to shout the important stuff so that it can be heard, then everybody's happy. But then they need explanations. Our gifts come from the heart. We have nothing more. Your next birthday will be better, for sure.

More at lunch, and lots and lots of love,

Marianne

To Riša

6.9.43 Monday

My dear birthday boy,

Just one small wish, as small as my present – I want to congratulate you again on your birthday and I want you to have another piece of chocolate – it's from Paris! How much I enjoy your letter! It's being translated and everybody's enjoying it. It's the one moment of the day when these women talk to each other. Otherwise they only talk to me. I don't know where their bad temper comes from. And I have no idea why they are so angry.

Today has not been a nice day. My sister has written. She's sent soap and a little chocolate - she doesn't know that they let us have everything here. Still, it's good to hear from her at all. My niece doesn't want her to write because my sister has been very low since the court hearing. But now I have given her hope. This letter seems to have passed my niece's censorship.

On the whole I am more hopeful, perhaps because of you, with your childlike faith in luck, in our good luck, with your belief in miracles. I pray that fate proves you right. But I also believe you're very young. Your voice sounds quite young, and your thoughts do, too. But is youth really something so special? The capacity to live life fully, with all its highs and lows, is something we really don't have when we're young. We just live for the day, like animals. I see it even here. Rosa is in love with Inspector Müller and spends all her time thinking about him in the very shadow of her own death, and she's happy that he apparently loves her too. Why wake people up when they are having a lovely dream? I hope that things will work out for us, too, now that I've convinced everyone that the war will be over soon and we'll all be going home. They believe me unequivocally, not because the news is good, but because I tell it so well. Almost believe it myself.

I share Goebbels' opinion as expressed in his speech in the last "Reich I don't know if I told you this, but Switzerland is getting high praise for refusing to negotiate over asylum. The English and Americans were demanding that war criminals be handed over. I wanted to send you a copy of the "Reich", but Marie thought, patriotically, that the Czech papers were better, and anyway I don't want Sauer to see that I pass the "Reich" on because he gives it to me as a present. Otti is trying to get it to the Jews today, because they get no newspapers at all. I supply nearly all the cells with news. That's why I never know what I've written where. I'm getting another paper today. Sauer's going to borrow it for me. Anyway Goebbels also says that each day can bring a complete change and surprises. That's what I think, too.

Frau Kubik is dying in Cell 45. She's in a terrible state.

If I hear more, I'll leave space in my next letter for political news. Don't know if there is much, but you should know what there is. No, I must also write to you on Monday, even

if it's only gossip. How about the Bible? It's interesting isn't it? They even used it to foretell the rise of Napoleon. It's in Tolstoy's "War and Peace". I wonder what the outcome will be for H⁵. And the big birds that drop fire? Destroy cities? A lot of that makes sense, but I don't understand the 42 moons. For that you have to be a Talmud scholar. The Book of Revelation is a Talmudic tale anyway.

Have another nice birthday kiss.

Marianne

To Riša

7.9.43 Tuesday 4 pm

Darling,

I'm feeling soft in the head. I really am a God-gifted card reader! I spread the cards for Rosa yesterday evening. She's had a very, very happy day today - you must have heard her laughing. She's completely happy. She had a visitor (...) some kind of news, which she herself didn't understand properly, but neither did I, since no one apart from me speaks German, and my Czech is limited to criminal vocabulary. And yet she's happy and that's precisely what I don't understand.

I don't want any visitors. I don't want to make myself and others unhappier than we already are. I see things so clearly and the others don't. Tomorrow 5 will die. I know for sure it's Cell 43's turn. He spent the whole day today writing to his counsel. And then I also know that since April 5th 150 people have been "operated". You'd think that would be enough, wouldn't you? "But what's that compared with the situation on the front?" you would say, wouldn't you?

I know a lot of things in advance. Do you believe in things like that? I really do. I've had it proved so many times, especially here, and I'm beginning to think I'm some sort of "Cassandra". And yet I have a bad feeling about tomorrow, even though I know for sure that none of the women will be going. I knew about Frau Kubik's illness long before, while she was still in good health. I have a good feeling about myself right now, but I was saying only yesterday that something will get heavily bombed not too far from here, and look what a dark night it is tonight. I wonder where they were? I think there will be a big event at the end of the week, a political one. You can test me on this - it doesn't have to happen right now.

I believe in everything except my own good luck and my ability to experience luck. It's difficult to explain that to you, but I'm almost certain, even though you say it's got something to do with one's will. Seriously, I've left my life behind me now, and even though I'm happy with you, really happy, I know we both have the feeling that it's not just the body that craves food but also the soul.

You're clever, child. It's a pity about the food, but you'll get my secret letter because Zapoteky doesn't understand German, and so cell 42 should pass it on to Cell 43 - he's in there now, I've just heard about his transfer - otherwise they would all be unhappy that they didn't get anything to read and so have no news. I'll talk to Emmi via the window. Or ask via Cell 42 if they have someone in the cell who understands German. That's how one gets the news, you see. I ask what's new and I get an answer.

The new warder is a splendid man - really. He doesn't like his job here. He's decent and civil, just as we are before Thursdays.

5 men have been sent up to us. I just hope you're not one of them - I should have asked. That would be an utter catastrophe for me; I'd be devastated. I'll ask again.

Well, send us lots of lovely kisses. I am grateful to you for everything. There is little love here.

⁵ Marianne is referring to Hitler.

To Riša

9.9.43 Thursday

My Darling,

You think of me all day long, don't you? I know, because yesterday evening I was bright and happy. We laughed a lot, and I got Jarka and Rosa to eat everything, all except for a pear, a big, juicy one, the best of the year. I saved it to send on to them later in the "Gugger"⁶. They didn't suspect a thing. Only Otty and I knew, and we kept our spirits up and played along with the happy mood.

Today was evil. They were so happy about Italy surrendering and the great retreat in the East: the whole Donets Basin, Grolino, and the preparation for more big evacuations. There it was in print, plain and clear, anyone who's been reading the army reports carefully these last weeks must realise that we are disengaging. It has to happen to save lives. They were so happy. But the news didn't make me so happy. My heart throbbed with pain. It comes a month too late. Then Wagner came and said Rosa will be the first to go. She stood at the door and listened. Listened, till the door opened. It was terrible, child. I couldn't warn her. I tried to stay calm, but I'm like a corpse driven mad by crazy thoughts

And now I can't stop thinking again about my own death. I will not do it their way, child. I just won't. I'm going to act the "greatness of soul" when I'm nothing but a small weak human being. At least if I'm dying a horrible, painful death I can scream. Do you understand?

How do I manage to combine our affair here with politics? Well, when the Russians take Warsaw will that be the end of it all? For they'll be there next week. You explain the politics to me, child. I know my predictions are right, but I always seem to be one month out. The avalanche is gathering speed. The English have already agreed a ceasefire, but it will only be made public when the English wish it to be, and that will only happen when the town of Stalino falls along with the entire Ukraine. Yugoslavia will be next, then France and Finland - and then me, too, little one.

I can hear Rosa weeping. She's had an injection. Little Maria will be going to her. I'll try to make sure about that, and all our bread will go to the "Gugger" today.

11 men, 2 women. 4 men from upstairs. 3 from outside. Court hearings rushed through in 3 days. That's how these political cases are being dealt with under this secret martial law. I've been sitting around since yesterday. I really am the Pankraz newspaper and Maria's the Pankraz radio station, don't you think? But today I'm more confused than ever before. I've been writing all day. When one letter is finished I write another one. Perhaps I'll find an answer when I can see the days ahead. What will happen next? Italy won't be a theatre of war, because the troops there are being disarmed. The Germans are cursing them violently as "traitors".

My darling, forgive me for being so confused, but don't try to encourage me with the hope that I will live to see the end. The big things are happening, but it has to get even bigger. Berlin must fall, and the East, and at the same time uprisings need to happen in all the occupied territories. Finland will be the next theatre?

Thank you for "Schiller". I love him. I'm playing out "Mary Stuart" in a different costume and in a different period.⁷ Do you know what pain is – spiritual pain? A gigantic emptiness and hunger.

Marianne

⁶ "Gugger": the name the prisoners gave to the preparation cells where they spent their last hours before execution.

⁷ Marianne is referring to Schiller's play "Maria Stuart" that centres on Mary, Queen of Scots.

To Karel

Secret letter, undated

Dear friend,

You want to know what it's like here? I don't believe anyone in the outside world could even imagine what goes on in here. I had no idea myself before I was arrested. I just had an unpleasant feeling haunting me that the people inside Pancraz were sitting in a hole waiting to die. Today I myself am awaiting death by the guillotine – here in Block IIa, as it's officially called – together with 13 other women. 20 women have already been executed; I don't know how many men, but significantly more.



KODADOVÁ RŮŽENA

We were present when our best friends were led off – Rosa Kodadova, Jarmila Zivcova and many others. We could hear the thud of the chopped off heads on the floor. We can hear every detail that occurs close by. We hear the door to the preparation cell opening, then the executioner as he approaches the door; his assistants grab the victim, throw him or her on the wooden bench, and the head is chopped off. Then they drag the headless body



ZIVCOVÁ JARMILA

away. They place it in a crude coffin, and throw the chopped off head between the corpse's legs. The whole thing is carted off somewhere to be burned. By now we know the whole routine by heart. We also know how our women behave in these last moments before death. Do you feel sick? That is just a small fragment of what we have to endure.

Sunday is a nice quiet day. We read, write, entertain ourselves and write secret letters that are destined for other cells. They are hidden in bread or newspapers or something similar and that is how they get to their recipients. The content of these letters is love, hope and a longing for the end to this war that is strangely linked with our own end, and our own hopes that everything will work out well. We sleep well. On Sundays we receive visits, food, and parcels...

Little change on *Mondays*. Monday's news is always a bit less good than Sunday's news, so we believe it less, and every word of the warders is treated with disbelief. We begin to ask when the "operations" will take place this week, and who is next to go. There are only three women here who speak good German, and so they are the ones who distribute the news and uphold the contacts. Friday is the day that always takes a lot of us away for good. Each of us counts her weeks and days and imagines that it will be her turn to go on Friday.

Every two weeks on *Tuesdays* we are allowed to leave our cell for a walk in the prison yard. It lasts half an hour. We lunge chaotically into the prison yard, gesticulating wildly while excitedly exchanging news, full of pessimism or full of hope. The afternoon is visiting time. Repeatedly visitors come and bring reassuring news: the war is ending and we'll all get sent home and thus escape the guillotine. The visitors bring food too, and hidden in the food are letters, which we pass on so that Block IIa knows what's going on outside. And so the nervous tension grows.

Wednesday is the day the men walk the prison yard. We all stand at the cell windows and look down on them. We're allowed to do that. At least we've claimed this right. The men are chained to



one another. They walk around in pairs in a circle. They can't do anything else anyway because of the chains. They call up to us, "What's new?" because we're a kind of news centre. We pass on to them what we've learnt in the meantime. Among us is a young girl, cheeky and bold, who's good at retailing the news quickly. The men below look anxious, unhappy and wretched. They're in a worse state than the women. Some men were taken into custody here with their wives. They're happy when they see their wives at the windows and call out to them.

By Wednesday evening we know for sure "who", "how many" and "when". When they are only men we take it calmly, but when we learn that a woman is on the list and even know which one, we react differently. Either we tell her – We did that with the oldest one among us. She stayed calm, she put her clothes on after being ill for three weeks, and she waited for them to come for her. She didn't even have tears in her eyes. But we didn't say anything to our youngest, 23-year-old Rosi Kodadova, and her friend Jarmila Zivcova. They lay in each other's arms on the mattress, with a blanket over them and an old fur coat from better days. Six of us lay close to one another on the floor, whispering the awful news; "They're going on Friday." They were supposed to have gone 14 days before, and so their hopes had risen. Young, pretty, their hair twisted into plaits, their faces plied with cream, they slept peacefully while we talked nervously to each other, our hearts pounding as if they would burst. We know that our situation is hopeless too, and that we, too, will have to go the same way. We talk calmly and quietly about suicide, with all the desperation of countless sleepless nights. We tell no one what we know. Our day is fixed – Friday.

On *Thursday* the two women take a bath. They have visitors and are happy. The visitors bring them food – a wonderful cake, grapes, a flan; they talk of home, of mother, of son – but we, we can't share their happiness because we know what tomorrow will bring. We're given a piece of cake. In the evening the cell livens up, we are compelled to be "jolly". The two women ask us when it will be their turn. We don't lie, we just say that we don't exactly know. It's all so pointless! They're not suicide candidates, but why should we tell them the truth? We sleep little. 13 will go tomorrow, we've always known that, but among them are the two women with whom we've been living together for months now, sharing everything with them, sorrow and joy. Everyone, the prison warders included, is fond of our Rosa. But Friday approaches.

On the "big day" both are pale and nervous. We wash ourselves as always – a jug of water and a tin washbowl. The water comes to our cell first; that makes the women nervous because we usually get it last. But they wash themselves thoroughly. Cleanliness is a duty for all of us; our situation demands it. Then they dress, paler than usual and then comes their worst hour. It's just before 9 o'clock. The state prosecutors appear and once again read the death sentences to those who are to be executed. Then they take them to the preparation cells. There they stay from 9 in the morning until 4.30 in the afternoon to endure the worst hours of their lives.

Rosa stands at the door and listens to which door the footsteps are going to. Our cell is the last on the corridor. We all listen, we all count together as the doors open and close and the footsteps come closer – I know our chief prison officer Papa Sauer's footsteps only too well. I know that Rosa will go first, then Jarmila. Rosa puts her coat on, takes a crucifix in her hand and waits at the door. Suddenly she turns round and says to Jarka, who's washing underwear, "They're coming!" The door opens, Rosa screams, "I won't go, I won't go!" Three prison officers are standing outside waiting; then she goes, a helpless lamb dragged off to be slaughtered. She cries and screams from the moment she's taken till half past four in the afternoon, till her last scream under the guillotine.

We could hear everything and feel it as if it was happening to us. Jarka only cried quietly to herself. She had gone resolutely, like so many other women before. Now they are sitting in the preparation cell, and all of a sudden we have so much more space in our cell. We look at each other. Not one of us can justify this murder. We try to see them both

again. We know that they'll be writing farewell letters, and that it will be up to us to ensure that these last secret letters reach their friends without falling into the hands of the German censor. And we manage it, we get to them to say a last goodbye. We say to Rosa, the little kid crying her eyes out, "Be strong, girl!" But the poor thing cries and cries and says, "I'm not strong! I didn't do anything wrong!"

Papa Sauer is still with her. He promises us that he won't take her naked to the execution, as they usually do. The poor little thing has such a deep sense of shame. We have to leave her.

They will comb her beautiful dark hair up on top of her head so that it doesn't get in the way of the blade. We have to go because the guillotine awaits its victim. We go back along the long corridor to our cell. Then the clock strikes 4. We close the window so as to hear everything better – we sit absolutely still and do not speak a word. We huddle together on the mattress on the floor and wait till the door of the death cell opens and the first delinquent calls out, "Goodbye, friends!" The door closes and thud number 1 follows. Someone sings "Home Sweet Home" and "Shine Golden Sun". They all sing in chorus, and each one calls his last goodbyes. And now, before the eleventh thud, we hear Jarka.

She calls from the corridor next to the execution chamber, "Goodbye, girls! Send my love to my little Jirka!" That's her baby son. We cry for the first time and call an answer to her. A thud – the end. And now Rosa calls. We hear a thud, and then silence. We sit on the floor and hear her voice echoing on. Then everything is over.

As the prison officers open the door to our cell we see the guilt on their faces. They talk to us and we say, "That was a foul murder!"

We do not eat, we talk and talk, unhappy and nervous. We are nice to old Frau Kubik, she's also waiting for death. She just sits there and her eyes are blank. She says little, keeps looking around for work to do, as she has done her whole life. She was ill. She lay three weeks with us, and we looked after her on her soiled mattress. It was a full hour before we noticed that she'd died, she was so still. And so she escaped the executioner and kept her head. She was buried in the hallowed ground of her home.

We spoke about Bozena, whom they destroyed by taking her baby away from her. Now she just sits around in silence. We would like to heal her of her sorrow. Slowly it's getting better. There are days now when she sings and dances. Vlasta Hellerova was bold and strong; there were many like her and they all died young – for love, giving shelter to a person on the run.

We reflect on how senseless our situation is. At some point each one of us will have our "big day". No one will open the prison gate for us and take us home, or come to visit us: we can expect no help. The political situation may be comforting, but here in Ila life will come to an end soon.

The next executions will allegedly take place again in a week. So we have a week's rest from the guillotine, we can live another week, see the sun, eat, cry, laugh, sing, write about love, about hope. A whole week lies ahead of us! That's a long time. Maybe the English will arrive in the meantime, or the Russians, or we could even be pardoned!

Two hundred will die under the guillotine, that's how many there are here now. Should we really keep on hoping? On the last day we get a cigarette, we talk, we accuse, and then some insignificant prison warder will lead us to the death cells, and will sit and watch us and try to calm us with stupid, banal words.

Happy, dear friend Karel? Can you extend our lives? You're already doing it through your concern. Or better not; we want to leave this world, we want to look death straight in the eye and talk about it as a fact of everyday life.

We women from Cell 38 greet you warmly, Karel, our dear friend. Tell the world out there: We have our own world here where time runs faster. We've already been waiting

four months to die. Usually one gets executed after three months at the most. Why are they letting us live this extra month?

Greetings,

Marianne

To Riša

11.9.43 Saturday

So darling,

Now I haven't got a letter from you. It didn't work. Pity! And Wagner looked away, too. I'm so sorry. What shall I do without your letter and without your philosophy, which relates so beautifully to our life here? I'm so easily influenced. I've read your letter again, which is something I often do, and now I almost find the idea of dying beautiful, but in my kind of way. That's fate, too. And I shall succeed. It just needs someone to set an example. We women are more inventive than men. Granted the men have achieved something this time with the prosecutor and with Sauer - but to be dragged to the slaughterhouse? No, my child!

It's exciting reading the newspapers just now even though I'm having some trouble with my heart, but I'll tell you the most important bits. It actually said word for word that a great burden now rests on the shoulders of the German army alone, but that they are absolutely resolute. The front is not just Italy - that is to say, northern Italy, as the English have taken central and southern Italy. Yet Rome and 30 miles around it are still in German hands. In fact, there isn't really a proper front, as they write that the Italians have handed several important ports over to the English. But they insist that they still hold Milan and Padua and South Tyrol, which is suddenly full of happily liberated Germans. Then they write that the Balkans have become a further front, but that Pola and Ragusa are firmly in German hands. Down by Naples there's an army fighting, but central Italy is not under German control. - So the picture just isn't clear at all.

I'll wait till tomorrow, and add Monday's news then. Tomorrow is the start of a new week, and I'm holding out great hopes for it. The Russians are in total control of the Black Sea, and the Azov Sea. Desna, a river near Kiev, is also mentioned. I'm convinced that the front has collapsed. That's why they're writing about Italy.

My God, child! Survive the next week and something really big will happen - remember, Sunday's news will already be 4 days old, and there's more happening all the time... Maybe I should think about my fate the same way, as you do?

I saw you today. You were quite sad. You weren't aware of me, you just went on sleeping, so to speak. You're right, the food doesn't trouble me. But our postman isn't as skilled as the old one, and so I miss out - unlike you of course, because I keep on writing to you whatever the circumstances. As long as I live you'll go on getting letters from me in your food.

I talked some more courage into Emmi once again, today. I can do that for anyone - that's the kind of woman I am. I always see things through. That's why I was able to get my letter to both of them. And now I can see how the news affected you. Wonderful! Do you really see things like that? Me too. I wrote you everything exactly as it stood in the newspaper - and what was omitted. Do you really think they only write a third of what's actually happening out there?

The "Reich" came from me. You villain! That's why I only got half a letter from you! Go ahead and read it all. Take as long as you like. You can return it with the new warder, but stick a letter for me between the pages. But a bit later, as I've already got a letter from you now.

As of now, there are only 6 people up for next week. I'm still trying to work out who 4 of them are. But I'm preserved another week for you. - You have a bride who is languishing

on her deathbed, and I have a groom who has had a bad accident. But going by what Alois⁸ told me I hold great hopes for the reopening of your case: all the relevant files are going to be dealt with at the same time. So, child, the day I look you in the eye as a free woman you'll get your kiss! But until then I shall go on flirting with the warders - they tell me everything, you see. What a pity Wagner's away just now. You could have given him one of your letters. So I ate the porridge all on my own, without you. The next time you send a letter via Sauer or Hoffmeister just say it's for "the sick woman".

I could spend hours like this writing. The sun is so lovely and warm outside. I was at the window and the fresh air makes me quite drunk. It may be an insane hope, but I think we really have a big chance now.

My sister, the wife of the Kommandant of Paris, has also written. Cherish hope for me, my darling, as I do for myself. She knows there will be no clemency, so hope for what? Well, perhaps one day his people will kill me instead. That would be Kismet too!

Good night

Marianne

To Riša

14.9.43 Tuesday

My dear,

I keep hoping and hoping, but my heart can't keep pace. I go up and down, but there's never any rest. And then it's Thursday again, and I just gave up hoping this week.

Richard, I can't go on any more, all these ups and downs. I sent you that extra news report because it just seemed so unbelievable, and I wanted to see how it struck you. (...)

Otto⁹ came to visit me. How do these two things fit together? And why would he tell me one thing after telling me the other? At any rate there aren't so many up for execution this time. – Don't be angry with me for writing everything as it comes into my head. It's just my thoughts: erratic, moody and desperate. I'm like a trapped animal struggling to get free.

The newspaper is good again today. The eastern front retreating further. Towns not being mentioned now, only rivers. And as far as Italy is concerned the reports make no sense at all - yesterday they were in Ollevano, today they're heading towards it. High spirits over the freeing of the Duce and disgust still over the betrayal.¹⁰ Battle with Italian speedboats. Civil war - Italians with Germans, Italians against Germans. Terrible confusion. I really can't help you here I just don't see it either, even though I call myself "Cassandra". The English have landed in 19 places! Yesterday they spoke of Taranto; today they're talking of Salerno. Not long ago it was Naples. They report that the English have central Italy but they also report that supplies are heading for the southern front. It's regarded as significant that Baldo is in German hands, but then they talk of fights with Italian resistance and then elsewhere with Badoglio's troops. So where and how and what?

There are a lot of cell transfers today, I can tell by the doors opening and closing. Thank you for the cigarettes and cake - I shared them out fairly. Thanks also for the loving words. Here at least is a woman who won't shoot you. Are you jealous? Well, I won't survive it. You just cannot stop women chasing men, any more than you can stop a cat chasing mice.

I used to work in journalism like my husband, so I know how to read a paper, particularly a German one. It's a pity about my head coming off, but there are precious few who will weep for me - a sister who loves me very much, and my husband? Young, rich, handsome and elegant. Always adored by women. Perhaps it's better this way, I'll remain

⁸ A prison warder

⁹ A prison warder

¹⁰ Benito Mussolini had been kidnapped by partisans and then rescued by German troops

an interesting woman till I die. No one will come to my funeral, and tears are soon dried Do you still believe in good? I think I wanted to, I could still, but the Jewish women here are not 100% sure. But my head will stay on. You believe that, don't you? I hope so! I really must concentrate on your fate now.

I sent my husband off to Poland in February 1939. I had to raise hell to get him to go. He didn't want to. It nearly drove me crazy that he didn't, there was no good reason. He was a journalist working for the English and the French. But he always believed in me, and left to seek his fortune abroad. As for me, well, I saw it all coming, but you can't do anything against fate. I could have stayed in bed like I'm doing now, and just let fate happen.

It's nice writing down my thoughts like this, I have no inhibitions. It would be so nice to actually talk to you. I've mentioned to Sauer that I'd like to talk to you about what the newspapers say. Couldn't you bribe him? It would work, he's a decent chap. Really, I like them both, Wagner and Sauer. Wagner's always coming to see me to get my advice on his love affairs. If this weren't the execution block we'd be laughing together like old lags. There is a comic side to this ghastly tragedy. I'll leave the other page for politics - tomorrow or Thursday.

My child, last night was terrible. I got to sleep at 3 o'clock and woke up again at 4. Today it's not 4 but 13 up for execution. Are we among them? I already know that our women are going tomorrow. I'll give Hynkova my farewell letter, just in case it's necessary, so that you can have my last thoughts. I feel wretched today, but I'm not letting it show. The truth is, all I can feel is fear for myself. I can't imagine being able to watch the others go.

The politics are wonderful. The leading article is about Finland. They're not letting the war of nerves get to them. The eastern front is collapsing. Same in the south. There's no fighting going on there (...) Stuttgart and Strasbourg bombed during the day, Munich at night. Heavy losses.

I could be losing everything I possess today, but all I seem to be able to do is sit here racked with pain. Or perhaps I'm coming from another world. And from my last love. I'll answer your letter tomorrow. Right now all I know is that the place where my heart is supposed to be hurts so badly that I can hardly breathe for pain and fear. That I shall go through the night unable to sleep. That I shall harry my brain to an unconscious pulp trying to squeeze one good thought out of it. That I want today to be my last and never have to wake up again. That I had everything behind me, all the fear and pain. And then you appeared. You pulled me out of it all, and now I'm back struggling again with the most appalling thing there is. I know you'll understand.

I kiss you from my heart,

Marianne

To Rosi

Secret Letter

22.9.43

Wednesday

Dear Rosi,

My God, the time rushes by, and I'm still alive. It could be because of my case file, but nobody really knows – least of all me. I know nothing at all. Though I do read the newspapers every day and have a lot to read here, but it isn't what I really want. I get on OK with everyone, even with the prison warders; it would be quite bearable if ... well, this if... I've resigned myself; I believe our destiny is in some way predetermined.

Why am I not getting any letters from you? You have no idea what an orphan I am compared with the others here. They get so many letters. The censor lets everything through - you can send me a parcel with whatever you like in it, nobody will open it. What I'd like best would be cigarettes and jam. But send me whatever you like. I want

everyone to see that I have someone out there who cares for me; someone I care about too. The only parcels I've received up to now were redirected from somebody who is already in heaven and knocking at St. Peter's gate.

A lot of people leave for St. Peter every week, you know. There aren't many women left here any more, and no new ones have arrived. In our cell the 23-year-old and the 60-year-old are both dead. Another one was taken to a mental asylum, which saved her from certain death. When our Rosa Kodakova went it was terrible. I had known about it beforehand. It nearly broke my heart a second time. The two of them went together, the 23-year-old and the 30-year-old, as close together as schoolfriends. And what was their crime? – Nothing, a great big nothing. We were all completely overwhelmed, the whole of Block IIa. It was the worst day we ever had here.

Why am I bothering to tell you all this? You'll never understand what life is like here anyway, so why should I burden you with it? I keep hoping that my case will come out well, but my hope is fading. The days fly by so fast and I'm amazed I'm still alive. My health is bad; I'm very ill, and yet in the middle of it all I'm receiving love letters from another prisoner here, who has never seen me. I could arrange that, too, if I wanted to, anything is possible here. You just wouldn't believe what it's like in here, even if I had all the time in the world to tell you about it.

So, dear Rosi, please don't be sad about my fate. Write to the prosecutor or come and see me at last, or at least write me a letter – make it a long one if you really can't get here. And let me know whether you've received the things from me. My dearest little sister, I'll write again soon, and don't be angry with me.

Love,

Marianne

Riša to Karel

*Secret Letter, undated*¹¹

On Saturdays we shaved in front of Cell 38; and so Marianne saw me at last, and I was able to look at her through the peephole in her cell door. We knew each other so well by now from the letters that our appearance no longer mattered.

Marianne was older than I had expected, but there was something striking about her face. And her eyes – dark and sharp – were dangerously beautiful. If she hadn't looked at me with such love and tenderness I would have trembled under her gaze. But I'm getting ahead of myself - it was later that I first saw those eyes close to. Marianne had lent me a book and asked me in a letter to ask the prison officer to let her meet me after the Saturday morning shave. She knew that I'm somewhat shy, that's why she added: "But you'll never do it, I know you won't." Of course I couldn't let her think I was a little milksop! So I said to the warder that I would like to give her back her book personally and thank her personally for the loan. He granted my wish and opened the cell door for me immediately after the shaving session.

We were able to exchange a few sentences and touch hands. And that was when I saw her eyes. They looked lovingly at a boy who had written letters to her. I didn't need to be afraid – even without words we understood each other. Only the prison officer didn't understand – how could he, after all? – he didn't know her soul. So all he had to say, and I shall remember it till the day I die, was, "Well, she's no beauty."

¹¹ Even though undated, it is probable that Riša is referring to Saturday, September 18th and that the letter was written shortly afterwards to Karel. In the next letter from Marianne (see below) of September 23rd she mentions for the first time that she has seen Riša in person.

That's what he said as he led me back to my cell. I cannot tell you how small and blind he seemed to me. I just laughed to myself and said nothing. He probably didn't notice that I despised him, either.

Riša

To Riša

23.9.43 Thursday

My dearest little beloved,

Why didn't you admit to him that there was a letter in there, not a paperback? He's willing to turn a blind eye but doesn't want to be made a fool of. Next time you write you'll have to sacrifice your Charles Dickens. Have you got any thing else? But it doesn't matter. It's still best to send things to me. It really won't matter, and nothing will happen. But don't lie if someone finds out.

I laughed a lot because she was so clumsy. She must have trembled over my letter¹². I really know now that love is the greatest power in the world. You concentrate all your capacity for love on me because, firstly, you get an immediate, sweet reply which doesn't spoil this lovely dream, but actually increases it. And even if you mean it for your wife, or indeed any other woman, it's still me receiving it. I'm playing the role of all the women in your life now, and I'm playing them well – aren't I? I even make you happy, dreamy, yearning... I want you to feel in and for yourself that you're too precious to die and that my need for you is absolute, which is the case anyway. This is the truth, my little pageboy, who wants or needs or longs to die with his Mary, Queen of Scots - perhaps I was once Mary, Queen of Scots or Marie Antoinette? There was a great man who loved her once and longed to see her – and in here it's you who love me and yet are powerless to help.¹³ But keep on loving me – it fills me with joy and happiness and brings a real meaning to the short days, and one forgets where one is – or is not. But in the meantime we enjoy the calm.

Special German Court summary proceedings at 8 am: 2 women - Gestapo - execution this week. One of the women is 22 years old. There must be some kind of martial law declared outside. What do you think? I think we're not going to be able to save ourselves, even though everything looks so favourable.

The appeal in Berlin will now be decisive. – Emmi has a very bad feeling even though she's just a country girl. Love – the chopper¹⁴ – politics - yearning – our themes jar with each other.

And now my bridegroom: he spent an hour talking politics yesterday and said how happy he was that it'll be all over soon and we'll be together... He doesn't want ever to vote again in an election.

Do you know why Sauer thinks I am such a highly intelligent woman? I was able to solve his riddle. There are 4 corners in a mill. In each corner is a sack. On each sack sits a cat with 4 kittens. The miller is still in the mill with his dog. How many paws are in the mill? So, be as intelligent as me.

Wagner was just here and wanted to know whom I'm writing to. I said, to him. He has night duty next week. Another sleepless week for you - I just hope I can sleep as well as I did this week.

I expect a big political event on Saturday. In fact I'm expecting the end of the war. Why else is Mussolini visiting Hitler? In fact I wish peace for everyone, for you and for our

¹² This reference is not clear, but perhaps Riša's wife stumbled on one of Marianne's letters on a visit to her husband in the prison, and demanded to know who she was.

¹³ The historical reference, which has its parallel to Marianne's situation in prison, is to Lord Babington. He was arrested and tortured by Elizabeth for plotting to put Mary on the throne.

¹⁴ The word used by the prisoners for the guillotine.

kiss, because that's when you'll get it. But I'm not thinking about kisses today. I'm not eating so well, either. I only got one piece of gingerbread today from the warder. (...) This evening I shall only have coffee. But I don't want to talk about food. That's all they're talking about here now. I'm letting you in on a bit of my life here.

We saw each other today. Did your heart pound, or did you overlook me? I'll come to your cell, if we get time. The question marks return on Saturday, and the trembles with them. If only something big would happen on Saturday! But your sister is coming. She's bound to know what's going on. You're right, let's not drive ourselves mad; let's trust our luck. I'm feeling less optimistic today because of those summary proceedings.

I'm afraid they'll play an underhand game with the Russians. If they're in Romania and Istria – when will they be here? Soon? After all, we aren't Germany. They are quite likely to come this way. No one will be coming to Germany unless they're prepared to fight to the bitter end. It just won't happen. It's so hard to get my mind off these miserable politics. My thoughts are so scattered.

Darling, I find that when desire and yearning are at their most intense, death can be very beautiful. In fact I'm longing to die, with my masochistic temperament. What a pity I can't die in your arms. I don't think my heart would survive happiness, though. But that's how I'd like to die. I wouldn't feel fear. Another kind of dream: unfulfilled yearning. After all, there's always something unfulfillable about love, it's always a yearning. There's the yearning for more, for the act of love and the feeling of sexual satisfaction. I swear you would never lose desire with me - love is an art, and a gifted pageboy can become a great master. If they gave us just one night and one day, we would live those hours to the full. But we're enmeshed today in the great world drama being played around us while our freedom is lost. Haven't we already lived this fate before - in Paris, when the chopper was invented?

Good morning, darling

I'll see you today – (...) I often look out of the window to catch sight of you. The long corridor is the only space between us. I think of you so much, wondering whether you're thinking the same things I am. Will there be salvation? Every death candidate is now being checked on his capability for work, and so you will get home after all, darling.

Today's newspaper is so good that this is going to be a very long letter. Tell me what you think of the Gestapo's summary proceedings? 6 people are in the Guggler¹⁵. 2 women. That was what I wanted to ask you yesterday. Today or tomorrow they will be gone.

And now to politics, after my love for you has grown rather than declined: the Russian front is falling apart – they actually use the words “falling apart” in the report. Lovely words - luxuriate as you read them. Pollavoi evacuated - orderly retreat. All areas that tie down large numbers of troops are being evacuated so as to form the shortest possible line of defence. The greatest offensive in the whole war! Retreating armies under heavy fire from the enemy. The enemy following up along a 150-mile stretch. Their goal seems to be not only to reach the Dnieper but something far more ambitious. The push is triggering a number of battles. The Soviets are keen on speeding up the retreat and are following the rear end of the enemy army with heavy forces. They are even trying to overtake, but their attempts do not impress the Germans. Italy is quiet. Hanover and Oldenburg have been attacked after a long time. Lead article: If the Russians win, the Czechs will be deported to the Urals - the Czechs should start thinking about what lies in store for them. It all points to the Czechs joining the anti-communist front. Today's newspaper is good, but I feel a lot is missing; no news on the uprising, nothing about Italy and France. Nantes was also bombed.

Do you have the newspapers? Darling, 10 are more than enough. No more to come. I've been good to you. There's confusion here: noise. Marie is good to them all. She is a great

¹⁵ The prisoners term for death row

girl, please tell Franz. He should tell her that when he writes, that'd make her happy.
 And I am happy when I think of you thinking of me.
 A kiss for you,

Marianne

To Marianne

25.9.43 Saturday afternoon

Darling,

The Berliner Zeitung is here again (...) but I believe I need your clever brain to read it. A report about the Italian minister-president just back from visiting the Führer and immediately giving a speech. It said that the population has been spared. It is also reported that King Peter of Serbia landed in Kiev with Maisky, and that he has a bad reputation in England – they call him a proto Fascist. Then there's talk of some big band of partisans in Sicily. In short they're telling us there will be enough to eat.

The news also reports that all German forces in the Crimea are surrounded; only the report of their surrender is missing. But it's possible that they'll be able to pull back. Then they are crossing the Dnieper in a westerly direction; there's talk that possible withdrawals are being obstructed, and Kiev is mentioned in this context. The central part of the front has also retreated, otherwise there's nothing great today, but it's enough anyway. In Italy they're not fighting much, it's an old-new story. There's nothing special, no new air attacks - only the lie that 27 aeroplanes were shot down in the air attack on Germany. The French president Laval gave a speech saying that a German victory will save France from communism. Laval's been talking too much for some time now.

So, my child, I'll close my eyes and reflect on how the news affects me: good, I'm satisfied. Peace is on the way, that's clear. The Serbian King is in Kiev. But now something odd occurs to me. How far is Smolensk from Warsaw? Napoleon used a horse and carriage, but how long did he need for the journey? I would love to be in Naples with you now, no matter how it looks now. But I've just remembered that there's no landing permission agreed with Italy. So enough of politics. Who knows, there might be more news on Sunday.

Riša

To Riša

25.9.43 Saturday

Darling,

I agree with you completely. Here are a couple of things from today's leading articles. There are still no estimates as to how far the retreat has gone in the last weeks because everything is moving towards the end. The front has been reduced by several hundred miles to save manpower and materials and improve access, and now they're evacuating areas where there's been no fighting at all. The strain on the German soldiers is great because they don't have a clear picture of the overall situation. The advance is over, and the activity of the different bands of partisans is getting stronger because the distances between the German forces along the front are too great. There then follows a long discussion on whether the partisans are to blame for the bad supplies and the hope that they can get the supplies better organised. Madrid says that the German retreat is excellent. The Soviets are pushing further ahead into what is effectively no man's land as everything has been evacuated by the Germans, including Rostov, Smolensk and Cherkassy. Constant attempts to cross the Dnieper, and this time there's no report of any obstruction. Then an article about Finland, about a separate peace agreement that will probably soon be signed. Declaration of independence by Albania and a speech by Dr. Goebbels hinting (no more than that) that the German people shouldn't lose courage.

To Riša

26.9.43 Sunday

Darling,

Good news from Russia in the newspaper, admitting the retreat so openly that I'm quite amazed. I now expect a huge evacuation. All fronts are on the move and the enemy is incapable of interrupting our retreat. The danger of a breach is no longer so important as the front is standing again; in many places the gaps in it were only filled after heavy fighting. Italy – new landing of powerful enemy forces. Heavy fighting around Naples, heavy naval firing, strong enemy air support; then the first speech of Mussolini, I've only skimmed over it, I'm reluctant to read it. Then Hungary: the same elements seem to be at work there as in Italy. Romania is indignant, Switzerland insists on its sovereignty, Greece and the Balkans are quiet, everything's in order.

The English say the second front is actually Italy. The Germans have taken over the Italian railways. Where are the fascists?

I've heard that all criminal hearings are going to be re-examined and that there is reason for hope, but I'm sceptical. Hoffmeister said there's an empty execution list here and that he hopes for the best. (...)

Marianne

To Rosi*Secret letter, undated*

Dear Rosi,

Please contact Frau Anna Elmer, 3 Norway Street, Prague 12. She's a friend who's also in trouble. She knows a lot about you.

She's also doing a lot for me and knows a lot, too. I'm no longer sure that you're interested at all, as I haven't heard anything from you for such a long time. I hope you're not ill.

All the best.

Marianne

To Riša

27.9.43 Monday

Did you sleep well, darling? We had a bad night. We spent it talking about death again, which will be visiting us on Friday. I spread the cards for everyone. They showed badly for Marie. Of course we all sang, but Marie was very sad, she expects the worst. Physically we're well but we live in mental agony. Towards 2 o'clock I tried to sleep but woke again around 5. I am very sad. Now I'll write you the latest news.

If you haven't read the Sunday paper then the Monday one will bring no joy. Fighting continues on the central Dnieper. In Italy the advance has been halted. Essentially all attacks were repelled and they name another town where fighting continues. A few small attempts to cross the Dnieper. In Italy fighting has flared up again at Salerno. They fight for a day then they take a break. An appeal by Marshal Graziani - Badoglio is to blame for everything: Greece, Albania, Libya and Italy. Our newspaper says that the Germans are having problems with King Victor Emmanuel; this means that the Sicilians don't want him and the English are trying to find a suitable place for him (...)

Hoffmeister is worried that the Russians will soon reach the Balkans. German efforts to pacify the Balkans are appreciated – Nedikoff's visit to the Führer proves this – and also Greek sovereignty. The French are being told to protect themselves against enemy air raids. They're calling for volunteers, and rehearsing blackouts, and so on.

Now you know all and get a kiss.

Marianne

To Riša

27.9.43 Monday

Dearest,

I love your letter. I've read it 4 times over. But it made me blush. At least they told me I did. But there's a special reason - I have to make a confession. I gave Hoffmeister your letter from Saturday to read. It was so beautiful, and I know Hoffmeister hates our petty deceptions. He has sharp eyes and I wanted him to see how important your letters are to me in what may, after all be our last week. I wanted to clear the difficulties aside. You don't mind, do you? You were all in favour of openness once.

Politics have no great importance for great spirits like us. We take facts as they are and come to terms with them. (...) Unfortunately, however, they're still very important for me, and I had really been hoping the English were about to make peace. I still keep on hoping, because without politics we really are lost. I think I'll change the subject, little pageboy - the world is as ugly out there as it is in here. All we really have left is the world of dreams. So keep on dreaming, and loving me.

What about van der Velde¹⁶? Of course I read that too – got very cross and thought Weiliger and Anker deserved what they got. – You can see how it has affected people if it even succeeds with you. But at least you're critical. In the last analysis it all boils down to talent and schooling. My current husband, who is years younger than me, was also a "pupil", and it was a wonderful marriage. No doubt he is a master now with someone else. But I never fancied the idea of learning the rules from a book. I'll keep my promise gladly – and it must be soon – for few people have had the good fortune that I have to experience death in several different ways.

Today I sat on the stool and thought about nothing. I felt quite free, light and bright, and I couldn't tell whether I was sitting or floating. The others asked if I was all right, because I looked so pale. But it was nothing, except that I couldn't stand up for a while. Now I can clearly feel my heart again and I'm back on the ground. I had wanted to die of heart failure. The gods usually grant their favourites their wish – so it appears that I actually did wish for this life. I fully expressed my desire to have a child. I also wanted to experience life to its very depths: every bit of it. I had abundant good luck, only this year brought misfortune.

Do I still have one last wish in life? Yes, our day and night together, no matter how, and the strength for it, too. But the longing for something is always better than its fulfilment. Unfulfilled wishes make life worth living, and I don't think one was ever denied me. Strange: I once wished for a particular pair of shoes, and I ended up with 4 in different colours. I was very pleased, and that's a minor example. I think I still have 3 more wishes: a quick end to the war, to kiss you, and even so not to go on living. I just haven't ever been able to deal with the dark side of life. I've failed utterly. A song was once written for me to sing on stage called "Life has really spoiled me". I have to think of that song and compare myself to it now.

Darling, do you like everything I'm writing? Reading it over I find a lot of it very confused and written only because it was in my head at the time, but I realise that not all

¹⁶ Marianne is referring to a book by the Flemish author Anton van de Velde 1895-1983

thoughts are worth sharing. Don't you sometimes just switch off? I do. There are times when I think of nothing at all, not even the chopper. I spread the cards mechanically and have no idea what I'm thinking about as I do it.

Emmi was just here. She's also very nervous. Can we ever be human again – I wonder? I start a sentence and then finish it on a completely different subject. But it's good talking to her. Otty and Emmi also mean a lot to me. I'll get this letter to you now. Sleep well, my darling and dream that our love continues. Let our waking not be a bad one. Let us live as long as we can.

Many loving thoughts,

Marianne

To Riša

28.9.43 Tuesday

Darling,

First, quickly, what struck us today - in the newspaper, of course. The Minister-President of Serbia announces how wonderful it is that the people are living in peace and harmony. Not one word about Germany. Norway was promised sunlight and freedom if the Bolshevik danger is driven back. Government reshuffle in England. Richard L. named as resident Italian minister. Some members of the government will have to be released for further such posts. Delegation of Ibn Saud travels to Washington. Switzerland approves the new positioning of the front. In connection with the funeral of the murdered Gauleiter Weiss in the Ukraine one learns how strong the partisans are. Speech by the Foreign Minister on the third jubilee of the triple alliance.¹⁷ The Reconstruction Office in America is in Jewish hands.

A Wehrmacht report: Attempts to cross the Dnieper at multiple points were beaten back amid heavy fighting; troops have also landed behind the front; fighting is above all in the centre of the eastern front - the enemy attacks again on both fronts. Fighting on the south Italian front south-east and north-east of Salerno. On the eastern front our fighting forces have retreated, after destroying the transport routes. Isolated air attacks on western Germany; doesn't all this look like peace? There's already a slight change to be sensed in the newspaper. The report from headquarters is somehow different, or am I mistaken? There's much to learn from the foreign newspapers.

But now to important matters. What happened yesterday? Hoffmeister told me that the Jewish women wanted to send some kind of news to their husbands that they had hidden in some bread. Did they find out about it?

I've been writing a great deal recently, and Hoffmeister comes into my cell every day. I don't keep anything secret from him, and so during our conversation I of course mention you and the joy that your lovely letters bring me. I have a letter here, he can read it and see that it is nothing of any particular interest to him. Hoffmeister knows that I am a clever woman and he wants to be cleverer than me! He read the letter that you sent me in the book.

He brought me the books and said he had read it. He likes your political views, they're not violent but conciliatory: my heart stood still when I heard that! I was also very curious what he meant, but then I had to laugh when I read your letter. In any case I'm held in high esteem, at least in Hoffmeister's eyes. I also wrote a letter yesterday so that he could see that I reply. But other things must remain secret. The potatoes are very delicious, for sure! I don't think he'll continue be interested in us except when it concerns politics – and only if they're real politics. (I'm feeling very good. Someone has just called out that the Red Army has reached the Soviet border!)

¹⁷ The alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan.

Now you know the story of our correspondence. But Hoffman is a nice man and I quite like him. He's kind. I don't want him to see me as a fool in matters that I understand! On the whole this is more of an advantage than a disadvantage to you. You entered into this relationship with me and now here you are being presented as someone special. Don't worry. I've always been able to present the man of my choice in the best light!

Yesterday we had a very jolly evening! The vodka put us in a good mood and another night flew by again! Hoffmeister sang songs, even though he got the words and the tunes wrong, he just kept singing "Lalalalove! It was very funny; but please don't think that I'm not sad any more because I laughed a little.

Last night someone in the cell above us slit their veins open. I don't know any more than that. On Friday something big is on, but no one knows who will be due. I don't believe my appeal will succeed. I'll know more this evening and I'll ask Hoffmeister because I'm also very concerned about Marie. I have a strong suspicion, and the cards look very bad. I hope nothing happens in the cell above us on Friday. I am an optimist, I prefer to think about happy things rather than sad ones.

Hoffmeister has given us an extra four tomatoes and an onion that we're going to eat this evening. I'm making sandwiches for everyone with tomato and onion. I'll have to give Marie something else, otherwise the onion won't go round. I have to cook this evening, and there'll be something left over. Today there'll be milk for sure. Apart from that, the food is getting worse. It's high time the English came and cater for us. If the Russians are at the Polish border or likely to be there very soon, what will happen then?

I've already written to you that Hoffmeister thinks completely differently. He doesn't want defeat. You can tell him they've surrendered all the eastern territories, and the Russians are already in East Prussia, and he remains completely unaffected.

A journalist in an Italian newspaper offers some advice to the Germans: so, at last they've lost the war, but how shall I explain that to my children? Prison Officer Müller came back from Mannheim and told me there's not a wall left standing there, bodies everywhere, rubble everywhere, terrible famine and huge chaos. He lost his family in an air raid and didn't know why. If it already looks like that in Mannheim then the Germans will be defeated after all. Now all is quiet again, perhaps they will negotiate?

Darling, it's love writing to you. It's thoughts about the situation, about our situation, about the hope for better times. Are you cold? Have you not got a coat? I have my summer and my winter clothes here. I'm not so cold today, and I've slept well. If you've come to terms with your life as I have, it's all the same whether you laugh or cry.

I'm busy all the time observing things. I examine the good and bad signs. But then I succumb to the German propaganda again: final victory and so on. Somebody should explain all the facts to me. Do you see clearer after you've read my letter?

I should really be writing about love and the soul. Today I intend to write an essay on our life here, but only after we've eaten, when everyone's asleep. Two are already asleep. Marie Pospisilova is crying while writing. No surprise, she's young and longs for love. What can she do, poor child? She's only 26. I remember when I was that age. I never thought of myself as young, and certainly not childlike. I refused all the "young" roles in the theatre. I didn't want to be young at all! And anyway I never was. I was always more mature, never frivolous, and got married horribly young. But then, I always mixed with older women. I never felt like a young girl because I never was one. At 26 I was already self-supporting, a wealthy woman. But Marie is a child, she's small and terribly inarticulate, and it shows on her face, too. But she's unhappy, and I like her in spite of all her failings. I'm just describing what's going on around me, but you know it already.

My heart and all my thoughts fly to you.

Marianne

My beloved hero baby,

Now I have seen you a few times. My heart pounded every time. Perhaps it was stress or perhaps it was because you knew. Why are you all saying it'll be tomorrow? No one knows anything. It can only be Friday. And this evening, that is to say tonight, I shall certainly know, and I'll knock if you're in danger. At least, I've been promised news tonight. If it's you, you'll certainly go with Alois. But so far he has no date. So you'll be preserved, if only for the files. That's why we begged for one of our cases to be re-opened, so that our files would be left alone.

In any case, there's nothing one can do about premonitions. Draft your will. Send it to us. It'll be smuggled out - everything makes it out. And live as you have resolved to do. For the moment I can't do anything, myself. But if it was my turn I'd be devastated because my hopes had risen again. And that's my greatest fear, being taken by surprise. I just hope not. And if your case is tied to Alois', you won't be due for execution, either. In any case, nobody knows anything up to now. But all this is premonition. My confidant knows just as little. And the staff here know nothing either. Tomorrow Sauer will be on duty, so perhaps he'll know something. The Governor's man hasn't been here either. So, child, that's all that there is on the subject of the chopper.

So the subject of politics doesn't interest you any more. Well, It always the same, anyway. Attempts to breach the front failing. - Everything on the Dnieper. Advance by the English in Italy. No skirmishes with partisans. Northern Italy named and also Dalmatia. Underground fighters surrounded and destroyed. Hanover and Brunswick were attacked and the German Bight too. Prague is full of soldiers and there are many controls on the trams. There's an outside report that Kiev has fallen and that the front is only 25 miles from the Polish border. Everyone believes it's the end. But all in all I'm not pleased with today's newspaper. Yesterday's was nicer. It gave me a feeling that the end was coming. Today's gives me a feeling that everything is dragging on.

I'm fed up with it all over again and find myself escaping again into romance, into dying with you. Can we agree on this? Let's walk hand in hand to the guillotine, and share a last kiss, too, the kind you shared in the springtime of your life. Why shouldn't I die with the last love of my life?

Today everything's in turmoil in our cell. Everyone sees themselves in the death cells. Everyone's jumpy, everyone's afraid, and no one wants to die. They dump their shattered nerves all over each other. But they're leaving me out this time. They're nice to me.

By the way, your letter yesterday got me really down. This number "3", your premonitions, your words, and so little for me. I felt utterly miserable, and today I have the feeling that it isn't true. You'll live at least another week.

Will something happen this week? Yes, Romania. Yes, Warsaw. But then what? Will they come here? A lot must be happening around Serbia - A man from the Foreign Office has been sent there. I think Serbia will soon be evacuated by the Germans and made independent.

You'll go on getting the midday meal till Friday, then it'll go somewhere else again. Somebody called to me today that Cell 43 wants my letters again. But I have to confirm this first.

If this turns out to be my last week, then I shall have been faithful to you right to the end. But if it's not, I shall swerve. So you won't get a letter if we're both still here because I shall be so sure of you that I shall be unfaithful. What disgusting talk! But I can't help it, I have a really good feeling this time, even if it only holds for one more week.

So, my dear, that is enough of an answer to your short letter. You've been spoiled enough. Be a good boy and don't say goodbye yet. If you're case is linked to Alois, then nothing will happen. And I'm telling you, you are.

Kisses

To Rosi

29.9.43 Wednesday

Dearest Rosi,

Tell me, didn't you receive my card? You can send me anything you have, cakes, biscuits, jam, cigarettes, soap, sausage. My God it's such a shame you're not here in Prague so I could tell you where everything can be found.

At present I'm quite well. One can get used to anything. Our case files are a mystery to me. Stay in contact with Frau Elmer, 3 Norwegische Strasse, Prague. Also write to Steffi Piackova, 22 Johann-von-Saaz-Gasse, and ask her to send me something that you will pay for. I don't want her to get it for me as a gift. Frau Elmer is following our case and hopes for the best for her friend. I urgently need a letter from you, I long for a few lines. Or am I already dead for you?

You can also send me a nice book – exciting – thriller – whatever - everything is allowed here.

Warmest kisses, my poor little bunny rabbit,

Marianne

To Riša

30.9.43 Thursday

My dear Richard,

You can really take my word – they've postponed your and Frantisek's farewell to this world. 22 people are up for execution, and among them is a woman named Victoria. But you two are not among them!

Darling, your letter brought me to tears. You don't have to keep reminding me of the last moment. If all goes well with your case review you'll be out of all this filth anyway - what more do you want? Write to your wife and sister, ask them to make more detailed inquiries at the state attorney's office. They'll get a reply which tells them how the case really stands. It would be better if you give us the farewell letter for your wife, while you can still do it - hardly anything gets out after death. Our secret postal system works wonderfully. I'd also like to have more on your feelings and impressions for later. My own letters have already been dispatched because I believe you can never finish communicating with the people outside. I'm still assuming that tomorrow will not be your "big day". Or don't you believe me? I know the feeling. I have it too, and although I'm still alive there are a lot of things that still grate on my nerves. I'll have to ask Wagner again today, even though he's always been accurate before, and I'll ask Hoffmeister too. But I'm sure the news will be good. Believe it or not, I'm dreading tomorrow morning, in spite of everything. The transfers to death row are already straining my nerves. If only I could go to sleep and not wake up till Sunday - no, not till after the war.

I haven't had a newspaper yet today, so I can't write about politics. I don't want to reply to your letter yet and I'm not going to write a farewell letter either. You wouldn't believe (...) how much I've changed.

Victoria has gone silent; she has never trusted Hoffmeister. She always stood by the truth, even in court. It would only have taken a few words from her to put her situation in a much better light, but she refused to move an inch from her position. She stood by the truth, which meant more to her than her life. She has worked hard all her life, there has been very little to enjoy in it, she has stuck by all the rules, and yet her fate has brought her to such a terrible death. Where is there any justice? Nowhere! I don't believe in it. It only exists in our dreams. I once had a dream like that. It made me so excited that I got

woken up by the pounding of my own heart. There's no point in talking about it, or in hoping for anything at all.

I'll send all your letters back, although I'd be so happy if you'd let me keep them as a present. I would take them as such and cherish them to the end of my life... I think of you all the time, and hope I shall quieten down soon. Can one even imagine heroes getting upset? You are no hero either, that's for sure. But heroism is inconceivable in circumstances like these. Heroes and chivalry only exist on stage.

Till my next letter.

M.

P.S. We're going to get newspapers after all! I've got the chief warder, Papa Sauer, wrapped round my little finger! His eyes are full of longing – he'd do anything for me, he's so far gone! He's let me see the execution list: you're not on it, and neither is Frantisek! He actually believes the whole prison block would fall apart without him.

So, my darling, enjoy your meal. I'll provide you with the news throughout the week! You'll soon see, our date will be postponed – for at least a week, so let there be no talk of any surprises. My darling, there are so many beautiful things I would love to write you, but I'm afraid you would read them as goodbyes. And in any case you won't really enjoy this letter because I haven't given you any reports on what's happening outside.

Love,

Marianne

To Riša

1.10.43 Friday

My darling,

I feel totally miserable; I may look like a strong-minded woman but it's only an act, and not too successful a one either. You see, I've always got you to think about. For a long time now you and I have been imagining ourselves in the Great Beyond, but all the while others have been going there before us. I am full of admiration for Victoria. I was able to fix things so that I could go to her cell on death row – I'm good at fixing all sorts of things, but in the end it's meaningless! Execution day comes round again and 22 human beings become 22 corpses. Some of them have only been here 6 weeks. It's all happening a lot faster than before.

Darling – I hope we both survive this week and that tomorrow, Saturday, will bring us wonderful political news and great surprises. They're only in Italy but there can still be a turn for the good, you'll see. Do you believe that we can live a normal life again?

I was with Victoria for quite a long time. But it's all the same to me now. I comforted her and told her the war will be over in 14 days, and until then...

Time is still on our side, we are still living longer than others. Do you believe that I've brought you good luck? Please believe it at last! Believe me, I do have the power to do it. Many people have believed in me in the past and it helped them too. It's for free - I've brought everyone luck, everyone who loved me, and I'll bring you luck, too.

M.

To Riša

1.10.43 Friday evening

My dearest,

I'm finished, utterly exhausted. Victoria behaved heroically – she laughed and was calm. Meanwhile I weep and feel like a wreck. I'm not crying for myself but for all of us – we're all unhappy and we all have to find some way of coming to terms with it. Your letter yesterday was so lovely, and I was so happy. You're with me for another week!

Reading the newspaper today was once again quite an experience! The news was very good today, and it'll be fantastic tomorrow for sure! But what's the use? Everything is moving quite fast out there, yet much too slowly for us. The troops are making a show of strength in several places, above all in the central section of the front. Although they find excuses the enemy is stronger and so retreats are once again in process. On the Romanian front, too. Of course the enemy pursues our retreats hesitantly and with weaker forces. The British have been stopped south of Vesuvius.

Laval spoke against Bolshevism once again. Sven Hedin expresses the same opinion.

How does Germany actually want to end the war? In the passage on Churchill it says that those nations that help can benefit themselves. Let's hope that things speed up in Italy. That's necessary otherwise the revolutionary spark will spread via Naples to Rome. We'll hear about the new position on the eastern front tomorrow. So you're going to enjoy this coming week.

There are only three of us in the cell since Victoria's death. I've swallowed a lot of medicine as my heart is giving me trouble again. I count my heartbeats. No, I shall certainly get ill, I can feel it. ... I hope tomorrow will be a quiet day. Hoffmeister read your letter, and I am very happy that he's delivering it to you. He doesn't understand anything, anyway. Just keep on writing! I love you, my poor, dear man-child. It's a miracle that we've survived a further week. I hope that we can love each other a few days more. I'd so like to talk to you while you're shaving, but it's always just me that wants to. I'm so tired today. I had to concentrate very hard while talking to Otti. Wagner passed by and declared that the whole of cell 44 is due, in fact today. 22 people, that's a lot.

As you can see, everything is muddled up – politics, our “big day”, and our love! It's terrible how I mix them all up. (...) I had to weep over my obstinacy, and I do have a terrible obstinacy. Victoria was a real heroine. Pity no parcels came today – the poor thing so loved to eat, and nothing ever came for her.

My dear, I take your head in my hands and see... what do I see? Deep in your eyes I see much love and friendship.

Till death us do part.

Your M.

Risa to Marianne

1.10.43 Friday evening

My Dearest,

It's the evening of the “big day”. We have every reason to be sad. However, I'm not. I've had nothing but sad thoughts in my head all day long, and now I've had enough and I'm forcing myself to think of happier things. And yet in spite of this my thoughts keep going back to today's tragedy, and I again try not to think about it. I have one week of my life left to live and I want to live these last days as well and as beautifully as I can. That sounds like an almost impossible goal for someone condemned to death, but with a little goodwill, why not? After all, what do I need to be happy? A love letter from you, political news that brings hope, something good to read and all this comes from you! My happiness lies in your good hands. This letter comes to you via Alois, so I don't need to hold back. I can let my imagination carry me away. Would you like to join me? After all, you wrote that you imagined holding my head in your hands and looking deep into my eyes. O God, if only it were possible! If I could only bring you here by magic for just one hour! We would sit side by side on our mattresses, hand in hand, and just gaze long, very long into each other's eyes. I would lay my head in your lap, close my eyes and go to sleep; I fall asleep so easily. And you would keep watch, since you sleep very little anyway, yet I'm sure that you would easily fall asleep with me. Don't you agree? If I laid your head on my shoulder as though it were a cushion you would surely sink into a

peaceful sleep, lovelier and longer than with any sleeping pill. If you don't believe me then please get yourself locked up in cell 41 with me for a night, and then you'll see.

What are you doing now? You're certainly sad, and I can't comfort you. I haven't written to you yet today. I thought it would be better not to write at all than to write you a sad letter. But now I'll write you a long and beautiful love letter. I know you'll understand.

Of course it means that I'm being unfaithful to my wife, but she won't take it amiss. It's only a dream, a short dream between two unhappy people, in the time we still have left to live. But it transforms it into a thing of beauty.

So, my beloved Marianne, your infatuated Riša is happy, and at the same time fears what tomorrow will bring. Imagine, I'm so shy and I know you know it. If I were alone with you it would be easier, but in front of the warder – I don't know, I really don't know. You're sure to be disappointed.

Up to here was written yesterday, then my friends wanted to play cards so I stopped. But now Alois is going for a shave and will bring the letter to you, so I must come to a close. But tomorrow, Sunday, you'll get a long letter. Many loving wishes from your

Richard

P.S. Send me something new to read, I've finished the second novel. Thank you.

Risa to Marianne

2.10.43

Saturday evening

Dear Marianne,

First I must thank you for the day's news and your lovely words on Friday. Your letter was beautiful, but sad. I don't really know why I liked it so much. I read it several times over and each time it put me into a sort of Sunday mood, and yet it had something melancholic about it. It had the same effect on me that poems do. In fact, your letter of actually is a poem in prose. Perhaps it is because it was written directly after the horror of the executions.

I should like to answer you equally beautifully – I'm in the mood for it. But I don't know if I can do it. I haven't been a journalist as you have, but I feel the potential for it. I was always very modest about my talents. Perhaps I might have found the courage for it later in life, but it's not worth it now in the short time left before execution.

I think society harms itself when it kills people at my age, the age at which humans develops their greatest spiritual creativity. But such is mankind! As soon as an insane ideology takes hold they think that no one must deviate, either to the right or to the left. You only have to cast a short glance at history to see that every ideology that considered itself advanced – and the one we are currently enduring cannot be so termed - always ended up making compromises. One cannot make angels of people, nor paradise of the earth. This is not to say that one shouldn't try to realise one's dreams, for everything that is just and beautiful should be the goal of every human being. But there is one very important aspect: the path to an ideal situation should not be such that it causes a large amount of undue harm.

I am convinced that Hitler really wanted the best for the German people; but the path he chose doesn't lead to this goal. Firstly, the German people are only one of several sons of the European community of nations, and in no family is one son allowed to eat everything up and leave the others to starve. Secondly: no path to wealth can be achieved by one nation at the expense of the others. The path that the German people are taking now doesn't lead to wealth. On the contrary, the Germans are having to pay every day with what is dearest to every nation – their own blood. There was a way to heal all wounds, but nobody was able to work it out when the war began. It was apparent at the time that Germany could increase its wealth at the expense of England and Russia by

permanently Germanising the Ukraine, which in my opinion is utter madness. They wanted to compare Hitler with Napoleon, for God's sake I think that Napoleon, with his crazy idea of conquering Europe, sacrificed the best elements of the French nation. Today Hitler can only find curses for the French. Isn't Hitler the same threat for Germany that Napoleon was for France? Yet it could also be argued that this was Germany's only chance not to perish altogether. My views on this would take us too far, and there isn't enough time, anyway.

One thing is certain: the path Germany is taking leads to self destruction. Each day that passes brings so much damage that the Germans will be feeling it for years to come. And I'm not just talking about the material consequences to the Germans when this war is over. Every people in every country suffering in this war, not only now but on into the future, will blame the Germans as the instigators of this horror. It would be damned difficult to convince any Russian that the devastations the Germans have wrought to his country were necessary for Germany's survival. No Russian will take that from the Germans. Anyone who cares for the German people even just a little has to see now that the whole thing is a complete and utter madness, and has to look for a way out of it all. Because I they don't, Germany will be completely annihilated: *vae victis!*¹⁸

As you can seem I'm in a political mood today. I don't know if I'm tiring you, but it won't hurt you to read something other than the newspapers. We two are not the only ones stuck in this almost hopeless situation - whole nations are stuck in it. Why can't we live together in peace and each of us just do his job? One in the factory, another in the fields, wouldn't that be wonderful? But that would be paradise on earth, a world lacking culture, and that's forbidden. There have to be masters and slaves, master races and enslaved races.

Richard

To Rosi

Secret letter, undated

Dearest Rosi

My nerves are shot to pieces. I've given you so much good advice – the lawyer lady can, must, write. She wanted to talk to you. She's unhappy that I'm alone. But it seems that's the way it has to be. Destiny.

I kept on hoping from week to week but now I've given up and am trying to make a quiet exit from life. Not with a great fanfare. No one will notice, and you will have peace, and will eventually forget these times.

I have loved you more than anything else in life, you know that. Today I've managed to find myself the best place in this chamber of horrors: I'm ill. I play patience and chat with the warders. I get better food, I read the newspapers every day, and I'm loved and cared for by everyone. It's bearable, even without hospital care.

Take care of the last pieces of my belongings and pray to God that my plan works. It's my last and only wish, now that I've given up hope of seeing you. Pity. My figure is perfect now. And my face has no crinkles. My hair has actually turned white. I never thought such a thing could happen to me.

Don't break down. Mimi needs you and Hellmuth needs you too. You're not to blame that you haven't got my strength and experience, but you're good and kind. And perhaps there can still be happiness in your life. Life will go on without me. Who needs me, after all? Hans has learned to live without me, and I don't want to hurt myself too much so I don't think about him a lot.

¹⁸ "Woe to the defeated!"

It would have been good if you and Hellmuth had lodged an appeal for clemency at the high court. It would have been good if you had visited me here. But it was not to be. I think of you only with affection and know that one can bear and endure a lot of pain.

You'll get over it too.

Dearest Rosi – I kiss you.

Marianne

To Karel

5.10.43 Tuesday

Dear friend,

Here are some facts to fill out your archive. These are the women from our circle who have been executed:-

A pretty 23-year-old gipsy girl. She was desperate, she fought against this way of death. She tried to kill herself by cutting the veins in her thigh with a splinter of glass, but failed.



NEUMANNOVÁ CHARLOTA

Next: Lotte Neumann, a German from Berlin. Even in these last moments heads have to roll for Germany's victory.

Then Anna König, also a Berliner; she cried a lot and vomited. Neither of these Berliners had reached 30.



KÖNIGOVÁ MÍNA



KOHNOVÁ BERTA

Next: Berta Kohn, 66; she was totally apathetic.

Then young Antonia Sazim, a citizen of the Bohemian Protectorate; she was very desperate.



SAZIMOVÁ ANTONIE

The next to be executed was Marie Müller, 43, a mother of 13 children. The last child was born in prison. She was a good, tender farmer's wife. Right up to the last minute she didn't know that they were taking her to be executed. The executioners told her that she was going to receive a pardon.



PRŮCHOVÁ VILÉMA

Immediately after her they beheaded Anna Svehlova, Vilemine Pruchova and Vlasta Hellerova. Pruchova and Hellerova were friends. The latter was brave, young and full of heart. The former appeared to me to be feeble-minded. She continually wrote letters to state president Hacha, but their contents were completely meaningless. She hardly slept a single night and gave the impression of having gone completely mad.



HELLEROVÁ VLASTA

The fates of Rosa Kodadova and Jarka Zivcova you already know about.



LIPENSKÁ BARBORA

Then Barbara Lipenska, 60, ready to die, steady and calm.

She was followed by Viktoria Kroupova, worker, 48 – a heroine! She was secretly in love with prison officer Hoffmeister. Before her last journey she held his hand. We learned afterwards that he laid a flower in her coffin.

And now the women who are awaiting the guillotine:-

You already know Otilie Hynkova, a 30-year-old woman, good-looking and full of life. Sometimes she believes she will be released, and then she resigns herself to death.

Marie Pospislova, 26. We all love her. She knows about 20 words of German and even succeeds in talking to the warders.

Marie Janouskova, 32, nervous; she still doesn't comprehend her hopeless situation. She's happy when she's able to see her husband for a short moment, and this has become the meaning of her life.



FLUNKOVÁ EMILIE

Emilie Flunk, 38, hardworking, strong. She speaks good German. She has passed the saddest days of her life in here. She has a strong character and awaits her fate bravely, although her heart is full of yearning for her two daughters. The younger daughter is only a few months old and has been left with people who apparently do not treat her well. To add to her heartache, two sisters, aged 50 and 30, have also recently been brought to the prison. I don't know their names. They're hoping that the new political developments will save them. We all share this hope.



POSPÍŠILOVÁ MARIE

Then: Bela Mekotova – a woman with a birth-mark; she tried to kill her stepson. She's pinning her hopes on a pardon, because not long ago a murderer here who had killed a woman was pardoned. Murderers are more likely to be pardoned here than people with harmless political convictions. We do not like her.

Bozena Dolejsova: she has gone mad and has ceased to be a human being. She's a complete wreck.



GRÜNBERGEROVÁ ERNESTINA



STAMPFEROVÁ MARGARITA

Further: five Jewish women: Lewi, Taussig, Singer, Grünberg and Stampfer. They are basically better off here than elsewhere.



SINGEROVÁ MARIANNE



TAUSSIGOVÁ ELSA

They are treated the same way as we are and like us they are hoping for a miracle.

And now to me, Marianne Golz, wife of a journalist who is active in England. I originally worked as an actress. Later I also worked as a journalist, with Mitropress, and was well known in all the newspaper offices in Prague. I'm from Vienna, my father is Polish and my mother was Czech. My husband has become an English citizen. I was only drawn into this whole affair because I knew too much.

Please remember the following, I think it's important. Do you know Emil Synek, the editor-in-chief of the "Telegraf"? He lives in England and is working there for Germany. His wife lives in Prague-Podoli. Her name is Evzenie Synek, a full Jewess and a Gestapo agent. She has my life and a further 10 lives on her conscience. I hope that you will be able to stop her activities. She should be kept under observation. Her daughter is called

Yvetta. Please inform my husband, Hans Golz, about her. See to it that her double-dealing becomes known to ensure that she is not awarded medals of honour one day that she does not deserve.

I worked in the cultural field all my life and I'm trying to continue my work here. I get the newspapers every day and understand how they should be read. They even bring me "Das Reich" and other weekly journals.

And then I "love" a young man here, and he loves me. We do not know each other we've only seen each other once. But he needs my imagination and I his so that we can survive these terrible days. I enclose a couple of the letters we send each other every day, either hidden in books and newspapers or transferred by the warders. This "love" brightens both our lives. I know that this coming Friday will be his "big day". His death will be a great loss to the Czech nation.

You cannot get an accurate picture of life in here without considering the inner conflict of the women prisoners. They have done a lot to lighten the male prisoners' lives through their influence on the warders, who are only men after all. The warders flirt with us and then often run into difficulties with their superiors.

The last days here have been almost bearable. A mood of hope predominates, and we pray for peace. This prevents suicide attempts. The men are guarded much more strictly. If an attempted suicide fails there is a terrible punishment: they're beaten and chained. The women keep hoping they'll be pardoned, and anyway they don't have the means to attempt suicide. Each of us supports one another. None of us has the courage to kill herself, although we talk about it a lot. Hanging is impossible, and it's very difficult to get hold of poison; the will to survive is very strong right up to the last moment.

The men are usually taken by surprise when their executions are announced. They have no idea that they're next. The women know exactly five days in advance. We've known every time when a woman was due, but we only told those who had the courage to face it. Only Vlasta Hellerova and Barbara Lipenska knew. They both wanted no uncertainty. Vlasta wanted to kill herself, but did not succeed: the poison that had been smuggled in inside a fountain pen was not strong enough. So she went the hard way to the scaffold. Not a single woman has been pardoned so far. Only three men. The others were all executed without scruple.

At 9 o'clock on the day of the execution they appear in the cell of the condemned. You are brought before the state attorney, who again reads out the death sentence, and then you sit in the death cell and wait, heavily guarded, till half past four. Then you are handed over to the executioner's assistants, Czechs, and taken to the executioner. He is dressed in civilian clothes and earns 400 Reich marks a month.

I've explained enough for today, and hope you're satisfied with this.

As soon as Otty Hynkova informs you of my death, please inform my sister Rosi Haala at 34 Böcklin Strasse, Vienna 2. You can send her Otty's letter, that will do. Everyone here is looking forward to my clothes and possessions. My death is necessary as everybody here adores my clothes.

I send you my regards,

Yours, Marianne Golz

Riša to Karel

And then the bad times followed for Marianne! We sensed the end was nigh! We were afraid for each other and gave each other courage. We comforted each other and gave each other hope. Then Marianne wrote to me one day that this would be her last letter, that she knew she was going and that she would try to go her way. Awful days! Awful letters! I can't even write about them. To be separated by only a couple of walls from the

place where a human being is trying to take her own life – it’s unthinkable horrible!
No, I cannot and will not go into detail.

Riša

To Riša

5.10.43 Tuesday evening

Richard!

Thank you and believe me when I say I’m calm and hopefully also brave – for the difficult step still awaits me - and with the thought of you, my child, and with your last love letter, I hope my performance will be successful. I’m really happy that the die is cast. My nerves are worn out and I’ve had enough. Life was pleasant, art was joy,¹⁹ and strange will be my exit – but then women like me do not die in bed. I shall surely return and we shall meet again as souls or as new human children or as lovely flowers – or as a tree that lives many years and outlives generations. This is my last letter - wake up, you dear, bright little pageboy, the queen is departing – she’s leaving the stage of life. And now I ask God for his help – for this will not be easy.

Marianne

Riša to Marianne

6.10.43 Wednesday

Dear Marianne,

I wrote very little to you yesterday, and I want to make up for this today. I saw you a couple of times today. I was even able to bid you my last "farewell".

I expect to go tomorrow or Friday and so I want to write you a few farewell lines. I’m sad, but I don’t want our last exchange to be a melancholy one. I also wrote a goodbye letter to my wife yesterday. Her last letter to me was so lovely, and I’m so sorry that my death will bring her so much pain. For you, too, of course, or at least that is what you wrote, but you only know me superficially. What happened between us was just a prison dream, and even the most beautiful dream remains just a dream!

You will forgive me if my last thoughts will be with my wife: that is my duty. I care for you too, and it means a lot to me that I have you as a good friend who always understands me. Thank you so much for that. You know, we understood each other right from the start, and you will understand me now, too. Through you I sought and found what was missing in me and in my soul, and I’m very grateful for that. Since we began writing to each other my life here has become much more intense.

Your letters brought thoughts back to me that I had deemed dead, especially here in prison. Only now have I begun to enjoy life again. It has been a long and beautiful dream for me. It has strengthened my soul and fundamentally eased my path into the unknown.

All this, my love, is thanks to you. Your spiritual strength, which you gave to me, a stranger, was essential to me. Whenever I read your letters and answered them I nearly forgot I was in prison and awaiting death. In those moments the prison bars no longer existed for me, and there was no lock on the door. My thoughts had free reign. They roamed in a large space full of freedom and happiness – you know the feeling. You shared the experience in our letters.

Of course you’ll be losing something too, but you can go on talking to me. I just won’t be able to answer you any more. You’ll have to make do with what you still have: my old letters, if you still have them. You can read them all, or just this last one. Perhaps I’ll write to you one last time tomorrow, if my name is only up for Friday.

Goodbye for the last time, and take my last kiss,

¹⁹ A quotation from Friedrich Schiller’s “Wallenstein”: “Life is serious, art is joy.”

P.S.

My love,

I've just read your letter. I don't know for sure, but the Governor told us during our exercise period in the courtyard that my name is not yet up. Forgive me for writing so little to you yesterday evening. I had written a goodbye letter to my wife and had no more time after that. And I didn't want my sadness to spill over on to you. But these few lines were enough to make you sad. Perhaps I shouldn't have written anything at all. But it's happened.

What is going to happen to Alois does not affect me. His case was dealt with separately, and we'll only see each other at the final hearing. But in any case it really doesn't matter. The end has to come, and the sooner the better. I'm still interested in the political situation – it's just a little bit too slow for me. But it's all the more certain that the end of the war is approaching. Although I shall not live to see it, my death will be all the easier knowing it.

I know you thought yesterday that your hero was getting fearful, but this is not the case. It was just the letters to my wife and my sister that so moved me. I can see how much they love me and that they cannot face my death. I'm just so terribly sorry for them. If only for them I would I'd like to go on living. My wife wrote that she literally doesn't want to live without me. You can imagine how that makes me feel. I immediately wrote her a long letter about life and death and reminded her that it is her duty to go on living. I shall only have it sent after my death, though. I've put it with the other letters that will be sent to her with my belongings after my death. That is why I didn't write to you yesterday. What I wrote to you this morning is also a farewell letter. This time for you. If it's premature, then keep it for next week, but I believe it's appropriate now.

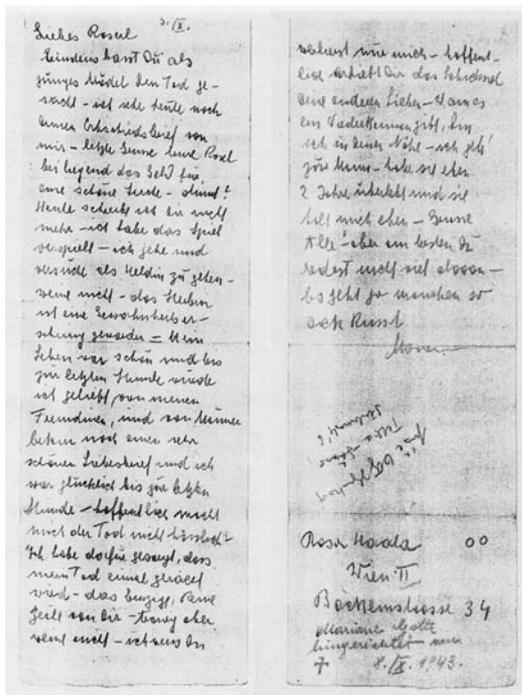
Franta Janousek is also preparing himself. There is a terrible atmosphere here. We call it "travel fever". If I could go hand in hand with you to the execution, it would be beautiful and romantic and much easier. But unfortunately we have to go separately. Yet no one goes alone. There are always companions on the journey from the circle of people here. Franta and I believe we'll go together. You'll hear us singing.

I'll end for today. Regards and a kiss,

Your Baby

To Rosi
Secret letter

5.10.43 Tuesday



Dearest Rosi,

Once, when you were a young girl, you wanted to die. Even today I can still see your goodbye letter before my eyes. Well, this is my goodbye, dearest Rosi.

Enclosed is the money for a beautiful corpse – aren't I right? After today I'll not be writing to you again. I've lost the game. I'm going, and will try to go as a heroine. Please don't cry. Dying is a normal event here. My life was lovely, and right up to the last moment I was loved by my women friends. And I received one last beautiful love letter from a man. And up till the last moment I was happy. I hope death doesn't make me unsightly. I've made arrangements for my death to be avenged.

One thing, though: not a single line from you. Sad, but please don't cry. I know you are losing only me. I hope destiny will grant you

other people to love. Until we meet again in the hereafter I shall always remain close to you. I'm going now to join Mummy. I've outlived her by just two years, and she's coming to fetch me now.

My love to everyone. But it would be best not to talk too much about it all. Other people are in a similar situation.

I send you a kiss

Marianne

To Riša

7.10.43 Thursday

Richard, my darling,

The funeral music is playing outside. Lovely. I'm hearing the music in honour of my dead body before I go, also a pleasure. I'm happy, cheerful, chatting to the warders as though I knew nothing. I'm not thinking of anything. Only that this harrowing life is coming to a close according to the script I have prepared.

I hope you experience the sensational ending to this drama and can rejoice with me. I'll be returning very soon as a spirit to check whether you're crying a lot. But before I fly away from this house altogether, I bid you farewell.

For the record, I have done everything that I could. I was bold, brave, charming and true to my character. I shan't be like that as a corpse, but they won't cut off my head. And they won't drag me before the state attorney – by God, they won't.

Instead, he will have a delightful letter from me. He will not enjoy his dinner, for I call him a mass murderer.

Be a good boy and rejoice over my departure. I always made a good exit on stage. When I played a comic role the people laughed tremendously. My punch lines struck home.

So, my child, that is the only thought for now. I live in the present. It was gruesome until you came into my life. I have so much to thank you for, more than I can ever say. You have no idea. I was often truly happy through your letters.

Apart from that, it's better this way. I'm leaving life my way, and for many it will be an unforgettable way. As I fall asleep today I shall think of something funny. Perhaps I shall even die with a smile on my face – laughing at the others.

Goodbye, and survive me as long as possible. My last wish for you will be in another letter - its with ...

Marianne

Marianne to the State Prosecutor

5.10.43 Tuesday

State Prosecutor,

I have no wish to see you. But I have a few words for you today.

You had some bad things to say about me in court, but there was one exception: you said that I am a woman of character and intelligence. I intend to live up to this statement, indeed I am obliged to. No one has the right to take my life, and so I shall have the courage to take it myself. Will you have that courage, too, when destiny calls you to account? But you are only a man.

I tell you one thing: think what it means to be a killer of women. For that is what you are: a mass-killer, and, even worse, also a woman-killer.

I have arranged for my case to be made public later, and in detail. The informers will not sleep easy then, either. For now, though, enjoy your meal. In time you too will draw an unlucky card. Then you can follow my example.

Marianne Golz née Belokostolska



HYNKOVÁ OTILIE

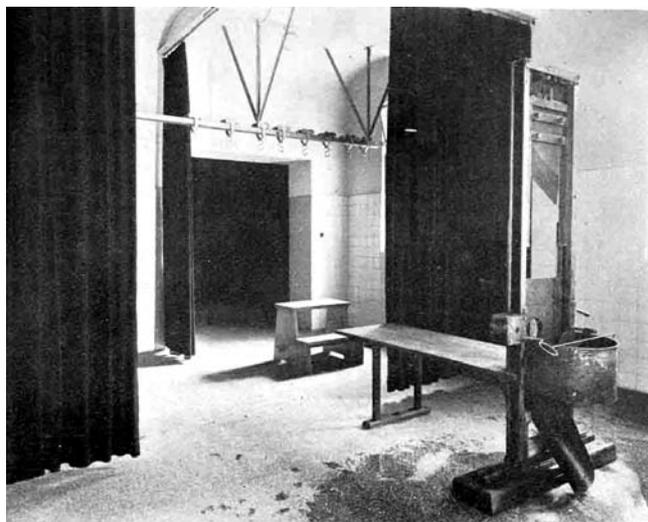
Otilie Hynkova to Rosi

Dear Frau Haala,

It's a pity that I do not know you personally. Marianne has told me so much about you, about your bravery, that I feel I almost know you. My name is Otyllie and I have been condemned to death, like Marianne. Our cases are very similar. I had a lab and worked with chemical elements. I promised Marianne that I'd write to you after her death. I'm keeping that promise now and writing to you straight away, before my turn comes. My beloved Marianne went to her death before me. I keep seeing her before my eyes. The way she smoked, the way she laid the cards. The way she waited

for me one evening and asked me "What have you brought me, darling?" – "Dear Marianne! Everything! Everything!" And now everything is over, and only the emptiness remains in my heart, and a grey chill. Dear Frau Rosi, you cannot imagine what it's like here; don't even wish you could know.

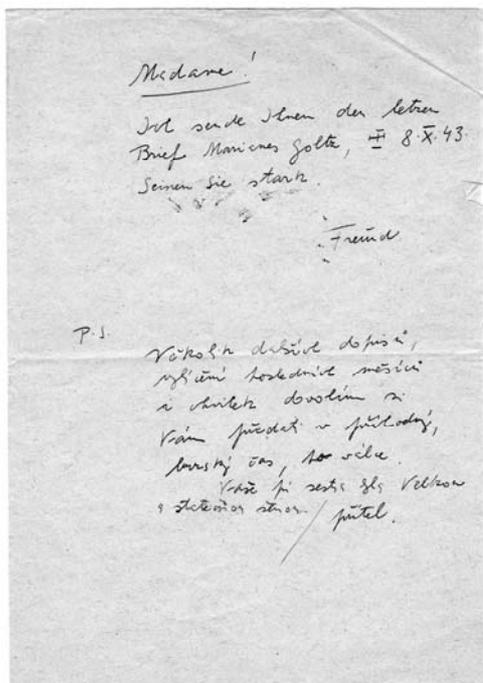
Marianne was ill for several months and ate hardly anything. In the last days, when she knew that she was on the list to die, she tried to slit open her arteries, but the attempt failed. She wanted to hang herself, but that



didn't work, either. At the last moment she managed to get hold of some pills and took them all. She felt very ill after that, and she was in this pitiful condition, almost unconscious, when they came to take her away.

She didn't escape the guillotine, as none of us will. She died peacefully, only half conscious; she could hardly follow what was happening to her. Frau Rosa, that's how your beloved sister died, loved by us all. My beloved Marianne, my dearest Marianne. I loved her so much and love her still. Forgive me, I'm just so sad. I'm sending you this letter because I promised I would. I'm not writing to anyone else, because I'm already more or less dead for the world outside.

Otty



Karel to Rosi

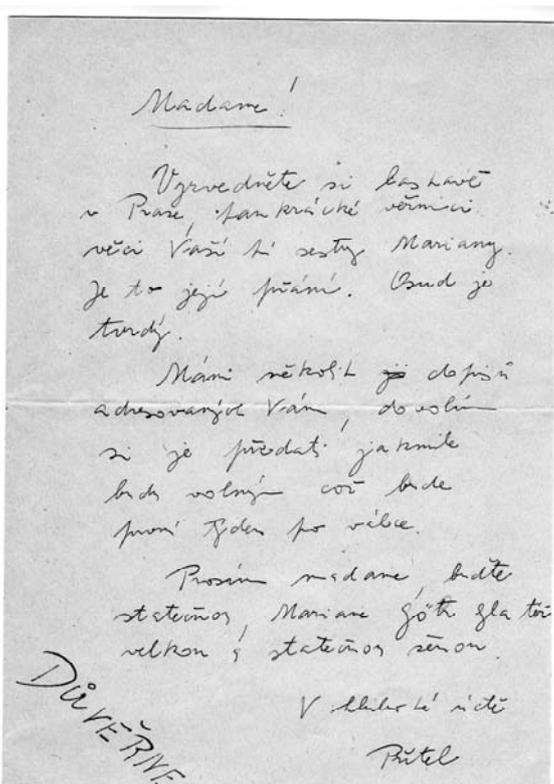
Dear Madam,

I send you the last letter from Marianne +
8.X.43. Be strong.

A friend

P.S. I shall hand over to you other letters and
reports about her last months and moments as
soon as possible, after the war. Your sister was a
great, a heroic woman.

A friend



Karel to Rosi

Dear Madam,

Please collect the effects of your sister
Marianne from Pankraz Prison in Prague.
It was her wish. Fate is hard. I have some
letters addressed to you. Permit me to give
them to you after I am released, which will
be in the first week after the war. I beg
you, Madam, to stand fast. Marianne Golz
was a strong, heroic woman.

With great respect,

A friend

Karel about Marianne after her Death

And so Marianne Golz, that proud, intelligent and extraordinary woman, also died in the “chopper cell at Prague-Pankraz. I knew the contents of her secret letters and I consider her, next to Richard Macha and Lida Novak, to be one of the great souls who, through their wisdom and generosity of spirit rose above the wretched world of Block IIa.

Marianne Golz had in her time been an actress and journalist. Her husband, Hans Golz, was a newspaper editor who had emigrated to England in 1939. Marianne was known in newspaper offices all over the world. Not even in this filthy hole did she lose the greatness of her personality. If one could say of anyone that she retained her nobility of spirit in these ignoble and squalid circumstances, then it could only be her. With true grace she smiled down upon the real poor and wretched, the prison warders and the revolting system they served that was the fruit of German might. As an Austrian she spoke fluent German but she refused to demean herself by bargaining with the prison warders. She only made an exception when the other women in her cell asked her to. She was above the food question, too, despite suffering from hunger and malnutrition. In fact she ended up regarding food in general and her ration in particular as utterly negligible. Later, when her daily exchange of letters began with Riša in Cell 41, she would send nearly half her daily ration to him through the prison warders – but with the potatoes stuffed with her secret letters! The correspondence that passed between Cells 38 and 41 is a novel in itself, so tender, tinged with such love and sensuousness, and at the same time shot through with such tragic sadness.

The good fortune of Cells 38 and 41 was the married couple, Janos and Marie Frantisek. Janos was with the men in Cell 41 while his wife was with the women in Cell 38. The two cells became inseparably linked by daily contacts with one another. Hardly a day passed without the Frantiseks managing to wring permission from one or other of the prison warders to visit one another. Mostly it was Marie who visited her husband in Cell 41. This connection between the cells gave rise to an intense exchange of letters which ended up becoming a kind of secret news exchange. And quite apart from the newspaper a very special ‘link’ developed, a new and special relationship: the letters between Marianne and Riša.

It was a very difficult undertaking, developing the strange love that began to blossom in the fear-filled blood-drenched atmosphere of Block IIa – a love between two people condemned to death. As Riša later wrote for my archive, what becomes clear from the relationship of these great souls is that the feeling between them was above all the vulgarity of a worldly love. It was an other, worldly love, a blissful love on the very margin between life and death. It was the same for both of them. Riša and Marianne each stood with one foot in the grave. In this situation of horrendous desolation and despair the two of them grew and nurtured together the beautiful flower of platonic love. All words, all ideas that describe this purity of feeling come across as mere platitudes and banal.

Marianne knew a few days ahead of time that she was going to be executed. She organised poison for herself and took it when she got to the preparation cell. The prison officers found her in a deep coma and were afraid there would be investigations into how she had obtained the poison, for the responsibility, and consequently the guilt, was theirs. So they dragged Marianne Golz before the state attorney in this painful condition and explained that she had just fallen into a faint. And in this ‘fainted’ condition she was executed.

The execution room was thus witness to the most abominable of executions. The head was cut off an already dead body solely for the sake of good order. And Marianne, who had so wished not to suffer the degradation of death by execution departed alone. Despite all her efforts she had been unable to avoid “the business”.

With Marianne's death under the guillotine, Riša lost one of his strongest emotional bonds. Her letters – above all the last ones – became a source of reflection for him after October 8th. He often leafed through the pages, talking with his dead friend. He spoke to no one about this, not even to Alois or Franz. It was a great secret within him. The departure of his friend left a leaden silence behind.

“I am dumb, broken and aged,” he wrote to me. “I continue living with a sacred corner in my heart for the imperishable memory of precious Marianne.” No literary style could better describe the fragility of two people's emotions growing on the downward slope towards death. The private words of this implausible love story reveal so many emotions and inner conflicts in these two souls facing death, that just one small piece of paper from among Riša's secret letters conveys more than a hundred pages from a literary work.

In Search of Marianne

In February 1960, my father learned that the Federal Republic of Germany was prepared to pay him 1,500 marks for the 'deprivation of liberty' in Prague-Pancraz prison of his wife, Marianne Golz-Goldlust, between November 19th, 1942 and October 8th, 1943, 4.43 p.m. No reparation was ever offered for what happened at 4.44 p.m.: her execution by guillotine. 30 marks were, however, paid, to Alois Weiss by the state attorney's office at the Special German Court in Prague. Entry 219 in the prison record book states the following:

Golzova, Marianne born 30.1.1895 Vienna 8 Kls 90/43 25.5.43 8.10.43 16.44 hours

'Case 8 Kls 90 / 43' of the Special German Court in Prague was closed by Alois Weiss, the prison executioner.

The Search for Marianne Begins

I was born in London in 1947. My mother, Ida Reiss, a Jewish refugee from Straznice in Moravia, met my father in London in 1940. My parents brought me up without any knowledge of my Jewish origins. However, in 1960, when I was 13, they moved to West Germany, and the story of our family gradually caught up with me there, step by step. It took me a long time to root my identity out. My sense of being Jewish kept growing, even though my knowledge of the fate of my family remained tiny. In 1985 I read a book "*Wir wissen nicht was morgen wird, wir wissen wohl was gestern war*" by Peter Sichrovsky - "*We don't know what will happen tomorrow, but we know what happened yesterday*". The book was dedicated thus:



"For my grand parents whom I'll never forget, even though I never knew them."

It describes the difficult search for their identity of 15 Berlin and Viennese Jews who were born after 1945. In some of the cases the parents were already dead and therefore unable to answer their children's questions. There I recognised my own situation. My dad died in 1969, my mother in 1976. Was there any other way to find answers to the many questions I had? Suddenly I had a brainstorm: I'd search for the files of my father's reparation claim. I found them at the offices of the Berlin Reparation Agency.

After his return to Germany from England, my father had been obliged to sue the Federal Republic because their reparation agency refused to recognize the symptoms he was suffering from as a result of being forced to flee Germany in 1939. He underwent a psychiatric examination for the court hearing, and his reparation file contained the psychiatrist's comprehensive report. It was effectively his C.V. with psychiatric comments appended.

And so, one morning back in 1985, I sat in a drab public office in Berlin-Schoeneberg with a large tinted file in front of me and started to read. The following paragraph drew my attention to Marianne:

"My wife Marianne wanted to follow me to England in the summer of 1939, but this became impossible once the war broke out. She was never afraid and immediately started to help Czechs and Jews to escape via Vienna to Italy. She made connections with the Gestapo and found out whom she could bribe so that she could help people to acquire false documents. She held weekly meetings in her apartment to which Czechs, Germans and Jews came. The group was betrayed and during one of the weekly meetings they were all arrested. The Jews were deported to the concentration camps while the Czechs and my wife were put on trial. In 1943 my wife was sentenced to death at the guillotine. She spent weeks in the death cell and was only executed at the end of 1943. The fate of my wife is described in a book that a Czech who had been employed by the Germans as prison photographer published after the war. The book is titled 'Zaluji' (Czech for 'I accuse'). This man wrote about my wife, and there is also a prison photo of her in the book. Secret letters that she wrote to her sister and that had been smuggled out of the prison are also published in the book."

Suddenly I remembered that my father had mentioned that he had been married before and that he had loved that woman a lot, and that the Nazis had murdered her. I just had to find that photo and see what she looked like.

A few weeks later I had the book in my hands and saw Marianne's photo. Although I do not speak Czech I was able to see that at least 20 pages had been devoted to her. The subsequent translation by a friend led to a multitude of feelings within me.

"Marianne Golz was from Vienna. A very intelligent woman, aged 48, with grey hair. Not even in this filthy hole did Marianne lose the greatness of her personality. If anyone could be described in these ignoble and squalid circumstances as 'a gentle lady of great spirit', then it could only have been Marianne. She was the interpreter between the prison warders and the prisoners. She was very popular and loved by them all because she had such a positive attitude and so much political insight."

Marianne knew ahead of when she was going to be executed. That is why she obtained poison and took it in the death cell. The prison warders found her in a deep coma and were afraid that there would be an investigation into how she had managed to acquire it. So they dragged her in front of the state attorney in a state of unconsciousness and it was in that state that she was beheaded."

Marianne's Life

Maria Agnes Belokosztolszky was born in Vienna-Hernals on January 30th, 1895. Her family were Catholic. Her father was Polish, her mother Czech. After high school graduation in Vienna she attended courses to become a ballet dancer and opera singer and chose the stage name, Marianne Tolska. She is first mentioned as an opera singer in July 1921, where she appeared on stage with the Viennese Raimund Theatre during a guest performance in Linz. Marianne wrote about herself in retrospect:

"I remember when I was 26. I didn't feel young at all and I certainly wasn't childlike. I refused to play "young" parts in the theatre I didn't want to be young at all. And anyway,

I wasn't. I was always more mature than my contemporaries, never frivolous, and married terribly young. But then, I always mixed with older women. At 26 I was already self-supporting and a wealthy woman."



She appeared in Stuttgart, performing in the operetta 'Viennese Blood' on July 12th, 1922.

"How nice that the theatre has succeeded in staging this delightful operetta in such a satisfactory manner. Dancer Marianne Tolska not only looks attractive but acts and sings a lot better than in the past. What a lot of good a little rest can do!"

Between October 1922 and September 1924 Marianne is a member of the Salzburg City Theatre ensemble. This is where she meets Nico Dostal the Austrian operetta composer. Dostal writes:

"My first season under the directorship of Mr. Strial in Salzburg was unproblematic. It was he who brought the singers Rudolf Worelli and Marianne Tolska to Salzburg. Marianne was to play a role in my later life. Before we brought the operetta 'Madame Pompadour' to the stage in Salzburg, our soprano Tolska travelled to Vienna to watch Fritzi Massary perform as Madame Pompadour at the Carl Theatre. Tolska copied all she had seen during Massary's performance and proved to be a splendid Pompadour."



The peak of Marianne's career was her joint appearance alongside Richard Tauber in 'Die Fledermaus' on July 30th, 1923 at the Salzburg City Theatre.

"The 'Fledermaus' with Richard Tauber as Eisenstein was, as expected, a tremendous success. The famous guest's usual quick and tempered performance as well as his wonderful and well-kept tenor voice made the evening unforgettable. But it should also be mentioned that some of the local talents do not have to stand in Mr. Tauber's shadow. Miss Tolska was well suited for her role."

Just 14 days before, Marianne had married the Viennese music publisher Ernst Wengraf on July 16th, 1923. In 1924 she moved with him to Berlin, where he had opened a second office. It was her second marriage. Nico Dostal later wrote about his time in Berlin:

"As I climbed off the train at Berlin-Anhalt Station I immediately felt at home. The first thing I did was join the circle around Marianne Tolska-Wengraf, who by then was divorced from her husband by mutual consent. Marianne used to surround herself at her flat on Wittenberg Platz with dynamic people from the theatre and advertising worlds. It was possible to meet all sorts of people there and make useful contacts."

Marianne probably met my father, Hans Werner Goldlust, during one of these meetings in 1924. He was then head of the advertising and distribution department of the "Literarische Welt" which was published by Rowohlt, the well known publishing company. My father adopted the name 'Golz' in the early 20's, because as an assimilated Jew he rejected the stigmatisation of 'Jewish' names like 'Goldlust'. It is rumoured that he never officially registered the name change so as not to offend his father. This is the reason for the hyphenated name: 'Golz-Goldlust'.



Willy Haas, already a reputable journalist, was editor-in-chief of the "Literarische Welt". Rowohlt offered the magazine for sale in the spring of 1927. Willy Haas and my father bought it and my father became managing director.

On March 21st, 1929 Marianne and Hans married in Berlin-Wilmersdorf. Hans Golz writes about his wife:

"I was very proud of my wife. Through her I was introduced to circles in associated fields to my own. My wife was always a strong support. I could always rely on her. She was always optimistic and believed that she would never have any problems in life so I would never need to worry about her."

And Marianne's niece Erika Haala adds:



"Marianne was a very beautiful and impressive woman. She liked wearing bright colours and she was always well dressed. She was a very striking and dominant person, full of life and energy. A person who was full of vitality. I spent quite some time thinking about the expression 'joie de vivre', but it's not quite the right one. Vitality, someone who was very striking. Wherever she was, she was at the centre. Whether this stemmed from her temperament or from her experience on the stage I cannot say, but it certainly impressed us all. She was a woman with a lot of charm, a lot of warmth, and full of happiness. She was my favourite aunt."

When Hitler came to power in January 1933, Hans Golz and Willy Haas were aware of the danger for Jews. They sold the magazine by March 1933 and subsequently emigrated to Prague with their wives in 1934.

"Willy Haas and I tried to open a new magazine 'Die Welt im Wort' ('The World in Words') with the Orbis Publishing Company. We had taken the list of subscribers of the 'Literarische Welt' with us and we hoped we would be able to distribute the magazine throughout Germany from Prague. But this proved impossible. In 1935 I took up work as the representative of the French news agency 'Mitropress' and also wrote for the 'Neue Wiener Journal'."



Marianne apparently did not work as an opera singer during their

time in Prague. In 1936 Hans Golz' parents and his sister also left Berlin for Prague.



On March 15th 1939 the Nazis occupied the Czech Republic. Hans Golz fled Prague just before the annexation and reached England via Poland and the Baltic in the summer of 1939. The extensive correspondence between Rosa Goldlust in Prague and her children Hans and Erna in London shows that Marianne stayed on in Prague to help her parents- and sister-in-law and to wind up her flat.

Even though by July 1939 she possessed the necessary visas to leave Prague and join her husband in London, she did not succeed in leaving the Czech Republic, now renamed 'the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia', before war broke out on September 1st 1939.

Marianne's Arrest and Court Trial

The sources covering the period of her trial and execution on October 8th, 1943 are multiple. They comprise of:

- Statements by Erika Haala, Marianne's niece;
- A letter from Dr. Friedrich Seidl, a former tenant in Marianne's flat in Prague during the war;
- An interview with Erna Steiner, who together with her mother and others was arrested by the Gestapo at Marianne's flat on the evening of November 19th, 1942;
- Excerpts from the German state attorney's charges and from the court ruling of the Special German Court in Prague on May 18th, 1943 referring to Marianne and the crimes she was purported to have committed;
- Written statements by Marianne from official prison letters exchanged with her sister Rosi in Vienna and from secret letters that she smuggled out to her between her arrest on November 19th, 1942 and her death on October 8th, 1943; and finally
- Excerpts from secret messages that Marianne exchanged with her fellow-prisoner Richard Macha (Risa) and the prison photographer R. Karel that were published in the book "Zaluji" ("I Accuse") in 1946 in Prague.

From all of these sources the following picture emerges:

After the war had begun, Marianne belonged to a resistance group that helped Jews to get out of Prague by procuring faked ID-cards and travel documents. Marianne succeeded in saving part of the refugees' moneys by transferring them to her sister Rosi in Vienna.

"Marianne knew, through some kind of source at the Gestapo, who was going to be deported next. These people would then be contacted by some sort of organisation and helped across the border at night. My mother would then receive the money."

[Erika Haala]

"I only knew Mrs. Golz distantly. The list of names we used was in code. I never knew she was called Golz until she became a client of my mother. Then I recognized her. Marianne deliberately and regularly helped Jews to escape. She was a wonderful woman and she held her tongue. We agreed from the beginning that if anything blew up she would take everything on herself." [Erna Steiner]

It is rumoured that Marianne even got people out of Theresienstadt Ghetto. With the help of a secret contact and by way of Hans, information about what was going on in Prague reached the exiled Czech Government in London.

Every second Thursday evening a 'social meeting' took place at Marianne's apartment.

"I recollect going to such a meeting once or twice with a friend. Most of the people there were on the run, hiding from the Germans". [Erna Steiner]

The prosecution later asserted that at these meetings "hatred was stirred in every way against the Reich". At the meeting on Thursday, November 19th, 1942 all the participants were arrested by the Gestapo.

"We got there at half-past eight, and there were several people there, and the Gestapo opened the doors and said, "We've been expecting you!" We were arrested and taken to the political department and were treated worse than murderers or criminals." [Erna Steiner]

That same evening, the Gestapo in Vienna arrested Marianne's sister Rosi.

"My mother knew that she was involved in helping Jewish refugees to escape from Prague and the meaning of the money she handed to them when they got to Vienna. We learnt that Marianne had been arrested the same day in Prague, and that she was going to be put on trial." [Erika Haala]

Marianne describes how she was arrested:

"Evzenie Synek, a Jewish woman, has me and ten other people on her conscience. She works for the Gestapo. Make sure, Mr. Karel, that Mrs. Synek's double-dealing is made known so that she is not awarded a medal of honour one day that she does not deserve!"

During her interrogation by the Gestapo, Marianne exonerated the others arrested, as she had agreed to do with the people that were close to her.

"She took it on herself and we played the innocent lambs who happened to be at one of her social meetings when we were arrested. After Marianne stated that we had nothing to do with the whole affair and that we were only there by chance, we were released." [Erna Steiner]



On May 18th, 1943 the trial against Marianne and 17 further persons took place at the Special German Court in Prague. It was a show-trial that can only be understood in the context of the Nazis' defeat at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942/43. With this defeat the tide turned against Nazi Germany. The judiciary was assigned the task of cracking down on all forms of resistance within the Reich and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The language of the trial and the court ruling is deliberately clear: it was intended to set an example.

"The accused, Golz-Goldlust, has been a friend of Goldschmidt since 1940 and visited him often. It was at his apartment that she met Zapotecky and learned that he helped Jews illegally to cross the borders of the Protectorate. In order to avoid his own deportation Goldschmidt fled to Vienna. About two weeks later, the accused Golz-Goldlust received a phone call from her sister Haala, who told her that Goldschmidt had paid her a visit. Subsequently several letters were exchanged between the two ...

Golz-Goldlust advised Kühnel to approach Zapotecky and ask him to help him cross the border. Zapotecky states that Kühnel handed Golz-Goldlust 20.000 Czech Crowns and asked her to transfer them in small amounts to her sister Rosi Haala in Vienna. Goldschmidt had been informed by Golz-Goldlust of the imminent arrival of Kühnel in Vienna. Kühnel emphasises that Golz-Goldlust recommended Zapotecky and also gave him Zapotecky's office address and telephone number.

Golz-Goldlust has been married three times. Her present husband is a full Jew. One of her two former husbands was also a Jew. It is obvious that Golz-Goldlust has become mentally Judaized by her several marriages to Jews, and socialises with Jews, half-Jews and friends of Jews. It is therefore clear that Golz-Goldlust would without inner or outer pressure assist other Jews she knows to avoid state measures aimed at them by aiding their illegal emigration." And further: " Golz-Goldlust is in a very different racial category. She has mixed with great ease and enthusiasm in Jewish circles and has involved herself in the cause of her Jewish and half-Jewish friends. She has not acted under any pressure but from inner motives. Her desire to please her Jewish friends fits her aggressive approach towards the National Socialist state."

Among the 18 accused, Marianne and a further nine of the defendants were sentenced to death on May 18th, 1943 as "saboteurs and aides to enemies of the Reich ".

In June 1943 some of the accused launched an appeal against their death sentences. On July 19th, 1943 Marianne also made an appeal. The appeals were dealt with by senior attorney Dr. Ludwig at the Special German Court in Prague. Regarding Marianne he wrote:

"Marianne Golz-Goldlust was sentenced on May 18th, 1943 as a saboteur and enemy of the Reich as well as for aiding enemies of the Reich. She was subsequently sentenced to death and the loss of all civil rights for life. The special situation in the Protectorate of

Bohemia and Moravia make it necessary that the death sentence be implemented. I recommend that no pardon be given and that justice take its due course."

On September 21st, 1943 a further appeal, lodged with the Reichsminister of Justice in Berlin, was rejected.

"In the context of the court case at the Special German High Court in Prague of May 18th, 1943 I have ruled with the consent of the Führer and in agreement with the Reichsprotector of Bohemia and Moravia not to make use of my right of pardon in the cases of those who were sentenced to death."

Marianne's Death

"Prague III, October 8th, 1943

To the Attorney General at the Special German High Court in Prague

Re: Sentence against Zapotecky and others.

The court ruling against Marianne Golz-Goldlust was carried out on October 8th, 1943 at 16.44 p.m.

The procedure was as follows:

- 1.) Between presentation of the condemned and handover to the executioner: 3 seconds.*
- 2.) From handover to implementation: 6 seconds.*

There were no incidents.

Epilogue

What happened to the judges of Marianne, Albrecht and Hartmann, and the state attorneys, Ludwig and Zeynek after the war?

- Dr. Erwin Albrecht (born 21.2.1900 in Dusseldorf) became a lawyer in Saarbrücken. Between December 18th 1955 and January 2nd 1961 he was a member of the CDU (Christian Democrat party) in the state legislature of the Saarland. After his activities in Prague became public knowledge he was ousted from the CDU on December 6th 1958.
- Dr. Robert Hartmann (born 1.7.1901 in Heilberscheid) became a senior judge in Koenigswinter.
- Dr. Franz Ludwig (born 7.4..1899 in Mainz) became a state attorney in Dusseldorf.
- Dr. Wolfgang Zeynek (born 30.9.1908 in Prague) became a state judge in Nuremberg.
- The executioner Alois Weiss (born 16.10.1896 in Ruma, Croatia) lived in Germany, in Regensburg, after the war and was never tried for his wartime activities.

Marianne's Epilogue

On June 9th 1988 Marianne Golz-Goldlust was posthumously awarded the “Medal of the Righteous of the Nations” by the Board of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

In her honour an olive tree (sapling No. 806) was planted at the Yad Vashem Memorial Olive Grove on November 28th 1988.

כאילו קיים עולם חלא *** WHOEVER SAVES ONE LIFE IS AS THOUGH HE HAD SAVED THE ENTIRE WORLD *** כל החקים נמש אחת

תעודת כבוד Certificate of Honour

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT IN ITS SESSION OF 9 JUNE 1988 THE COMMISSION FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS, ESTABLISHED BY YAD VASHEM, THE HOLOCAUST HEROES & MARTYRS REMEMBRANCE AUTHORITY, ON THE BASIS OF EVIDENCE PRESENTED BEFORE IT HAS DECIDED TO HONOUR

Marianne Golz-Goldlust

WHO DURING THE HOLOCAUST PERIOD IN EUROPE RISKED HER LIFE TO SAVE PERSECUTED JEWS. THE COMMISSION, THEREFORE, HAS ACCORDED HER THE MEDAL OF THE RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS AND HAS AUTHORIZED HER TO PLANT A TREE IN HER NAME IN THE AVENUE OF THE RIGHTEOUS AT YAD VASHEM ON MOUNT OF REMEMBRANCE, JERUSALEM.

Jerusalem, Israel
28 NOVEMBER 1988

ינתן היום בירושלים, ישראל
יט כסלו תשפ"ט

כבוד הוועדה לציון חסידי אומות העולם
ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

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ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

YAD VASHEM
Har Hazikaron
Jérusalem



יד ושם
הר הזיכרון
ירושלים

תעודה ATTESTATION

Marianne Golz-Goldlust

ששפחה נפשה בכמה להצלת יהודים בתקופת השואה
QUI, AU PÉRIL DE SA VIE, A SAUVÉ DES JUIFS PENDANT
L'ÉPOQUE D'EXTERMINATION

נטעה עץ בשדרת חסידי אומות העולם
& PLANTÉ UN ARBRE DANS L'ALLÉE DES JUSTES

LE 28 Novembre 1988

ביום יט כסלו תשפ"ט

בשם רשות הזיכרון יד ושם
POUR L'INSTITUT DU SOUVENIR YAD VASHEM

בשם הוועדה לציון חסידי אומות העולם
POUR LA COMMISSION DES JUSTES

ונתתי להם יד ושם אשר לא יכרת יסעיהו נבי
JE LEUR DONNERAI UN NOM ÉTERNEL, QUI NE PÉRIRA PAS" ISAIE. 56



Erika Haala recalls²⁰

When did you hear about Marianne's arrest?

Well, first my mother was taken away by the Gestapo here in Vienna without any reason being given. The next day they let my mother go, and she knew then that it was about the assistance to the Jews leaving Prague and the money that had been transferred to them via her, because that's what she was questioned about. Then we heard from the lawyer, someone came to us and told us that Marianne had been arrested on the same day and that she was actually in prison and would be kept there because they were putting her up for trial, because they had evidence against her – they had no evidence against my mother.

They accused Marianne of helping Jews?

Marianne did help them, she would get advance information on who was under threat through connections or contacts in the Gestapo or the Deportation Office. The people who were next on the list would be informed and then brought over the border at night through some organization, and the money would be sent to my mother. There was just one time when my mother gave the person a payslip which had a personal message to him on it, and this person was arrested in Vienna, and that's how it all blew up. This man didn't have a "J" on his passport because he was only a half Jew, which was a real stroke of luck for my mother because she could say she didn't know he was a Jew, and that's why she was released. But of course they carried out investigations and it was Marianne who had signed the transfer, and that's how it blew up.

So your mother was released straight away?

Yes, a day later, presumably because her husband was a senior officer in the Wehrmacht.

And what was the reaction when it became clear that Marianne was not also released straight away?

We received secret letters, and I have to say, my mother, who was very, very attached to her sister – and this close relationship comes out in the letters – was a broken woman from that moment on. She never talked about it to me. She hid the secret letters away from me. Later she asked my stepfather to help Marianne and he had to refuse. He said it was pointless and would bring us all into danger. She never forgave him. It affected my parents' marriage very strongly. For example she was never able to bear Christmas after that because Marianne always came at Christmas, and Hans. The Christmas tree would be over in the other room and we always celebrated it together here in Böcklinstrasse, it was just so much part of her life that afterwards she couldn't get through Christmas without – well - a nervous breakdown. Later, after my stepfather died, I never stayed in Vienna over Christmas, to make it easier for her. It was always the memory of Marianne, it just broke her up.

You said that very little was spoken about the situation in the family. Does that mean that while Marianne was in prison nothing was said at all?

We almost never talked about private things. That's just how we were. I knew hardly anything about my father's death, either. My mother was a very closed person and had her own way of dealing with these things. It was only through Ronnie that I learned to ask questions that I had never even thought of before because it was so much a part of our lives to, well, suppress these things and keep them taboo.

²⁰ The interview with Marianne's niece, Erika Haala, known as Mimi, was conducted by Ronnie Golz and the German TV producer Hannelore Schaefer in July 1987.

How did you find out about Marianne's letters, then?

My mother did say that she received secret letters, but she never showed them to me.

When did you first hear about Marianne's correspondence with another inmate?

I heard about that after the war, when I heard that there was this book about Pankraz, but I only saw the letters when Ronnie brought me the translations. Because it had been published in Czech I had just assumed I would not understand. I had known about it, but never bothered to get hold of it.

Why not?

Perhaps because of this remarkable family habit of never intruding into private matters. I was always proud of Marianne, but I never made inquiries about her, nor about the affair. And if Ronnie hadn't come, I would never have known.

Did it surprise you that even on death row Marianne wanted to, as it were, fall in love?

It didn't surprise me at all. She had a temperamental need to mix with men, and the career she had chosen for herself was a very spiritual one, and erotically coloured too. It was certainly characteristic of her. I find it very credible, and not at all surprising.

How did you react when Ronnie brought you these researches?

That was a terrible night! It was a confrontation with a reality that I had only known vaguely about, only guessed at. I have only just found the secret letters.

How come you have only found the secret letters now?

My mother must have hidden them to avoid having to read them again. I only found them after a really desperate search, because it seemed impossible that Mummy would have destroyed them. There are the secret letters and some of the letters that she was allowed to write. I hadn't known that there were so many. And I only learned from the secret letters that my mother had actually sent things to her, had reacted at all to her letters, for she never said anything about it. But she hadn't been able to respond to the request to visit her. I myself made a very clumsy and inadequate attempt to get a travel permit. But wherever I made inquiries – and I didn't know which office to address myself to – they said everywhere: "Don't even try; you'll never get a permit." Marianne was always convinced we would be able to come, but there was a border between Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia which just couldn't be crossed. At least we couldn't cross it.

I'd like to ask you about something in the first letter Marianne wrote to Rosi on 24.1.43. She writes there: "How is Hellmuth? I hope he isn't angry with me." Why?

My stepfather didn't care much for my aunt. And with his position as a German officer, even though he was only in the reserve, he was certainly angry with Marianne because it would have been a taint on his honour.

This is from the third letter: "Darling Rosi, Here is my third letter, but none yet from you. Should I be fretting? Ah, but I have your lovely parcel now, full to bursting... I'm racking my brains trying to work out why Hellmuth wrote the address down."

It would have been institutional procedure to inform my father of the arrest. He was stationed in Paris. My mother never told me that she sent parcels. I only learned that from the letters. I would never have thought her capable of dealing with these things, going to the post and sending a parcel, because she usually left all such chores to me.

From the fourth letter: “I have received your letter, but why is it so short? Why so little news?... I’m longing to hear from you again... What was Hellmuth doing in Prague at all?”

I don’t know anything about that. I don’t know if he was in Prague. It’s possible that something went on there that I never got to hear about. I would imagine that Mummy did write, and that it didn’t get through. And perhaps she didn’t write. Perhaps there was good reason for her helplessness. With hindsight we know more about what was going on then. For us at the time it was something quite new to be handed over to a totalitarian power, to be afraid.

Is it not possible that Hellmuth went to Prague in March ’43, found out how serious the situation was there, sorted out a lawyer, sent the parcel to Marianne, came back to Vienna and explained everything to Rosi, that is to say, that Rosi didn’t know until then that Marianne was under threat of death from a show trial?

It wasn’t clear to us all here at first. Of course he was always coming back to Vienna on leave, but I never heard that he had been in Prague. It is possible, as you say. My mother withdrew more and more, and that she never attempted to go to Prague certainly fits with her temperament. I would never have attempted to travel there, either, if I had known it might be dangerous. I was certainly not experienced enough. And without the help of my stepfather I would never have managed it, and he was in Paris.

I want to come back to the secret letter of the end of June, beginning of July. Marianne writes there: “Hellmuth must be able to do something... Go to Berlin, to the highest judicial office. – Hellmuth must make a plea for clemency... The race with death has begun. Who will be the winner?”

That is something I can remember, it was the only time I witnessed a conversation between my parents about this possibility. My mother asked my stepfather to do something for Marianne. He replied that it was bad enough just having a sister-in-law like that, and that he couldn’t and wouldn’t do anything for her. And from then on my parents’ marriage was destroyed.

What did he mean, having “a sister-in-law like that”?

Well, it was unpleasant for a German officer to have someone in the family on trial for high treason. Presumably the Gestapo only kept my mother locked up for one night and never charged her because they knew what rank my father held in the Wehrmacht. He was the Kommandant of the railway troops in Paris west.

I’d like to quote once again from a secret letter. Marianne writes here: “I am beginning to despair, and not hearing from you, my last hope, is really frightful.

If all else fails, then ... bring me a strong remedy from your brother-in-law so that I can pre-empt this ghastly show. You’ve got to. You’ve got to help me one way or another.”

My stepfather’s brother was a pharmacist, and she surely meant poison. And in the end she did manage to poison herself. But I don’t think we would have got anything like that from my uncle, for professional reasons. You have to understand, this was an officer family from the days of the old Austrian empire, and my grandfather had been a general.

There was something in that mentality that we can hardly even imagine today – correctness, a sense of duty towards the state. They believed you could lead a life completely outside of politics. This was certainly true of my stepfather, and it caused conflict between us. We said you can't be an officer and apolitical, and he thought he could because that was how it had been under Kaiser and empire.

Now that we're talking politics, do you think that Marianne got involved for political reasons?

Yes and no. She was very conscious of the politics of the time, but she certainly didn't do it as an act of resistance, more out of simple humanity, I am sure. But not out of a naïve humanity that was unaware of the political world. That was certainly not the case with her. My mother was more naïve there.

But she sometimes writes in the letters that she has been naïve.

With her that would surely have been a form of self reflection, which implies more intellectuality.

In one of the secret letters she refers to you, when she mentions the court official Röllich and says of him: "It's not money he's interested in, it's the house."

I inherited a house in Berlin-Lichterfelde from my own father. This house, which my aunt had looked after in Berlin and which she naturally knew very well, would have been the only property they would have been able to dispose of.

In the last sentence it says: "Mimi must play her part as the young German girl. She must go to him personally."

How she thought I could do that I don't know. And "young German girl" certainly doesn't mean that I was a member of Hitler's League of German Girls, because I wasn't. It's more likely that she meant I was of an age where I might have a certain influence over men. I had been 17 when she had last seen me.

At the end of the next to last secret letter it says: "I urgently need a letter from you, I long for a few lines. Or am I already dead for you?"

She was never dead for my mother; even after the execution she was never dead for my mother. She always remained a dominating influence; she stood like a shadow between my parents. It's not for nothing that you hang a picture of your dead sister on the wall. My mother always sat just here in this place, so it wasn't just by chance that she hung the picture here. It was before her eyes every day. She really was attached to her sister. Why she didn't write more, or whether the letters didn't get through, I don't know.

What was your mother's reaction when she received the last letter and realised that Marianne was dead?

A messenger came from the lawyer. My mother wouldn't let him come right into the house. Everything happened in the hallway that I still remember. He told us that Marianne was dead. My mother turned round and fainted away. I had to see the man out myself. "Good. Thank you. Please go," I said. I didn't ask any further. Young people today are used to asking questions. But today people aren't as helpless as we were then.

Did the letter from Karel come after you knew that Marianne was dead?

Probably, but I knew nothing about this letter.

How did your mother come to terms with it all? Did she feel guilty?

I don't know. She never spoke about it to me. I would doubt, though, that she would have felt guilty. Because Marianne would have known from her sister's character that she couldn't write, or only a little. She knew her sister very well. It might well be the case, also, that my mother really was torn between her duty to her sister and her duty to her family, that is to say, her husband and daughter. Not to drag us into it or endanger us. I think my mother did what it lay in her strength to do, and that she suffered for it nonetheless.

Did it change your mother's life?

She certainly became quieter, more inactive than she had been before. She didn't lead a life of her own any more.

In the next to last secret letter Marianne says goodbye to her sister and writes: "It was not to be." I have the impression that she understood Rosi's limited capacities very well, and was accepting here the way things had panned out. Sad but true.

It is understandable, isn't it, that one has hopes, and that one calls for help from others, even when one knows they cannot do it? And she did say in her reflections that Rosi couldn't do it.

Did you talk much about Marianne in the years afterwards?

No, almost not at all. I've already told you I only learned how she died by chance, and through my father's sister. My mother never spoke to me about that, either.

Did you have any contact with Ronnie's father after the war?

Yes, Uncle Hans turned up at our house once. He was in Vienna with his wife, Ronnie's mother, and there was an incident. Mother was angry and said she didn't want any further contact with him. He had married again and she couldn't forgive him for that. We had a fight about it because I disagreed. There was only one meeting, and the contact was broken.

I imagine the visit to this house would have set him aback, because it looks the same today as it did before the war and must surely have touched off memories. These were things that he himself couldn't come to grips with after the war. Perhaps he, too, didn't want to continue the contact?

That could be. It upset me. I had found my uncle again, but after this fight we never spoke about it again. I never pursued it.

How did you react when Ronnie suddenly telephoned you and wanted to hear Marianne's story?

I knew straight away from the name that I was speaking to, Uncle Hans' son. Actually I was very excited. I was happy, perhaps because I have no relatives and thought this would bring me new contact.

Didn't it frighten you suddenly to come face to face with the past?

No. Certainly it was difficult reading the letters again, but it didn't cause me to lose sleep or have heart flutters. Perhaps my career as a journalist had left me too hard boiled.

**You also agreed immediately to cooperate on the making of this documentary.
Did you have no fears about remembering this time, this story?**

It is far more important to me, even though it is hard, to bear witness to this time.

Erna Steiner recalls²¹

Frau Steiner, are you related to Emilie and Helene Steiner, who were accused along with you at that time?

No, at that time my name was Langer. I wasn't married yet. We are not related at all, we just knew each other. I'm not that old! I didn't get married till after the war.

Frau Golz was a client of my mother. My mother had a dressmaker's shop in Prague, we had emigrated there.

When was that?

In July 1938, after Austria was incorporated into Germany in 1938. She was a client. And my mother didn't know that I was in the Resistance movement. Poor thing, she wouldn't have been able to cope with it.

I only knew Frau Golz through six corners – our list of names was in code. I never knew she was called Golz till she became a client of my mother. Then she was Frau Golz to me.

Marianne came to your mother for dressmaking? Where was your mother's shop?

My mother didn't have a shop. She worked from home. Marianne always came to us alone, without anyone else.

Marianne lived in the 7th district at 4 Strossmayer Strasse. Did your mother live in the area?

No, no, we were direct in the centre, on Wenzelsplatz.

You recognised her and then realised...

I recognised her. And I said to her, "Not a word to my mother." She was a wonderful woman and she held her tongue. But then she made a terrible mistake. She had got people out of Theresienstadt into Switzerland and beyond, she had got people out of the concentration camp under the cover of SS people.

She had connections with SS people in the Gestapo headquarters in Prague?

Yes, yes, also.

Did she go to Theresienstadt herself? Did she fetch people back from there?

No, no.

So she arranged for them to be got out?

We were there to get a couple out, but they stayed in Prague. They had a dog and were so worried what would happen to the dog if they left.

Just a moment. They were going to be deported, they lived in Prague, and you were going to rescue them so that they...

...could go to Switzerland. And they had a dog.

²¹ Erna Steiner was arrested together with Marianne. Conversation with Ronnie Golz on November 5th 1989 in Vienna.

Do you know these people's names?

No, I haven't a clue. The dog got lost and forgotten of course, and Frau Golz said she would take it. And that was her downfall. Do you understand? Marianne rang and explained that she had taken the dog, and that she noticed that everybody was watching her.

There are photos of Marianne with two terriers.

I don't know about that. But the dog that she took over in the meanwhile – it was only a matter of a couple of days – attracted the attention of the Gestapo. "How come the woman has the dog that belonged to the Jewish couple?"

How did the Gestapo know about the couple with the dog? Informers?

No idea! They just knew! Informers everywhere. Everywhere! You have to understand, the city of Prague was the first Jew-free city, and it was presented to Hitler as a gift for his birthday in the year 1942. Our every step was watched. We knew that for certain. But the main reason for the arrest must have been because Marianne was in contact with her husband in London.

How do you know about this contact?

I knew about it because letters went out, in code, and there were contacts with President Benes.

Through my father? Was there regular contact between her and my father?

Yes, yes. She was in regular contact with him. That's why she was suspected. You see, she was Christian, as far as I know, and your father was a Jew and that's why he left. And at that time, in 1939, nobody knew the war would go further. Marianne once told me – in great secrecy of course – that she was in regular contact with her husband and that her husband made use of this for the press. She fed him, so to speak, with news of what was going on in the country.

Do you know anything about the relationship with my father?

Marianne gave us to understand in a roundabout sort of way that perhaps her marriage was falling apart. The way I understood what she said was that after the war the marriage would be finished. But they had the same political beliefs. There was still, let's say, a spiritual affinity between them. That's all I know.

So Marianne was still intent on helping Jews to get away? It was her main purpose?

Yes. Always. Her main purpose.

In the judgement it is stated that she naturally tried to present herself as only peripherally involved.

We agreed from the beginning that if anything blew up she would take everything on herself. She covered everyone. And there were a lot of us - eight or ten at the arrest.

Did the Thursday circle always meet regularly?

Well, it was a Thursday meeting when I went the first time with my mother.

It wasn't a meeting of resistance people?

No, no. At her place it was a social meeting. And my mother said, “Yes, we’ll come then, that way I can bring you the blouse directly.” And we got there at half past eight and there were several people there, and the Gestapo opened the doors and said, “We’ve been expecting you!”

Marianne had probably said who would be coming because it was a normal invitation and different people came. There were certainly eight of us. I hardly got the chance to meet everybody. It was over already when we came in. We hadn’t been in the flat very long when we were taken away.

The Gestapo were already in the flat and took everyone away?

Everyone away. We were taken into custody, but different places. Marianne was taken together with my mother, I believe.

Marianne was first in Pankraz, and then she was moved to the women’s prison in Rügen.

We were in the political section and so we had it much worse than the murderers and criminals because it was the Gestapo section. She was probably there with us.

Can you tell me why your name doesn’t appear in the evidence?

Marianne took everything on herself, and we were the innocent lambs who happened to be arrested at a social evening. There were several interrogations, and after Marianne said “The other people had nothing to do with me, they are my guests,” it was over. We were released.

How long were you held? One night?

No. We were inside a couple of weeks.

Did you learn anything from the newspapers about Marianne’s trial?

Nothing! Mind you, it was a different situation in the protectorate. We felt we were being screened off there. It was much worse for refugees in the protectorate than in the German Reich.

But you did hear about Marianne’s execution?

Yes, we did. But not from the newspaper.

Marianne was a personality, and you see, when someone says to you, “It’s OK, I’ll take everything on me,” well they must be incredibly strong to carry it off. Because we were certainly eight or ten or even twelve, I just don’t remember any more. We were a collection of people who all got arrested, and the danger then was if someone said anything different.

And she said to my mother, “If when you’re delivering me something or are just visiting and something happens, remember you only know me through business, not in any other way.” And so we went to deliver the blouse to her on this understanding.

In the protectorate the walls had ears, so to speak. You have to understand, the Germans were suspect, the Jews were suspect, the Czechs were suspect. You never knew, when you talked to anyone, whether they might betray you. You couldn’t trust anybody. We lived on a volcano. You couldn’t even trust your own family, it was terrible.

APPENDIX

Arrest of Josef Goldschmidt in Vienna on November 19th 1943^{22 23}

Secret Police²⁴

Police Station Vienna

Bulletin Nr. 7

20 – 23.11.1942

Classified

On 19.11.1942 the Jew

Josef Goldschmidt

formerly bank clerk,

born 28.8.1896

Protectorate citizen, married,

Address: Flat 9, Seumegasse, Prague XII.



was arrested. In July 1942 he went to Vienna in secret, without official authorisation and under a false name, in order to avoid formal evacuation. In Vienna Goldschmidt stayed unregistered at the home of

Karoline Hilfreich *née* Schweiz, of German blood,

Housemaid,

born 3.1.1896

German citizen, Roman Catholic, married

Address: Flat 5, Adolf Kirchlasse, Vienna III.

He paid her 180 Reich marks per month as compensation. Hilfreich knew that she was aiding a fugitive Jew. She was arrested on 21.11.1942. She has no record of criminal, police, or national defence offences. She is being held in protective custody. Goldschmidt was transferred to Prague State Police Office, where a charge had already been filed against him for smuggling Jews out of the Protectorate.



Karoline Hilfreich was photographed and registered by the Gestapo on November 30th, 1942. She was charged with harbouring Jews and was held at Ravensbrück Concentration Camp till October 20th, 1943.

²² Source: Austrian Federal Administration Office, Vienna.

²³ On the evening of the same day Marianne and the other people attending the “Thursday society” were arrested at 4 Strossmayer Strasse in Prague. Source: Austrian Federal Administration Office, Vienna

²⁴Gestapo = Geheime Staats Polizei: Secret State Police

Indictment by State Prosecutor at the Special German Court in Prague²⁵

Chief State Prosecutor
 Special German Court
 4 Kramarschufcr
 Prague III.
 File Refs. 8Js64/43 8Kl.S. 90/43-4-989/43

Prague, 21.4.43

1. Ottokar Zapotecky
2. Ladislav Dlesk
3. Emilie Flunk
4. Svatopluk Cila
5. Josef Dryak
6. Marie Casenka
7. Walter Lewit
8. Yvona Lewit
9. Ruth Lewit
10. Helena Steiner
11. Emilie Steiner
12. Marianne Golz-Goldlust
13. Viktor Kühnel
14. Josef Goldschmidt
15. Erwin Samek
16. Margarethe Samek
17. Jarmila Glavin
18. Erich Machleidt



I present the following charges:

That the above charged 1-9, 12, and 14-16 have committed sabotage since summer 1942, continuously and in association with each other, in Bohemia, Vienna and Leipzig, by granting shelter or otherwise helping persons whom they knew or could assume from the circumstances were committing high treason, or by not appropriately informing the authorities;

That the above charged 1-8, 12 and 14 have illegally crossed borders or caused others to do so and thereby committed criminal acts according to Article 12 of the Sabotage Act, § 1 & 2 of the Treason Act for the Defence of the State of 3.7.42, §10 of the penal law on passport fraud, § 47, 49 of the penal law of the Reich.

Evidence supplied:

1. The confession of the accused.
2. Witness Röllich, Criminal Commissar, Gestapo, Prague.

²⁵ From: R. Karel, *Zaluji*,

Result of preliminary inquiry:

The accused Zapotecky and Dlesk agreed to help Jews to escape. Zapotecky had known the Lewits a long time. Walter Lewit is a half Jew and when he married the full Jewess Yvonne he became a full Jew himself. The Lewits were summoned to report to the collection point in April 42 prior to evacuation. They decided to evade evacuation at any price and joined up with Zapotecky for this purpose.

Zapotecky had promised them help and brought the Lewits to his friend Flunk. Flunk was informed exactly of the circumstances. She worked in the Trade and Industry Department of the Civil Service in Prague. Because house searches had been instigated after the assassination of SS Section-leader Heydrich, she hid the Lewits under a desk in the offices of the Prague Magistrate for three nights. Walter Lewit received a false passport from Zapotecky in 1942 under the name of Dlesk. Yvonne Lewit had manufactured this passport. At the beginning of 1942 Lewit was hidden in a work force transport by Zapotecky and taken to Leipzig. Zapotecky had arranged this through the person responsible for the work force transfer, the accused Cila. It was he who smuggled Lewit to Leipzig, even though he knew that he was a Jew and therefore not permitted to cross the border. In Leipzig Cila handed Lewit over to the accused Dryak. Dryak knew that Lewit was a fugitive Jew. Despite this he procured him a position in the office of a machine tool factory. Yvonne Lewit stayed with Frau Flunk, who received 150 Czech crowns per day from her. When she heard from Dryak that her husband had arrived safely in Leipzig, she decided to follow him to Leipzig.

With the help of the accused Casenka the accused Yvonne Lewit crossed the border on 25.7.42 and travelled to Leipzig, where she made contact with her husband. Dryak procured work for her, too. He received a reward for his efforts. Dryak also knew of the Lewits' intention to escape to Switzerland. For this purpose Lewit deposited 6000 Swiss francs in Switzerland. Ruth Lewit, the sister of Walter Lewit, visited Flunk and was informed of all the details.

Zapotecky and Dryak had therefore made an agreement with the Jews, the Lewits, to help them avoid deportation. They knew that ID cards would be required for this. With their assistance Jews were brought into the Reich and where necessary jobs were provided for them.

The agreement was that Dlesk should enter a relationship with Helene Steiner, who worked at the Protectorate Printing Office, and persuade her to steal blank identity cards. At first she refused, but eventually Zapotecky and Dryak succeeded in persuading Steiner to steal 3 blank ID cards.

With the knowledge and agreement of Steiner's mother, Emilie Steiner, she gave the stolen documents to Zapotecky, who originally intended to pay her 1000 Czech crowns for each one. But Emilie Steiner demanded in addition clothes, shoes and groceries.

The Jew Goldschmidt was ordered to present himself on 9.7.42 at an assembly point at the Prague Trade Fair Hall for evacuation. He knew that the Lewits had evaded evacuation by fleeing with the assistance of Zapotecky. He likewise turned to Zapotecky, who advised him to cross the border into Austria at a particular point and brought Goldschmidt's luggage to the railway station. Goldschmidt crossed the border at Winterberg and travelled on to Vienna, where he was offered lodging with a certain "helper". Goldschmidt had already known the accused Golz for a long time. Golz knew of his flight and knew also where she could reach him. She occasionally visited him. In August 1942 Goldschmidt met the Sameks in Vienna, a married couple with whom he was already acquainted. The husband is a Jew. He told him about his escape. Samek then

gave him first 2000 Reich marks and later another 400. The accused Margarete Samek also knew that Goldschmidt was staying illegally in Vienna.

The accused Kühnel is a half-breed of the first grade. When he married a full Jewess in 1939 he became a full Jew. In October 1942 his mother and sister were arrested by the Gestapo. Fearing arrest likewise, Kühnel fled from his home to Machleidt, who knew of his decision to escape and offered him lodging.

Kühnel then turned to Golz. She took him to Zapotecky, who arranged the illegal journey and set up a meeting between Kühnel and Dlesk and his girlfriend Glavinova. These two helped Kühnel illegally to cross the “green” border at Lundenburg. Golz assisted and supported Kühnel in every possible way.

In November 1942 Zapotecky, Dlesk and others among the accused further attempted to help other Jews to flee from the Protectorate. However, one of these Jews was under observation by the Gestapo, and thus the accused were caught in the act. It appears that Zapotecky, Dlesk and Golz were involved on a much larger scale than known in smuggling people.

A Jew who evades evacuation is acting as an enemy of the Reich. The accused, insofar as they are accused in this context, were fully aware of the circumstances of their actions. All of them, including the fugitive Jews, knew one another and helped one another. All in all the hostile attitude of the accused towards the Reich is further emphasised by the statement of Kühnel that at the “Thursday Society” meetings in Golz’ flat the Reich was slandered in every possible manner.

It is therefore decreed that:

- a) the trial should take place before the Special German Court in Prague,
- b) the protective custody during interrogation of the accused is ended,
- c) the accused Zapotecky, Dlesk, Flunk, Cila, Walter Lewit, Yvonne Lewit, Golz-Goldlust, Goldschmidt and Erwin Samek be provided with defence counsel, insofar as they do not already have legal representation.

Signature: Dr. Ludwig

Extracts from the Judgement of the Special German Court²⁶

In the name of the German people

In the criminal case 8K.Ls.90/43-4-989 against

1. the office clerk Ottokar ZAPOTECKY from Prague, born 21.6.1899 in Schlan, citizen of the Protectorate,
2. the pastry baker Ladislaus DLESK from Vienna, born 9.8.1918 in Prague, citizen of the Protectorate,
3. the cleaner Emilie FLUNK née Pasensky from Prague, born 8.12.1905 in Bereschau, citizen of the Protectorate,
4. the construction supervisor Swatopluk CILA from Prague, born 19.9.1902 in Jungbunzlau, citizen of the Protectorate,
5. the lithographer Josef Stanislaus DRYAK from Leipzig, born 17.5.1910 in Brandeis. Citizen of the Protectorate,
6. the unskilled worker Marie CASENSKY from Prague, born 28.11.1917 in Miklitz, citizen of the Protectorate,
7. the Jew Walter LEVIT from Leipzig, born 24.12.1913 in Pilsen, citizen of the Protectorate,
8. the wife Jewess Yvonne LEVIT née Ehrlich from Leipzig, born 22.12.1911 in Vienna, citizen of the Protectorate,
9. the office clerk Ruth LEVIT from Pilsen, born 26.1.1919 in Pilsen, citizen of the Protectorate,
10. the worker Helene STEINER from Prague, born 21.1.1926, citizen of the Protectorate,
11. the servant Emilie STEINER née Bily from Prague, born 24.2.1907, citizen of the Protectorate,
12. the private person, Marianne GOLZ-GOLDLUST née Belokostolka from Prague, born 31.1.1895 in Vienna, stateless,
13. the bank clerk Jew Viktor KÚHNEL from Vienna, born 10.1.1903 in Königgratz, citizen of the Protectorate,
14. the Jew Josef GOLDSCHMIDT from Prague, born 28.8.1896 in Prague, citizen of the Protectorate,
15. the Jew Erwin SAMEK from Prague, born 14.6.1884 in Prague, Slovakian citizen,
16. the wife Margarethe SAMEK née Schorbogen from Prague, born 20.12.1900 in Berlin, Slovakian citizen,
17. Jarmila GLAVINA née Janulik from Vienna, born 12.3.1921 in Lundenberg, Italian citizen,
18. the insurance clerk Erich MACHLEDT from Prague, born 5.5.1909 in Maltbeuern, citizen of the German Reich,

at present all being held in the German prison at Prague-Pankraz on criminal charges for crimes committed against Article 1.2 of the Sabotage Act.

At a public hearing on 18th May, 1943 of the fourth chamber of the Special German Court in Prague at which the following state judges presided:

²⁶ Source: Ministry of the Interior in Prague and German federal archives in Koblenz

HARTMANN as chairman
 DR. ODEHNAL and
 DR. ALBRECHT as deputies
 State attorney DR. ZEYNEK as Official State Attorney,

the following verdict was pronounced:

- I. The following have been sentenced to death and the loss of all civil rights: the accused Walter Levit, Yvonne Levit and Goldschmidt, as saboteurs and enemies of the Reich for avoiding evacuation and keeping themselves hidden after leaving the country illegally, furthermore the accused Goldschmidt also for aiding enemies of the Reich, the accused Zapotecky, Flunk, Dlesk, Cila, Dryak, Erwin Samek and Golz-Goldlust as saboteurs for aiding enemies of the Reich.
- II. The following accused are sentenced for helping enemies of the Reich in lesser ways: The accused Casensky to four years' hard labour and four years' loss of all civil rights, the accused Ruth Levit to two years' hard labour and 2 years' loss of all civil rights.
- III. The accused Kühnel is condemned to one year's imprisonment for illegally leaving the country, the accused Glavinova to six months' imprisonment for aiding in passport fraud.
- IV. The accused Helene Steiner is sentenced as a minor to four months' imprisonment for theft, the accused Emilie Steiner is condemned to eight months' imprisonment for receiving stolen goods.
- V. The accused Margarethe Samek and the accused Machleidt are to be released.
- VI. The property of those condemned to death will be confiscated.
- VII. All the accused sentenced to prison will have the five months of custody credited to them, the accused Helene Steiner will be released as her prison sentence is covered by the time she has been held in custody.
- VIII. The costs of the trial will be borne by the Reich in those cases where the accused have not been sentenced; the remaining costs will be borne by the accused.

The court ruling may be enacted.

Prague, 25th May 1943

I. The Character of the accused

(...)

The accused Golz-Goldlust – aged 48 – was born in Vienna, the daughter of cable engineer Belokostolsky, and attended elementary school and then grammar school there up to the age of 14. From 1918 to 1933 she performed on stage in several theatres as an operetta singer and in this capacity travelled frequently abroad. She is stateless. The accused has been married four times. Her current husband, a full Jew, emigrated to Poland before the establishment of the Protectorate. There have also been two full Jews among the accused's previous husbands. The accused has no income of her own. She was living in Prague on an allowance in the amount of 1500 Czech crowns a month, which was paid regularly by her mother and her sister, resident in Vienna.

(...)

II. Description of the Crimes Committed

Towards the end of April 1942 the accused Levits received the order from the Central Office for the Regulation of the Jewish Question to report to the central assembly point at the Prague Trade Fair Hall. They had been awaiting the order and had decided from its inception not to obey it but to evade their expected evacuation.

To this end they decided to use the services of the accused Zapotecky. The Levits had been introduced to Zapotecky long before through the mediation of their house servant. Zapotecky was involved to some extent in the trading of black market food and had delivered poultry to the accused from time to time. In this context they had already discussed with him how to evade the expected evacuation order of the Central Office (...)

The Levits sent Zapotecky to Goldschmidt, to get his advice. They trusted Goldschmidt, as did other Jews and friends of Jews, as being especially experienced in these matters, which the Levits had resolved to undertake. At the time of the first evacuations Goldschmidt had already informed his circle of friends, and especially Golz-Goldlust whom he knew well, that he would never let himself be evacuated. (...)

The accused Golz-Goldlust had known Goldschmidt since 1940 and often visited him. Goldschmidt lived in great style and often gave parties at his house with large numbers of guests. It was at his house that Golz-Goldlust met the accused Zapotecky. She was able to learn from various conversations at Goldschmidt's home that Zapotecky was involved in illegally helping Jews to escape over the Protectorate border. She learned from a conversation Goldschmidt held with another Jew that the accused Zapotecky could be reached at the local government office on telephone number 704. She noted this number. When Golz-Goldlust heard that Goldschmidt had been listed for a transport she visited him. Goldschmidt had gathered a large number of people at his house, about 20 all told, when Golz-Goldlust arrived. On this occasion Golz-Goldlust asked Goldschmidt whether he intended to go on this transport, and Goldschmidt answered her evasively by asking her to take his dogs for him. Golz-Goldlust conceded to this request. About two weeks later Golz-Goldlust received a long distance telephone call from Vienna from her sister, who lives there, informing her that Goldschmidt had paid her a visit. Goldschmidt also telephoned her. From then on several letters were exchanged between the two accused. Goldschmidt informed Golz-Goldlust that he could be reached under the name Hutka at 5 Adolf Kirch Gasse in Vienna V.

At the end of October 1942 the mother and sister of the accused Kühnel were arrested by the Protectorate police. Kühnel learned the next day that his mother and sister had been arrested because they were not wearing the Jewish star on their clothing. Kühnel was very upset and feared that measures might be taken against him, too, although no reason for such measures was known. The first word Kühnel had heard about his family had come from his mother's house-servant, who was also the house-servant of Golz-Goldlust. Golz-Goldlust had a long-standing friendship with Kühnel's sister. Kühnel had received an invitation through his sister in July 1942 to attend the social evenings that Golz-Goldlust held every 2 weeks in her flat. Kühnel had attended 3 or 4 of these evenings. On these occasions Kühnel got to know the attitudes of Golz-Goldlust well enough to believe that she would offer him understanding and support in his situation. He therefore turned to Golz-Goldlust, who immediately offered to start inquiries in the Jewish community about the fate of Kühnel's relatives. Kühnel was so upset and frightened that he did not want to return to his flat. Golz-Goldlust therefore took him into her own home and allowed him to spend the night there. When Kühnel learned the next day that a house search had taken place in his sister's home he decided to flee. In taking this decision he was relying on Golz-Goldlust's support. And Golz-Goldlust did indeed prove ready to help. She made use of the knowledge that she had obtained from Goldschmidt. She gave Kühnel the name of Zapotecky, which she still remembered, and also gave him the telephone number at which Zapotecky could be

reached. Golz-Goldlust advised Kühnel that he should get Zapotecky to assist him across the Protectorate border. She promised Kühnel that she would ensure that that he could stay with Goldschmidt in Vienna. On 29th October Kühnel contacted Zapotecky at the local government office and informed him of his intention to leave the Protectorate illegally. Kühnel presented his identity papers to the accused Zapotecky and mentioned Goldschmidt, as Golz-Goldlust had directed him to do. Zapotecky said he would think it over and asked Kühnel to come back the next day. The next day Zapotecky declared he was prepared to introduce Kühnel to a man who would get him over the border illegally. After Zapotecky's consent, Kühnel handed over 20,000 Czech crowns to Golz-Goldlust with the request that when he arrived in Vienna it be handed back to him in small amounts at the address of Rosa Haala, the sister of Golz-Goldlust. (...)

Kühnel then travelled on to Vienna, where he immediately sought out Goldschmidt. Goldschmidt had already been informed by Golz-Goldlust of Kühnel's impending arrival. He gave Kühnel one night's lodging and then took him to a landlord, from whom he had already rented a room for Kühnel in the name of Karl Krug. Kühnel stayed there without registering with the police.

He then sought out Frau Haala, the sister of Golz-Goldlust, brought her the letters of recommendation that she had given him, and received, as Golz-Goldlust had promised, a first allowance in the amount of 100 Reich marks.(...)

III. The Guilt of the Accused

The accused Walter Levit admits that he wanted to evade evacuation because he has been misled by unconfirmed rumours about the conditions in the Jewish camps. He admits that he had received the identity papers of the accused Dlesk and forged a signature on them before the attempt on the life of the Deputy Protector of the Reich and that he had had no intention of using it; he had expected to be placed in a Czech workers' camp in Leipzig where he would not need identity papers as he would be provided with an employment book, which would suffice him during his stay in Leipzig. As he further states, the accused Cila made clear to him after he arrived that he must have citizenship papers in order for the labour exchange to find him a job and so he was forced to make use after all of the false identity papers for Dlesk. He states that when he handed the papers over to Cila he told him frankly about his situation and how his wife had stayed behind in Prague. Frau Levit confirms all these facts so far as they relate to herself and her husband. She states that the identity papers that Frau Flunk had given her before she crossed the border were worthless to her and that she gave them back to Časensky. She states further that she received the blank identity papers of Svoboda from Dryak; therefore Dryak had removed all the entries beforehand. She had then filled out this apparently blank form and given herself the alias Legit. She admits to having already deposited 6,000 francs in Switzerland to facilitate her further plans.

The accused Ruth Levit admits openly that she knew that her brother and sister-in-law, the Levits, stayed at the home of Flunk and Zapotecky until their flight to Leipzig. She states that she advised them against this flight, but was confronted with her sister-in-law's refusal. She would, she says, have felt like an animal if she had reported her family to the police.

The accused Goldschmidt also states that he had wanted to evade evacuation by fleeing. He also admits that he knew he should have reported Frau Levit to the police, as he knew of the Act of 3.7.1942 prohibiting the support of actions against the Reich. He has in no way contradicted the admissions of his co-accused, which incriminate him.

The accused Kühnel admits that after hearing of the arrest of his mother and sister he was too panicked to be able to think clearly; he had completely lost his head, he says, and could only focus on leaving Prague as quickly as possible. He states expressly that

Frau Golz-Goldlust recommended him to Zapotecky and named his official position as well as his telephone number. (...)

The accused Frau Golz-Goldlust tried to dismiss her connection with Goldschmidt by declaring that Goldschmidt was considered in Jewish circles to be a Gestapo informer, something that she had also heard elsewhere. She claims to have believed that it was quite possible that Goldschmidt went to Vienna with the knowledge and approval of the Gestapo. However Golz-Goldlust could definitely not have believed this. She herself has described how Goldschmidt invited large numbers of Jews and Jew-friendly people to his house. If Goldschmidt had really been suspected of being an informer for the Gestapo, he would have been shunned by the Jews. Further evidence against Golz-Goldlust's erroneous opinion lies in her statement that she had positive knowledge that Goldschmidt had been ordered to the assembly point at the Trade Fair Hall. She could also have assumed that Goldschmidt was unwilling to follow the order from his evasive answer to her question as to whether he would. It is also unbelievable that Goldschmidt should have gone to visit Golz-Goldlust's sister in Vienna without her knowledge or consent, as Golz-Goldlust claims. If Golz-Goldlust had really believed that Goldschmidt was a Gestapo informer, she would certainly never have played into the Gestapo's hands by sending Kühnel to him, if according to her quite plausible admissions up to then she had really wanted to help him. Golz-Goldlust, undoubtedly the most intelligent among the female accused, clearly recognised the role that Zapotecky played in Goldschmidt's circles. This is proved by the fact that she referred Kühnel to Zapotecky.

It is evident from her several marriages to Jews that Golz-Goldlust is thoroughly Judaised in spirit, and from the fact that she socialises with Jews, half-Jews and Jew-friendly people, and from the fact that she maintained contact with Goldschmidt after he left for Vienna, and indeed sent Kühnel to him, it can be deduced that she did indeed without any outer or inner compulsion or concern for the future give help to other Jews among her acquaintance to avoid the state measures by emigrating, even though with her superior intelligence she must have been very clear of the consequences of such action. Golz-Goldlust's attempt to present herself as a naïve, deluded woman can only be described as a bad theatrical performance. (...)

IV. Judicial Appraisal of the Offences

In order to avoid repetition there needs to be discussion from the start as to who in the given case is to be considered an enemy of the Reich, what behaviour is to be considered hostile to the Reich according to the Reich Protector's Act for Bohemia and Moravia of 3rd July 1942 on the prevention of support for activities hostile to the Reich (Page 182 of the Act), who is to be considered a saboteur, and what acts are to be considered sabotage according to the Reich Protector's Act for Bohemia and Moravia of 26th August 1939 (Pages 83, 84) against acts of sabotage and according to the stipulations of the Act of 11.1.1940 (Pages 3,4).

A Jew who eludes evacuation is an enemy of the Reich. The Jews in National Socialist Germany represent a political collective. They are a part of international Jewry, which treats the German Reich as an enemy power. Jewry not only desires the defeat of Germany in the current war but also strives for it with all means at its disposal. This attitude of international Jewry is widely shared by the Jews in Germany. The collective of Jews in the Greater German Reich therefore stands as a danger, which must be met with national political measures. These measures must be hard and uncompromising in war, in order to avoid a threat to the internal and external front. An essential means to meet the danger that Jewry poses is the evacuation and concentration of the Jews in certain specially established places. If a Jew evades such a measure he will no longer be able to maintain a latent hostile attitude towards the state, but will be compelled to take active steps, otherwise he will be unable to reach the goal he aspires to. If he does not obey the

transport order he is forced to go into hiding in order to avoid arrest. He will use every available means to this end and make no distinctions between legal and illegal means. He cannot exist in hiding without the support of other people. This is already apparent from the regulations pertaining to a wartime economy. The Jew on the run can only expect help from those elements of society that are also hostile to the State. This hostility to the State manifests itself in indifference to and unconcern with the political necessities, which demand the evacuation of the Jews. Political indifference is itself a crime. The extent of the dangers posed by an unidentified Jew appearing in Germany in the middle of a war can be seen in the case of Levit. After eluding evacuation he managed to find work in the buying office of a machine tool factory in the German Reich. There was no need to inquire whether this machine tool factory supplies the war front or the domestic market, since the whole German economy is now geared to the demands of the war, and so there are only war-related industries still functioning. In the not insignificant post that Levit took up in the Leipzig factory he was able without difficulty to obtain information which could be useful to the enemy if it were passed on. The danger that such information could be passed on is evident from the mere fact that the Levits had deposited 6000 francs in Switzerland, clearly indicating their plans to flee still further abroad.

It follows of necessity from such activities that Jews on the run cause disruption to public life and to the economy, and it follows further that not only the Jew who evades evacuation, but also those who help him in his actions, are saboteurs according to the Act of 26th August 1939.

Even the Jew who does not enter the economy illegally because he has sufficient means at his disposal, or such means are placed at his disposal from elsewhere, must violate state security measures in order to be able to exist while in hiding. He must form alliances with like-minded elements to maintain his hidden presence or to escape abroad. When abroad he will furnish the agitation against Germany with new material, and join the ranks of the Jews fighting actively against Germany. This is particularly true in the case of Goldschmidt.

From this perspective it is apparent that Levit, Goldschmidt, Zapotecky, Flunk, Dlesk, Cila, Dryak, Erwin Samek and Golz-Goldlust are guilty of the most serious crimes. (...)

What holds in the case of Erwin Samek must also apply to Golz-Goldlust, who obtained knowledge of Goldschmidt's flight from him personally at the very latest after his arrival in Vienna. It cannot be disregarded that Golz-Goldlust very probably knew before he fled that Goldschmidt was unwilling to be evacuated when ordered. In any event, it was Golz-Goldlust's duty to report Goldschmidt's presence in Vienna to the authorities. It is the Court's conviction that Golz-Goldlust was fully aware of this duty in spite of her denial. Not only did she neglect her duty to inform the police, she also offered the accused Goldschmidt every assistance in her power. Because of her intellectual capacity Golz-Goldlust was in a position to recognise the hostile activity of Zapotecky and therefore to recognise him as an enemy of the Reich. She not only did not report him, she used his services to help the accused Kühnel commit passport fraud. Golz-Goldlust must therefore be penalised for not reporting the accused Goldschmidt and Zapotecky according to §1 of the Act of 3rd July 1943, and for aiding and abetting an act of passport fraud.

V. Fixing the Level of Punishment

Golz-Goldlust is a quite different personality type to Flunk. She moved in Jewish circles with a bustling agility and stood up for her Jewish and half-Jewish friends. She acted, as already emphasised, not out of compulsion but out of an inner inclination. Her efforts to be accommodating to her Jewish friends imply her hostile attitude towards the

National Socialist State. There is a distinct spiritual affinity here to the particularly revolting personality of Goldschmidt. Even though it cannot be proved that Golz-Goldlust expected material advantages from her active involvement in the Jewish cause, there can be no doubt that she desired to achieve such advantages. She loved making a grand entry and playing the role of the great lady even though her financial means consisted only of the modest support afforded to her by her mother and sister. She must therefore have had other sources of income. Of the 20,000 Czech crowns that Kühnel had deposited with her, she had only transferred 5,000. Whether she would have transferred the rest remains unanswered. Golz-Goldlust does not seem to have had any qualms, either, about her relationship with Zapotecky, whom she met through Goldschmidt, even though she had recognised Zapotecky to be an enemy of the Reich. In these circumstances it cannot be assumed that this is a minor offence against the Act of 3rd July 1942 and the accused Golz-Goldlust is therefore also found guilty of an act hostile to the Reich and sentenced to death. (...)

According to Article II of the Order of the Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia of 26.8.1939 concerning acts of sabotage all the accused who are found guilty and condemned to death are to have their property confiscated.

The awarding of costs follows § 465, 467 of the Penal Code.

Signed: Hartman
Dr. Odehnal
Dr. Albrecht

Petitions for Clemency²⁷

Chief State Prosecutor
 German Ministry of Justice
8 KLS 90/43

Prague, 19th June 1943

To the Prosecutor General
 German Supreme Court
in Prague.

Re: Petition for clemency in the criminal case against Zapotecky and Others for sabotage
 Arising from: Clauses 4417 – III a 4 318/39 of the Justice Act of 19th December 1939
 Preliminary report of 21st April 1943

Enclosures: 2 volumes of case documents
 10 clemency appeals
 10 attested sentences of execution
 20 attested verdicts
 20 photographs of the condemned
 4 copies of the judges' remarks
 10 extracts from penal records

Compiler of report: State attorney Dr. v.Zeynek

- 1) The accused Ottokar Zapotecky of 42 Russische Strasse, Prague XIII, born 21st June 1899 in Schlan, Catholic, divorced, citizen of the protectorate, previously convicted twice, in custody since January 18th 1943 for interrogation on this case,
- 2) Ladislaus Dlesk, pastry baker, of 9 Florisdorfer High Street, Vienna, born 9th August 1918 in Prague, citizen of the protectorate, divorced, Catholic, no previous convictions, in custody since 18th January 1943 for interrogation on this case,
- 3) Emilie Flunk, née Casensky, cleaner, of 42 Russische Strasse, Prague XIII, born 8th December 1905 in Beneschau, citizen of the protectorate, Catholic, widow, no previous convictions, in custody since 18th January 1943 for interrogation on this case,
- 4) Swatopluk Cila of 16 Niederblanicka, Prague XII, born 19th September 1902 in Jungbunzlau, citizen of the protectorate, no religion, widower, 10 previous convictions, in custody since 18th January 1943 for interrogation on this case,
- 5) Josef Stanislaus Dryak, lithographer, of 2a Thomasius Strasse, Leipzig, born 17th May 1910 in Brandeis, divorced, citizen of the protectorate, Protestant, no previous convictions, in custody since 18th January 1943 for interrogation on this case,
- 6) Walter Levit, Jew, of 45 Dresdner Strasse, Leipzig, born 24th December 1913 in Pilsen, married, citizen of the protectorate, Protestant, no previous convictions, in custody since 18th January for interrogation on this case,
- 7) Yvonne Levit, née Ehrlich, Jewess, born 22nd December 1911 in Vienna, married, no previous convictions, citizen of the protectorate, in custody since 18th January for interrogation on this case,

²⁷ Source: Ministry of the Interior Prague

- 8) Marianne Golz-Goldlust, no profession, previously Wengraf, previously Schultz, née Belokostolksy, of 4 Strossmayer Strasse, Prague VII, born 31st January 1895 in Vienna, married, stateless, Catholic, no previous convictions, in custody since 18th January for interrogation on this case,
- 9) Josef Goldschmidt, Jew, of 9 Seumegasse, Prague XII, born 28th August 1896 in Prague, married, citizen of the protectorate, Protestant, one previous conviction, in custody since 18th January for interrogation on this case,
- 10) Erwin Samek, Jew, of 3 Tegetthoffstrasse, Prague XIX, born 4th June 1884 in Prague, married, Slovak citizen, one previous conviction, no religion, in custody since 18th January for interrogation on this case,

were condemned to death and lifelong loss of civil rights as saboteurs and helpers of enemies of the Reich.

I. Facts of the Case

The condemned Walter and Yvonne Levit and Goldschmidt evaded their imminent evacuation as Jews by fleeing. The remaining condemned supported them by facilitating their flight in various ways and not reporting them to the authorities, even though they knew that their flight rendered them enemies of the state.

For the details of the crime I draw to your attention the exhaustive and conclusive account in the sentence of the special court. I find no material or legal objection to any part of it.

II. Character and Previous Life of the Accused

I draw to your attention the exhaustive details in the court's judgement.

III. Petitions for Clemency

The condemned Jews Erwin Samek, Walter and Yvonne Levit and Goldschmidt and also the mother of Dlesk have presented petitions for clemency. They plead for conversion of the death sentence to imprisonment.

IV. Position of the Board of Prison Governors

The board of directors of Prague prison does not recommend clemency.

V. Recommendation

The special circumstances in the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia demand that the death sentence be carried out.

I recommend that no use be made of the right to clemency and that justice be given free reign.

(Signed) Dr. Ludwig

Chief State Prosecutor
German Ministry of Justice
8 KLS 90/43

Prague, 1st September 1943

To the Prosecutor General
German Supreme Court
In Prague

Re: Penal Charge against Zápotecký and others
Clemency Report 19th July 1943.

Enclosure: 1 Petition for Clemency

Report presented by: State Attorney Dr. Seynek

I present in the enclosed a Petition for Clemency from Marianne Golz.
I find in it no cause to change my position.

Yours faithfully,

Rehder Knöspel

Refusal of Petition for Clemency²⁸

Reich Ministry of Justice

IV g 21 4188i/43**Please quote this title and reference
in further correspondence**Berlin W 8 23rd September 1943**Wilhelmstraße 65****Telephone: 11 00 44 ext 11 65 16****To be registered**

Through

The German Minister of State for Bohemia and Moravia in P r a g u e
(to II c E I 1395/43)

to

The Chief State Prosecutor of the German Protectorate, P r a g u e
in Person or to his DeputyTo: 8 Kls 90/43 of 19th June 1943

Enclosures: 2 volumes of case documents
 10 notebooks
 1 Dispensation of 21st September 1943
 1 accredited transcript of Dispensation
 In the penal case against
 Ottokar Z a p o t e c k y
 Ladislaus D l e s k
 Emilie F l u n k
 Swatopluk C i l a
 Josef Stanislaus D r y a k
 Marianne G o l z – G o l d l u s t
 Erwin S a m e k

all the above sentenced to death at the Special German Court in Prague on May 18th 1943. I have decided, using the power invested in me by the Führer and with the agreement of the Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, not to grant the right of clemency.

Berlin, 21st September 1943
 The Reich Minister of Justice
 (Official stamp)
 Dr. Thierack

Berlin, 23rd September 1943.

²⁸ Source: Ministry of the Interior, Prague

Register of Execution²⁹

The Chief Prosecutor
at the German Court
- **8 KLS 90/43** -

Prague, 8th October 1943
4 Kramarschufer

To the Prosecutor General at the Special German Court

Prague

Re: Penal Charge against Zapotecky and others No. 37 of the R.V. 19.11.1939. In the edition of 13.11.43 – 4417 – IIIa – 246/42

To the Reich Minister of Justice: IV g 4188i/43

Enclosure: Dispensation of 21.9.1943 in the original

The sentence against Ottokar Z a t o p e c k y was carried out on 8th October 1943 at 16.36 hours.

Duration:

- 1) From collection of the condemned to handover to executioner: 4 seconds
- 2) From handover to execution 5 seconds.

The sentence against Ladislaus D l e s k was carried out on 8th October 1943 at 16.37 hours.

Duration:

- 1) From collection of the condemned to handover to executioner: 4 seconds.
- 2) From handover to execution: 6 seconds.

The sentence against Swatopluk C i l a was carried out on 8th October 1943 at 16.40 hours.

Duration:

- 1) From collection of the condemned to handover to executioner: 3 seconds.
- 2) From handover to execution: 6 seconds.

The sentence against Josef Sanislaus D r y a k was carried out on 8th October 1943 at 16.42 hours.

Duration:

- 1) From collection of the condemned to handover to executioner: 4 seconds.
- 2) From handover to execution: 7 seconds.

The sentence against Marianne G o l z – Goldlust was carried out on 8th October 1943 at 16.44 hours.

Duration:

²⁹ Source: Ministry of the Interior, Prague

- 1) From collection of the condemned to handover to executioner: 3 seconds.
- 2) From handover to execution: 6 seconds.

The sentence against Erwin S a m e k was carried out on 8th October 1943 at 16.46 hours.

Duration:

- 1) From collection of the condemned to handover to executioner: 4 seconds.
- 2) From handover to execution: 6 seconds.

All the above took place without incident.

Yours faithfully,

(signed) Rehder-Knöspel
First State Attorney

Executioner's Expenses³⁰

The Chief State Prosecutor at the Special German Court

Proof of Claim

by Alois W e i s s, Executioner

for

Special expenses, travel expenses and sundry expenses
for the month of October 1943

in connection with executing death sentences

List No.	Date of Execution	Place	Applicant and File No.	Name of Executed	Extra Allowance in Reich mark
1	2	3	4	5	6
26	8.10.1943	Prag	State Attorney Prague 5 Kls 90/43	Zapotecky Ottokar	30,-
27			State Attorney Prague 5 Kls 90/43	Dlesk Ladislav	30,-
28			State Attorney Prague 5 Kls 90/43	Flunk Emilie	30,-
29			likewise	Cila Svatopluk	30,-
30			likewise	Dryak Jos. Stanisl.	30,-
31			likewise	Golz-Goldlust Marianne	30,-
32			likewise	Samek Erwin	30,-

Corrected and confirmed

Details about each payment has been filed

Prague, 31st October 1943

(signed)

Chief Legal Inspector

³⁰ Source: Document Archive of the Austrian Resistance, Vienna

Annulment of Verdict

Federal Judiciary at the County Court Berlin

Berlin, 2nd January 2000
Tel.: Operator 030/90 14-0
(internal 914-111)
Direct line 030/90 14-36 63
Fax: 030/90 14-33 10

2 P Supplement 22/96

Please quote Ref. No.

Address:
Berlin (Moabit),
Turmstrasse 91

Federal Judiciary
at the County Court Berlin
10548 Berlin
Attorney Christoph J. Partsch
Humboldt Strasse 8
70178 Stuttgart

Postal address:
Letters:
10548 Berlin
Packets:
Turmstrasse 91
10559 Berlin
Appointments:
Monday to Friday 8.30 to 13.00
Thursdays also 14.00 to 15.00

Case: Annulment of criminal verdict during the National Socialist era.

Re: Your clients Riemer and Golz

Dear Mr Partsch,

It is certified herewith that the verdict of 18th May 1943 at the Special German Court in Prague against Marianne Golz-Goldlust for offences against the Reichsprotector Act of 3rd July 1942 in Bohemia and Moravia against the aiding and abetting of actions hostile to the Reich is annulled under §1 NS-Annul.

According to §1 NS-Annul penal decisions passed after January 30th 1933 for the furtherance or maintenance of the national socialist regime which were based on judgements of offence against primary principles of justice and crimes on political, racial or philosophical grounds, are annulled.

In the court judgement the following among other things is stated:

“In order to avoid repetition there is a need from the outset to clarify who in the given case is to be considered an enemy of the Reich, what behaviour is to be considered hostile to the Reich according to the Reich Protector’s Act for Bohemia and Moravia of 3rd July 1942 on the prevention of support for activities hostile to the Reich (Page 182 of the Act), who is to be considered a saboteur, and what acts are to be considered sabotage according to the Reich Protector’s Act for Bohemia and Moravia of 26th August 1939 (Pages 83, 84) against acts of sabotage and according to the stipulations of the Act of 11.1.1940 (Pages 3,4).

“A Jew who absents himself from evacuation is an enemy of the Reich. The Jews in National Socialist Germany represent a political collective. They are a part of international Jewry that treats the German Reich as an enemy power. Jewry not only desires the defeat of Germany in the current war but strives for it with all the means at its disposal. This attitude of international Jewry is shared widely by the Jews in Germany. The collective of Jews in the Greater German Reich therefore stands as a danger that must be met with state measures. These measures must be hard and uncompromising in war, in order to avoid a threat to the internal and external front. An essential means to meet the danger that Jewry poses is the evacuation and concentration of the Jews in certain specially established places. If a Jew eludes such a measure he will no longer be able to maintain a latent hostile attitude towards the state, but be compelled to take active steps, otherwise he will be unable to reach the goal he aspires to. If he does not obey the transport he is forced to go into hiding in order to avoid arrest. He will use every available means to this end and make no distinctions between legal and illegal means. He cannot exist in hiding without the support of other people. This is already apparent from the regulations pertaining to a wartime economy. The Jew on the run can only expect help from those elements of society that are also hostile to the State. This hostility to the State manifests itself in indifference to and unconcern with the political necessities that demand the evacuation of the Jews. Political indifference is itself a crime. (...)

“Golz-Goldlust is a quite different personality type to Flunk. She moved in Jewish circles with a bustling agility and stood up for her Jewish and half-Jewish friends. She acted, as already emphasised, not out of compulsion but out of an inner inclination. Her efforts to be accommodating to her Jewish friends imply her hostile attitude towards the National Socialist State. There is a distinct spiritual affinity here to the particularly revolting personality of Goldschmidt. Even though it cannot be proved that Golz-Goldlust expected material advantages from her active involvement in the Jewish cause, there can be no doubt that she desired to achieve such advantages. She loved making a grand entry and playing the role of the great lady even though her financial means consisted only of the modest support afforded to her by her mother and sister. She must therefore have had other sources of income. Of the 20,000 Czech crowns that Kühnel had deposited with her, she had only transferred 5,000. Whether she would have transferred the rest remains unanswered. Golz-Goldlust does not seem to have had any qualms, either, about her relationship with Zapoteky, whom she met through Goldschmidt, even though she had recognised Zapoteky to be an enemy of the Reich. In these circumstances it cannot be assumed that this is a minor offence against the Act of 3rd July 1942 and the accused Golz-Goldlust is therefore also found guilty of an act hostile to the Reich and sentenced to death.”

From the above statements in the sentence of the Special German Court in Prague it is clear that Frau Marianne Golz-Goldlust was condemned on political grounds.

In the above case the law on the annulment of criminal verdicts in penal cases passed under National Socialism has led to the legal rehabilitation of Frau Golz-Goldlust.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Chief State Attorney