

LETTER 1A

NO DATE

SEHR GEACHTETES FRAULEIN ZUUR

ON THE BASIS OF OUR CONVERSATION EARLIER TODAY I PERMIT MYSELF THE FREEDOM TO IMPORTUNE YOU WITH A FEW LINES AND SHOULD NOT WISH TO MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK YOU, HONOURED LADY, FOR THE ADDRESS OF YOUR DEAR MOTHER FOR A PURPOSE WHICH I IMAGINE YOU WILL CLEARLY RECALL (FROM OUR CONVERSATION).

PLEASE LET ME HAVE THE FULL ADDRESS, INCLUDING THAT OF THE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION, AND I PROMISE THAT YOU NEED HAVE NO CONCERN WHATSOEVER ABOUT WHAT I SHALL ARRANGE FOR YOUR BENEFIT. IN ADDITION I WANTED TO ASK YOU MOST EARNESTLY FOR YOUR DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH AS WELL AS YOUR PROFESSION. I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU PLEASE WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO DRAW ME ON THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE REQUEST FOR THE MOMENT, BUT PERHAPS TO RETURN TO IT LATER WHEN YOU ARE RESTORED TO FREEDOM. I MUST BE OPENLY HONEST AND ADMIT THAT AN HONEST INTEREST IN YOUR PERSON HAS STRONGLY ATTRACTED ME TO YOU AFTER MY BEING PERMITTED TO GET TO KNOW YOU PERSONALLY A LITTLE.

PLEASE DO NOT INTERPRET MY BOLD FORWARDNESS IN WRITING TO YOU AS EFFRONTERY AND I PARTICULARLY DO NOT WISH TO EXPLOIT YOUR STATUS AS A DETAINEE OR TO TURN YOUR HEAD IN ANY WAY. I BELIEVE I RECALL HAVING TOLD YOU WHO AND WHAT I AM. IF YOU WILL GRANT ME YOUR ASSENT TO PERMIT ME TO BE ALLOWED TO EXPRESS MYSELF IN GREATER DETAIL AND DEPTH, BUT ABOVE ALL YOU MUST FIRST BECOME WELL ONCE MORE AND TO THAT END I SHOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART TO GRANT ME PERMISSION TO CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR RECUPERATION IN AS FAR AS IT IS WITHIN MY LIMITED POWERS AND GIVEN MY INSIGNIFICANCE IN THE CAMP. TO THAT END I SHOULD PUT MYSELF ENTIRELY AT YOUR DISPOSAL AND ASK ACCORDINGLY THAT YOU SHOULD MAKE FULL USE OF ME. I ASK YOU ONCE MORE THAT YOU PLEASE EXCUSE THIS LETTER AND, IF I MAY BE SO BOLD, ASK TO TREAT IT WITH DISCRETION. IN THE MEANTIME IT IS A MATTER OF SOME URGENCY THAT I SHOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU IN PRIVATE AND IN PERSON.

WITH HEARTFELT GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR A SWIFT RECOVERY

YOURS FRANZ JOSEF GEBELE

NB PLEASE RESPOND TO MY CORRESPONDENCE AND ABOVE ALL TO MY OFFER OF HELP WITHOUT FALSE MODESTY AND AS DIRECTLY AS YOU ARE ABLE TO, FOR DELIVERY TO ME VIA YOUR FEMALE DOCTOR, WHEN EVER MY DAILY VISIT TO YOU PROVES IMPOSSIBLE. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE WITH ME WHATEVER WEIGHS HEAVILY ON YOUR HEART; I THINK THAT AT THE AGE OF 39 ONE CAN ASSESS FACTS AND FORM JUDGEMENTS PARTICULARLY WELL, SO PLEASE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN ME JUST AS I HAVE IN YOU.

TELL ME EVERYTHING AND YOU WILL FIND IN ME A GOOD ADVISOR AND FOR THE TIME BEING A FRIEND. WHAT HAPPENS TO US IN THE FUTURE, FATE AND THE FUTURE WILL DETERMINE. FOR NOW I WAIT IN EXPECTATION OF A TIMELY ANSWER FROM YOU, BOTH WILLINGLY AND IN THE HOPE OF HEARING FROM YOU.

Mauthausen, 25 March 1945

Dear Madame!

COPY

With the agreement of your daughter Sabine Zuur, I permit myself as a stranger to send a few lines in this manner. Your daughter is currently located in the concentration camp in Mauthausen Oberdonau (Austria), having come here well-cared for and in good health from Ravensbrück; she is doing well here and if I may tell you this, I will most definitely look after her in an honorable manner, protect her and watch over her. Rest assured, madame, that my support takes place with honest intentions and my letter to you, dear madame, occurs at the wish of your daughter, thus there is no reason to be concerned. Miss Zuur is well situated here in an office, her physical care leaves nothing to be desired, her physical condition is good and generally suited to the camp. The transfer of the camp stay from Ravensbrück to here took place due to evacuation before the enemy.

In line with my assigned task, I add the most sincere greetings and best wishes from your daughter, adding that you may most certainly look forward to her return in the near future, and if you would like, then you can, dear madame, write to your daughter yourself, but without any mention of any kind of my lines written to you today and its more detailed information.

Miss Sabine Zuur, born on 15th July 1918...

Prisoner no. 2851

presently in the concentration camp Mauthausen Oberdonau, Germania.

I beg you, dear madame, to forgive me if I should have troubled you as a stranger and without your bidding with these lines, albeit in the interest of Miss Zuur.

I have the honor of being able to greet you, dear madame, as well as your children in line with my task,

and sign with the greatest esteem, your

devoted

Franz Josef Gebel

chief ??

Concentration Camp of Mauthausen

LIEBE BESTE SABINE

IN RESPONSE TO YOUR DEAR LINES, WHICH I HAVE JUST RECEIVED I SHOULD LIKE TO SELECT AND RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING ISSUES AS WELL AS EXPRESSING MY MOST HEARTFELT THANKS FOR YOUR VERY AFFECTIONATE ANSWER AND I AM EQUALLY PLEASED, IF I CAN DESPITE MY MODEST ROLE IN THE CAMP, TO SUPPORT YOU IN ANY POSSIBLE WAY.

YOU MENTION AT THE OPENING OF YOUR COMMUNICATION, LIEBE SABINE, THE SUBJECT OF THE FRIENDLY FORM OF ADDRESS "SABINE" BETWEEN US SINCE WE ARE IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP AND IN YOUR VIEW WE SHOULD THEREFORE BEHAVE SOMEWHAT LESS CONVENTIONALLY THAN IN THE FREEDOM OF A PRIVATE LIFE OUTSIDE. I AGREE, LIEBE SABINE; SINCE YOU GIVE ME PERMISSION TO USE YOUR FIRST NAME, I AM PLEASED TO ABIDE BY YOUR SUGGESTION, HOWEVER, I SHOULD LIKE TO REMAIN TRUE TO MY UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION EVEN HERE IN THE CAMP AND REGRET THE LAX MANNERS OF CASUAL INFORMALITY AND THE EXCESSES THAT GO WITH IT COMMON THROUGHOUT THE CAMP.

IF I TELL YOU, LIEBE SABINE, THAT I HAVE ALWAYS AVOIDED ALL FRIENDLY INTERCOURSE WITH MY COLLEAGUES, YOU MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY BELIEVING IT, BUT IT IS TRUE.

I HAVE NOT YET ABANDONED MY TRUE CHARACTER AND HAVE, I HOPE, PRESERVED MY MORAL VALUES. PLEASE DO NOT LET MY WITHDRAWN NATURE OFFEND YOU.

MY GOODNESS, LIEBE SABINE, AS FAR AS YOUR MISTAKES IN GERMAN ARE CONCERNED, THEY ARE NOT A PROBLEM AND EVEN I, AS AN EXPERIENCED NATIVE GERMAN AND AN ACADEMIC, MAKE MORE MISTAKES THAN YOU DO AND BESIDES, I MUST TELL YOU, YOUR MISTAKES ARE A SOURCE OF REAL PLEASURE, FOR THEY HAVE AN ATTRACTIVE, CHILDLIKE NAIVITY FOR ME AND THEREFORE THERE IS NOT THE SLIGHTEST NEED FOR APOLOGIES.

TO PROCEED TO THE NEXT ISSUE – WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU NEED TO THANK ME FOR?

THE FEW TRIVIAL THINGS WHICH I AM ARRANGING FOR YOU TO RECEIVE IN FUTURE REALLY DON'T AMOUNT TO MUCH AND I FEEL SERIOUSLY UNCOMFORTABLE THAT YOU, LIEBE KLEINE SABINE, SHOULD WISH TO THANK ME FOR THEM. THERE IS REALLY NO REASON FOR THAT SINCE I AM ACTING OUT OF COMRADELY FELLOWSHIP AND SOLIDARITY.

BELIEVE ME, LIEBE SABINE, I HAVE QUIETLY AND SECRETLY HELPED MANY PEOPLE, OFFERED HELP GENEROUSLY, PROVIDED SUPPORT, EVEN ALSO TO WOMEN SUCH AS YOURSELF, THOUGH I HAVE NEVER ASKED FOR THANKS.

LIEBE KLEINE SABINE, PLEASE DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME, I AM PLEASED EVEN MORE THAN YOU ARE, IF MY SMALL GIFTS GIVE YOU PLEASURE AND HELP TO RELIEVE THE HARDSHIP OF YOUR SITUATION. WHAT HOWEVER IS FOR ME A FAR GREATER JOY IS THE

PROSPECT THAT YOU WILL RECOVER YOUR HEALTH AND FACE WITH BRAVE CONFIDENCE THE COMING END OF HOSTILITIES AND FUTURE FREEDOM. EVERYTHING ELSE YOU CAN LEAVE TO ME TO SORT OUT, BUT WITHOUT WISHING TO BE TOO INTRUSIVE, I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL BE FULLY RECOVERED IN A SHORT TIME AND YOUR GENERAL PHYSICAL WEAKNESS WILL GIVE WAY TO YOUR NATURAL PREDISPOSITION TO EXCELLENT HEALTH.

IN THE MEANTIME YOU SHOULD NOW EAT ALL YOU CAN. I SHOULD LIKE TO WRITE MORE ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT NEED TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE FOR YOU.

PLEASE FORGIVE ME THEREFORE FOR THE TIME BEING, LIEBE SABINE.

IF I MAY ASK A FAVOUR OF YOU, MEINE LIEBE SABINE, IT WOULD BE THAT YOU SHOULD, FOR GOD'S SAKE, AVOID ALL CONTACT WITH OTHERS IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT, BUT FOR THE MINIMUM COMRADESHIP OF THOSE OTHER WOMEN WHOM FATE HAS DESTINED TO BE IN YOUR SITUATION.

PLEASE PRESERVE YOUR HONOURABLE CHARACTER, REMAIN VIRTUOUS AND COURAGEOUS. PRAY, HEED MY ADVICE AND YOU WILL DOUBTLESS BE ABLE TO FACE THE FUTURE WITH JOY IN YOUR HEART.

THE WORLD AND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE ARE AN OPEN PROSPECT AND YOU MAKING YOUR WAY IN THEM, LIEBE SABINE, WILL BE THE GREATEST POSSIBLE PLEASURE TO ME TOO.

ABOVE ALL, HOWEVER, I WANT TO WARN YOU OF THE DANGER POSED BY THE MALE PRISONERS IN THE CAMP, WHOSE CRAVING FOR SEXUAL FAVOURS ON A REGULAR BASIS IS TOO GREAT AND QUICKLY LEADS TO DISASTER.

THINK ALWAYS OF YOUR DEAR MOTHER AND OF YOUR NEAREST AND DEAREST, STAY TRUE TO THE PURITY OF YOUR CHARACTER AND ALLOW NO SHADOW OF DOUBT TO ENTER YOUR THOUGHT. THAT WOULD BE MY GREATEST AND MOST HEARTFELT REQUEST OF YOU. WHY? THE FUTURE WILL REVEAL ITSELF AND IF GOD WILLS IT AND YOUR OWN WILL AND HEART WILL IT, THEN DECIDE.

WHEN YOU, LIEBE SABINE, TALK OF DISAPPOINTMENT, I PREFER TO REMAIN SILENT ABOUT ALL MY MISERABLE DISAPPOINTMENTS, INTRIGUES AND WOUNDS THAT THE FEMALE HEART HAS CAUSED THROUGH COMMON INSENSITIVITY AND TRAMPLING ON MY GOOD NATURE, WHICH KNOWS NO BOUNDS, SEEKING IN ME ONLY THE MATERIAL ADVANTAGE OF BEING PROVIDED FOR IN A CAREFREE FUTURE LIFE AND PLAYING A FRIVOLOUS GAME OF DECEPTION WITH THE TRUST I HAD OFFERED. SO PLEASE SABINE, YOU MUST NOT TEAR OPEN THOSE WOUNDS AGAIN. EVEN HERE IN THE CAMP AMONGST YOUR FELLOW FEMALE SUFFERERS MY GOOD NATURE HAS BEEN PRESSED DRY OF JUICE AND THROWN CARELESSLY ASIDE LIKE A FRESH LEMON AND IN THE NEXT BREATH THE NEXT RIPE FRUIT WAS SUMMONED ALONG FOR THE SAME TREATMENT- IN SHORT, THE ETERNAL FEMALE BAD CHARACTER TRAITS WHICH ARE INNATE IN THESE CREATURES WHO TOTALLY LACK EVEN ONE SPARK OF CONSCIENCE OR SENSE OF HONOUR AND EVEN

PURSUE THEIR AMOURS AMONGST THE SS GUARDS, LIKE A COW IN A MEADOW IN CONSTANT SEARCH OF FRESH GRASS TO EAT.

MY GOOD CHARACTER FORBIDS ME FROM WASTING FURTHER EFFORT ON THIS TOPIC AND I THANK YOU, LIEBE SABINE, FOR YOUR READINESS TO SYMPATHIZE WITH ME.

I AM CONFIDENT OF THIS AS I CAN INFER FROM YOUR PLEASING AND FIRM HANDWRITING A GREAT DEAL ABOUT YOU, WHICH SUGGESTS A COMPLETE ABSENCE OF BAD CHARACTER TRAITS AND SABINE, IF WE ARE HONEST WITH EACH OTHER, EVERY HUMAN BEING HAS THE ODD WEAKNESS. IT WOULD BE ABSOLUTE PERFECTION INDEED, AN IDEAL FOR US ALL, IF ONE WERE TO COME ACROSS A FELLOW HUMAN BEING WITHOUT FAULTS OF ANY KIND. THEY ARE AFTER ALL IN OUR RACIAL HERITAGE AND ON THE OTHER HAND IN THE PERSONALITIES OF OUR PARENTS.

I DON'T INTEND TO TELL YOU MY LIFE'S STORY TODAY SABINE, EVEN THOUGH I SHOULD DEARLY LIKE TO, BUT I DON'T WANT TO ADD TO YOUR BURDENS AND PREFER TO WAIT UNTIL YOU YOURSELF GIVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO.

JUST GET WELL AGAIN FOR MY SAKE PLEASE AND THEN WE SHALL SEE WHAT FATE WILL PREPARE FOR US, PERHAPS LOVE AND A FUTURE TOGETHER, PERHAPS A FAREWELL.

THAT I LIKE AND LOVE YOU DEAR SABINE, NEEDS NO FURTHER MENTION, THOUGH WHETHER YOU FEEL THE SAME FOR ME, WE SHALL HAVE TO SEE.

LIEBE SABINE, PERMIT ME TO WRITE TO YOUR DEAR MOTHER (WITH ABSOLUTE DISCRETION) AND TO CONVEY TO HER NEWS OF YOU, ALBEIT BY ILLEGAL MEANS.

PLEASE LET ME HAVE A FEW DETAILS YOU WOULD LIKE ME TO MENTION IN THE LETTER.

PLEASE TRUST ME WITH THIS SABINE. I AM YOUR FRIEND AND ADVISOR AND PROTECTOR WITH ALL MY HEART AND ASK FOR YOUR HONESTY TOWARDS ME IN RETURN.

FEEL FREE TO CONFIDE IN ME COMPLETELY. I SHALL LEARN TO UNDERSTAND YOU AND IF THERE IS A PROBLEM I WILL ASSIST WITH HEART AND HAND SO THAT YOU MAY LEARN TO UNDERSTAND AND TRUST ME IN TURN. IF YOU LACK GRAMMAR BOOKS, I SHALL REQUEST ACCESS ON YOUR BEHALF AND BRING YOU THE GERMAN DUDEN DICTIONARY TOMORROW.

SABINE, MY CHILD, I AM ABOUT TO BE OPERATED ON THIS WEEK FOR MY BULLET WOUND, BUT WILL BE WITH YOU IN SPIRIT AND IN MY ACTIONS AND IF YOU ARE ALLOWED TO LEAVE YOUR BED BEFORE ME, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO VISIT ME AS A PATIENT. IT WILL GIVE ME MUCH PLEASURE TO SEE YOU.

ABOUT MYSELF – I AM THE FOURTH SON OF A FACTORY-OWNING MARRIED COUPLE, GEORGE AND FRANZISKA GEBELE FROM MUNICH, WHERE I WAS BORN ON 12TH MARCH 1906.

AS A RESULT OF ILLNESS I HAD TO CHOOSE THE EASIER CAREER PATH OF STUDYING ENGINEERING. AS A CO-PILOT AND DESIGN MANAGER, DESPITE MY CONSIDERABLE YOUTH I MADE SWIFT PROGRESS THANKS TO MY ABILITY.

IN 1929 I JOINED LUFTHANSA AS A CO-PILOT WHERE IN 1932 I WAS INVOLVED IN A SERIOUS CRASH.

I HAVE BEEN MARRIED ONCE BEFORE AND THE MARRIAGE ENDED, DUE TO THE MISERABLE SCHEMING OF MY WIFE, WITH HER DEATH. THE MARRIAGE PRODUCED ONE CHILD (A GIRL), WHO, AT THE AGE OF 14 WAS KILLED IN AN AIR RAID ON MUNICH IN JUNE 1944. I HAD SHOT MY WIFE IN AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO HER ADULTERY AND WAS SENTENCED TO THREE MONTHS IN PRISON, CONDITIONALLY SUSPENDED.

I HAD 14 PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS UNFORTUNATELY, BUT ALSO THANK GOD, SINCE NONE INVOLVED PRISON OR OTHER DETENTIONS.

THEY WERE ALL FINES FOR TRAFFIC OFFENCES AND MISDEMEANOURS IN A CAR OR ON A MOTOR CYCLE.

MY FINANCIAL FORTUNES MAY NOT BE VERY IMPORTANT, THOUGH I AM VERY WELL FUNDED AND INVESTED IN SWITZERLAND, FOR WHICH I WAS SENTENCED TO 6 YEARS IN PRISON (AS I THINK I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED TO YOU), ON THE GROUNDS OF CURRENCY BORDER OFFENCES, FALSIFICATION OF STATE DOCUMENTS AND SIMILAR CRIMES.

I AM NEITHER A GAMBLER NOR A DRINKER, BUT I AM A SPORTSMAN IN ALL POSSIBLE SPORTS, A MUSIC LOVER AND A FRIEND OF NATURE. I LIKE GOING TO THE OPERA. I AM AN ENTIRELY EASY GOING HUMAN BEING AND BY NATURE AVOID CONFLICT.

BUT I DO HAVE ONE FAULT. I AM JEALOUS, BUT I TAKE THE VIEW THAT IT RATHER ELEVATES THIS FAULT TO THE LEVEL OF A VIRTUE IF ONE IS PROTECTING AND CHERISHING A POSSESSION THAT ONE LOVES ABOVE ALL ELSE AND ONE IS FIGHTING TO PROTECT THAT LOVE.

BUT WHETHER I SHOULD STILL BE SO INCLINED TODAY AFTER ALL THE SAD AND FATEFUL EVENTS OF MY LIFE, ALL THE INJURY THAT WOMEN EVEN FROM THE BEST AND MOST ELEVATED CIRCLES OF SOCIETY HAVE DONE TO ME....

(YOU MUST THINK ME SOME SORT OF SIMPLETON IN RESPECT OF MY DEALINGS WITH THE FEMALE SEX). IT IS A SUBJECT I GUESS WE SHALL NEED TO RETURN TO WHEN WE CAN TALK OPENLY.

AND AS TO WHETHER I STILL LONG FOR THE LOVE OF AN HONEST WOMAN: I BELIEVE I AM NOT YET SO FAR PAST IT THAT I HAVE LOST THE WILL TO STILL SEARCH FOR A LOVING WOMAN WITH SPIRIT, AFFECTION AND FAITHFULNESS.

WELL, I HAVE ENDED UP TALKING ABOUT THE PAST AGAIN, RUNNING THE RISK OF SLIPPING INTO MELANCHOLY ONCE MORE, WHEN WHAT I'D PREFER TO DO IS TO LOOK TOWARDS THE FUTURE.

I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY TALENT AS A NOVELIST, BUT I SHOULDN'T WANT YOU TO REGARD WHAT COMES NEXT AS A FICTIONAL FANTASY. I FIND IT DIFFICULT ENOUGH TO BE OPEN ABOUT MY CIRCUMSTANCES HERE IN MAUTHAUSEN, BUT YOU ARE WELCOME

TO WHAT I CAN TELL YOU, SO THAT, FROM MY LIFE STORY YOU CAN FORM A PICTURE OF THE HUMAN BEING WITH WHOM YOU ARE DEALING.

I RATE UNASSAILABLE LOYALTY AND HONESTY, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, VERY HIGHLY.

I HATE SECRETS AND ABHOR DECEIT AND INTRIGUE.

TRUTH AND FACTS MUST BE DECISIVE AND I AM PREPARED TO FIGHT TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE.

THE WOMEN OF THE 20TH CENTURY MOCK ME FOR DEMANDING SUCH STANDARDS.

I WOULD HAVE PLENTY MORE TO TELL YOU ABOUT MYSELF, THOUGH NO FURTHER VICES AS SUCH.

NO, YOUR HEART MUST DECIDE FOR YOU WHAT I MIGHT MEAN TO YOU IN TIME AND MAKE YOU EVEN HAPPIER THAN YOU ARE TODAY.

ONE THING I WOULD LIKE TO GET OFF MY CHEST NOW HOWEVER, NAMELY THAT AFTER THE WAR I SHALL GO ABROAD AND BUILD MY HOME THERE.

THAT IS ENOUGH FOR TODAY. LIEBE SABINE, GIVE ME AN ANSWER TO THIS LETTER SOON. IT IS OF CALMING REASSURANCE TO KNOW, LIEBE SABINE, THAT YOU WILL BE HAPPY TO ACCEPT ME AS I AM, WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR FREEDOM AGAIN.

GREETINGS, LIEBE SABINE, WITH BEST WISHES FOR YOUR SPEEDY RECOVERY AND LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR NEXT MEETING IN THE FUTURE

FROM YOUR FRANZ

PS DUE TO WRITING IN EXTREME HASTE, I ASK THAT YOU FORGIVE THE BAD HANDWRITING AND ABOVE ALL THE BAD STYLE. IT WILL BE BETTER NEXT TIME.

LETTER 3

27 MARCH 1945

SABINCHEN!

I AM AFRAID I DON'T KNOW IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED YESTERDAY'S LETTER AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE SOME SORT OF SENSE OF ITS CONTENTS AND HAVE FORMED A SMALL PICTURE, BUT DESPITE MY UNCERTAINTY I SHOULD LIKE TO BE BRIEF TODAY AND NOT BOTHER YOU WITH QUESTIONS AND MY SCRAWLED HANDWRITING.

SABINE, HAVE YOU RECEIVED THE CLOTHES? DO THEY FIT OR SHOULD I FIND DIFFERENT ONES FOR YOU? THE SKIRT AND THE FOUR BLOUSES I CHOSE AS ACCORDING TO MY TASTE AND BEST SUITED TO YOU. PLEASE SABINE, KEEP THEM FOR YOUR OWN USE.

FOR THE MOMENT I HAVE BEEN ABLE ONLY TO FIND UNDERWEAR FOR EMERGENCY USE. SHOULD YOU DESIRE SOMETHING DIFFERENT, SABINCHEN, THEN YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND AND I WILL SEE TO IT.

FURTHERMORE, HAVE YOU RECEIVED BREAD, SUGAR, AND MARGARINE ON SUNDAY EVENING? I SHOULD LIKE TO SEND YOU EVERY DAY MY GARRISON SPECIAL FOOD ALLOWANCE; SOMETHING OF SUBSTANCE AND NOURISHING, MEAT, SOUP AND VEGETABLES. I DON'T WANT TO TAKE ANYONE ELSE INTO OUR CONFIDENCE OR BOTHER THEM WITH SOMETHING WHICH WILL REQUIRE NEGOTIATION ON BOTH SIDES AND CREATE JEALOUSY IN OTHERS. IF YOU CAN SEE A WAY OF TRANSPORTING THE FOOD I SHOULD HAPPILY REGARD IT AS A SMALL ACT OF CHIVALRY. I GET ENOUGH TO EAT IN THE OFFICE OUTSIDE THE CAMP. SO IT IS NO LOSS TO ME. EVEN IF IT WERE SO SMALL A SACRIFICE IS SURELY REASONABLE ENOUGH.

DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL REQUESTS FOR FAVOURITE THINGS TO EAT? SABINE, YOU MUST THINK OF YOURSELF ABOVE ALL AND NOT OF OTHERS AND YOU MUST EAT. THEN YOU WILL SEE YOU WILL SWIFTLY MAKE PROGRESS WITH YOUR RECOVERY AND BE STRONG ENOUGH TO LEAVE THE CAMP WITH ME WHEN THE WAR FINISHES IN FOUR WEEKS TIME AT THE MOST. IF THINGS TAKE A TURN FOR THE WORSE, BE SURE TO STAY CALM, DON'T BE ALARMED. I'LL KEEP WATCH OVER YOU LIKE A MOTHER KEEPS WATCH OVER HER CHILD OR A TREASURE HUNTER OVER THE MOST PRECIOUS JEWEL HE HAS JUST UNEARTHED.

SO PLEASE, NO FALSE MODESTY ABOUT YOUR NEED FOR FOOD. IT MAKES ME HAPPY THAT I AM ABLE TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE PLEASURE.

BE ABOVE ALL CAUTIOUS OF EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR CAMP LIFE. I WARN YOU PARTICULARLY OF DEALINGS WITH YOUR FEMALE COMRADES. THERE WERE UNPLEASANT EVENTS IN THE CAMP IN RECENT DAYS AMONGST YOU WOMEN, LIEBE SABINE, OF WHICH YOU WILL CERTAINLY NOT BE AWARE AND THAT IS THE WAY IT SHOULD STAY.

IF YOUR PHYSICAL STATE AND YOUR FOOT PERMITS IT, I HAVE ARRANGED THAT YOU SHOULD FREQUENTLY COME TO ME IN THE STAFF QUARTERS (IE. BE BROUGHT HERE) SO THAT WE CAN TALK UNDISTURBED AND AT LENGTH ABOUT QUESTIONS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT PERHAPS FOR BOTH OF US AND ABOUT THE FUTURE. WHATEVER HAPPENS YOU WILL REMAIN IN THE STAFF QUARTERS UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR. YOU WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO WORK ANYMORE. THAT I HAVE ALREADY ARRANGED AND I ASK YOU TO WILLINGLY FOLLOW MY ADVICE, INDEED TO ACT EXACTLY AS I ADVISE IN ALL THINGS AND YOU WILL THEN DO WELL.

ONE THING IS LESS THAN IDEAL ABOUT OUR SITUATION AND THAT IS THE SLOWNESS OF POST FROM YOU TO ME. PLEASE TRY TO AVOID TORTURING ME UNNECESSARILY. I FEEL LIKE A TEENAGER WITH HIS FIRST LOVE.

LIEBE SABINE, ONE FURTHER QUESTION. WHO WASHES YOUR CLOTHES? IF YOU ARE HAPPY TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN ME I WOULD ASK YOU TO PLEASE LET ME SORT THE MATTER AND HAVE THE ARTICLES WASHED FOR YOU IN THE LAUNDRY. DO YOU HAVE SHOES, SABINE AND IF NOT, WHAT SIZE DO YOU TAKE? I AM ALREADY ACQUIRING STOCKINGS. I DON'T WANT YOU TO LEAVE THE CAMP IN RAGS WHEN YOU ARE RELEASED.

KINDLY BRING THE CLOTHES THAT FIT YOU AND ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT YOU WANT CLEANED TO THE LAUNDRY AND IRONING DEPARTMENT.

THE WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT PROMPTLY. I WOULD JUST NEED YOU TO TRY ON THE CLOTHES. OF COURSE, WASHING THEM COMES FIRST.

NOW TO SOMETHING IMPORTANT. TODAY I WROTE FROM MY SERVICE DESK VIA THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS TO YOUR DEAR MOTHER. IT IS A NICE LETTER AND I WILL LET YOU HAVE A COPY OF IT. BE ASSURED SHE WILL BE PLEASED WITH IT.

I HAVE INTENTIONALLY AND, I IMAGINE WITH YOUR APPROVAL, NOT MENTIONED YOUR INJURY. I DID NOT WANT TO WORRY HER. YOU WILL SEE THE CONTENTS FOR YOURSELF AND I LOOK FORWARD WITH CURIOSITY TO YOUR REACTION. PLEASE DON'T JUDGE ME TOO HARSHLY. I AM ONLY YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT AFTER ALL.

PLEASE BE GOOD ENOUGH TO LET ME KNOW IN DETAIL WHAT YOU NEED BY WAY OF CLOTHING, UNDERGARMENTS, TOILET ARTICLES ETC, BUT ALSO FOOD ITEMS. EGGS OR MILK? ARE YOU ABLE TO PREPARE YOUR OWN FOOD AT ALL? PLEASE, LIEBE SABINE, I AM AT YOUR DISPOSAL.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE STATE OF THE WAR? PLEASE BE DISCRETE WITH WHAT FOLLOWS.

THE ENEMY FORCES OF THE ALLIES HAVE ADVANCED FROM THE EAST TO DARMSTADT VIA FRANKFURT/MAINZ AND WURZBURG- ASCHAFFENBURG, HANAU AND NUREMBERG. IN SHORT DEEP INTO THE HEART OF GERMANY. ON THE WESTERN FRONT THIS PROGRESS HAS BEEN EVEN FASTER. THE RHINE HAS BEEN CROSSED ALONG ITS FULL LENGTH BY POWERFUL TROOP MOVEMENTS. LUDWIGSHAFEN, MANNHEIM, HEIDELBERG, STUTTGART AND SO MANY OTHER TOWNS ALONG THE WHOLE FRONT HAVE BEEN

OCCUPIED BY THE AMERICANS. IN FACT TWO THIRDS OF GERMANY, ACCORDING TO GERMAN RADIO. ENEMY PARATROOPS HAVE IN LARGE NUMBERS INVADED EMSTAD AND EMSLAND AS WELL AS BREMEN AND HAVE CREATED AND SUCCESSFULLY HELD BRIDGE HEADS THERE.

LIEBE SABINE, IS THIS THEREFORE NOT LIKELY TO BE THE END VERY SOON? I AM ENOUGH OF A STRATEGIST AND EXPERT TO ASSERT THAT HITLER'S BIRTHDAY ON 20TH APRIL WILL BE THE END.

UNTIL THEN, BE BRAVE AND TAKE COURAGE, SABINE. DON'T BE AFRAID IF THINGS GET SERIOUS TOWARDS THE END. I AM ON DUTY, GRIT YOUR TEETH AND BE CALM AND LOOK AFTER YOURSELF. IF YOU NOW HAVE THE THINGS WHICH YOU HAVE LACKED OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, THEN I AM COMFORTED AND SATISFIED TO HAVE HELPED.

I MUST STOP NOW.

GREETINGS FROM MY HEART,

YOUR FRANZ

LETTER 4

28th MARCH 1945

SABINE SONNENSCHIN!

IN ANSWER TO YOUR DEAR LETTER WHICH HAS JUST BEEN HANDED TO ME, I SHOULD ALSO LIKE TO REFER TO OUR CONVERSATION EARLIER TODAY. ALSO MANY HEARTFELT THANKS FOR YOUR CHARMING LETTER.

IN RESPECT OF THE PACKAGE OF SUGAR, BREAD AND MARGARINE, I HAVE QUESTIONED THE GUILTY PARTY AND SHE CLAIMS THAT SHE HAD BEEN UNDER THE MISAPPREHENSION THAT IT HAD BEEN INTENDED FOR HER PERSONALLY. I HAVE ACCORDINGLY MADE MY OPINION VERY CLEAR TO HER AND NO SUCH MISUNDERSTANDING WILL OCCUR AGAIN.

EITHER I SHALL DELIVER THE ITEMS MYSELF OR VIA A RELIABLE MESSENGER OR EVEN HAVE THE LADY DOCTOR PASS THEM TO YOU.

I REGRET MY MISTAKE AND THAT YOU, LIEBE SABINE, SHOULD HAVE BEEN ROBBED OF YOUR PROVISIONS THROUGH IT.

IN RESPECT OF YOUR LAUNDRY, I ASK FROM MY HEART THAT YOU PLEASE SEND ME THE ITEMS, SO THAT I CAN PROMPTLY AND WITH THE UTMOST HYGIENE CARRY OUT THIS GESTURE OF MY AFFECTION. YOU HAVE MY WORD ON IT. AT THE SAME TIME I ASK ALSO FOR YOUR OUTER CLOTHING SO THAT IT CAN BE CLEANED PROMPTLY.

ON THE SUBJECT OF NEW AND BETTER UNDERWEAR ETC, I ASK ONE MORE TIME FOR DETAILS OF WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE. PLEASE DON'T JUST SAY "NO", OTHERWISE I SHALL BE ANGRY WITH YOU, DO YOU HEAR ME SABINE ?

YES! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WORD AND THE 'PROBLEM' WAS JUST THAT YOU DID NOT WANT TO ABUSE THE TRUST YOU HAVE IN ME, AN HONEST TRUST BASED ON MUTUALITY.

DO YOU FEEL SECURE AND LOOKED AFTER? I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE MY GOOD FORTUNE THAT YOU TRUST ME. PLEASE THINK CAREFULLY WHETHER IT IS REAL AND, WHETHER, WITH GOODWILL ON BOTH SIDES I MIGHT/COULD, IN TIME BE MORE TO YOU THAN JUST A FRIEND.

MORE ON THIS SENSITIVE SUBJECT LATER IN THIS LETTER.

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE GERMAN DUDEN DICTIONARY, YOU WILL NEED TO BE PATIENT FOR A FURTHER DAY PLEASE. YOU WILL DEFINITELY GET IT THEN.

I INTEND TO ACQUIRE SOME GOOD BOOKS FOR YOU TODAY AND REQUEST SOME GUIDANCE ON YOUR PREFERRED READING MATTER, SUCH AS ROMANTIC FICTION OR GENERAL INTEREST NOVELS ETC.

I AM CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT ANSWERS I SHALL RECEIVE TO MY LETTERS TO YOU. I LOOK FORWARD TO MY LETTER PRODUCING A DIFFERENT RESULT IN THE FUTURE.

SABINE, ON THE SUBJECT OF THE LETTER TO YOUR DEAR MOTHER, I CAN TODAY ENCLOSE A COPY OF THE LETTER AND I BELIEVE THAT WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN WILL EARN YOUR APPROVAL. THAT YOU WILL BE PLEASED WITH IT I CAN FORESEE, BUT I CAN EQUALLY UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR MOTHER WILL BE OVERJOYED TO HAVE RECEIVED NEWS OF THE LIGHT OF HER LIFE.

FOR MY PART HOWEVER, I JOIN IN YOUR PLEASURE SABINE. WHEN I CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY WITH SUCH SMALL PLEASURES OF APPRECIATION AND COURTESY, BOTH NOW AND PERHAPS LATER IN LIFE EVEN MORE, WHICH I WISH FOR FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF SEALING MY WISH WITH A HOLY VOW.

CONCERNING THE REMARKS ABOUT 'WORK' IN YOUR LETTER, I CAN ONLY PRAISE YOUR JUDGEMENT AND AM PLEASED AT YOUR DECISION, BUT!! LIEBE KLEINE SABINE I AM NOT AT ALL HAPPY THAT YOU INTEND TO EXPOSE YOURSELF CAPRICIOUSLY TO DANGER, RUNNING AROUND THE CAMP ON A FREE REIN. YOU WILL BE REGARDED AND POSSIBLY TREATED AS FAIR GAME AND I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU FALL INTO FILTHY AND LUSTFUL HANDS. I SHOULD LIKE TO DEFEND AND PROTECT YOU. YOU DON'T KNOW THE PITFALLS OF LIFE HERE IN THE CAMP YET. IT IS YOUR DECISION HOWEVER AND I DO NOT WANT TO STAND IN YOUR WAY.

ANYWAY, THE WAR IS GOING TO BE WELL AND TRULY OVER BY THE TIME YOU ARE FULLY RECOVERED, SO THE QUESTION OF YOU WORKING WON'T ARISE.

BE WATCHFUL AND LOOK AFTER YOURSELF, MY LITTLE SONNENSCHIN. THAT IS WHAT MAKES ME HAPPIEST. WHEN I SEE THAT YOU ARE PREPARED TO FOLLOW MY ADVICE AND PUT YOUR TRUST IN ME. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT ANY LACK OF WORK. YOU WILL GET PLENTY OF THAT, BUT WITH ME IN MY DEPARTMENT. IS THAT OK? WORK FOR THE BIG BOY, WHO, LIKE A 16 YEAR OLD IS HEAD OVER HEELS IN LOVE WITH YOU.

WELL, SO MUCH FOR THE ANSWER TO YOUR DEAR LETTER, WHICH ONLY DEALT WITH HALF OF WHAT I HOPED TO FIND IN IT. BUT I HOPE FUTURE LETTERS WILL MAKE ME HAPPIER.

CONCERNING OUR CONVERSATION TODAY I SHOULD LIKE TO SAY STRAIGHT AWAY THAT I HAD LOST ALL SELF CONTROL AND ASK YOUR FORGIVENESS FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART FOR FORCING MYSELF ON YOU.

SABINE, MY SUNSHINE, I HAVE HAD TO REFLECT AFTER MY VISIT TO YOU THIS AFTERNOON ABOUT MUCH OF OUR CONVERSATION AND WONDER AGAIN AND AGAIN WHETHER YOU WILL IN TIME LEARN TO UNDERSTAND AND LOVE ME. I THINK LOVE ADMITTEDLY PASSES FROM ONE HUMAN BEING TO ANOTHER GRADUALLY, OR PUT RATHER BETTER, SLOWLY. HOWEVER, SUCH INSTANCES ARE UNUSUAL.

IN US IT MAY WELL BE THAT WE SHALL DEVELOP AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS, ONE FAST, ONE SLOW. THIS MAY BE DUE TO THE FACT THAT WE GERMANS ARE INCLINED TO BE EMOTIONAL AND MORE SENTIMENTAL THAN OUR NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, SO THAT I BELIEVE THAT MY NATIONALITY IS NOW PLAYING A ROLE IN YOUR FEELINGS FOR ME AND THAT MUCH OF WHAT YOUR HEART FEELS AS ANTIPATHY TOWARDS GERMANS IS CAUSED BY THE DIFFERENCE.

BUT I ASK YOU ONE THING IN ALL HONESTY. HAS LOVE IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD EVER BEEN THE PRESERVE OR PROPERTY OF ONE NATION ALONE? THIS IS A STRANGE SUGGESTION AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED AND I TRUST MY COMMON SENSE FIRMLY IN THIS MATTER. ONE THING I CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT, NAMELY THAT OF ELEVEN YEARS OF THE CRUELLEST DEPRIVATION AFTER MY EJECTION FROM POLITE HUMAN SOCIETY AND MY SEPARATION FROM ALL FEMALE HUMAN BEINGS.

THAT IT SHOULD FALL TO YOU TO CROSS MY PATH AND TO YOU TO BE THE ONE FOR WHOM I FEEL A FIRM AND HONEST PASSION TO MAKE ME RESOLVED TO ASK THAT YOU, MEINER KLEINE SABINE, IF YOU MIGHT BECOME MY WIFE.

YOU WILL DOUBTLESS SAY 'WHAT GUARANTEE DO I HAVE OF YOUR GOOD NATURE? I KNOW YOU FAR TOO LITTLE TO DECIDE'

ABOVE ALL, YOU LACK YOUR MOTHER'S ADVICE AND SUPPORT. ON THE ONE HAND YOUR DOUBTS ABOUT ME ARE REASONABLE ENOUGH AND UNDERSTANDABLE, ON THE OTHER, YOUR REMARKS TODAY THAT IT IS A PITY THAT I AM GERMAN, HURT ME. THERE ISN'T MUCH THAT I CAN DO ABOUT MY NATIONALITY. SINCE I HAVE MET YOU I HAVE BECOME DISTRACTED AND CONFUSED FOR LOVE OF YOU. I FIND CONCENTRATION IMPOSSIBLE OTHER THAN ON MY ANXIETY THAT YOUR FEELINGS FOR ME AMOUNT TO NO MORE THAN COMPLETE INDIFFERENCE OR EVEN THAT THE AGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US – YOU 26 AND ME 39- IS JUST IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO ACCEPT.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN TO COPE WITH THESE UNCERTAINTIES. I HAD SO HOPED THAT YOU, LIEBE SABINE, COULD BE TO ME WHAT I NEED AFTER THE MANY CRUEL STROKES OF FATE AND DISAPPOINTMENTS I HAVE HAD TO ENDURE FROM WOMEN.

I NOW WANT TO BE SILENT AND SHALL NOT EVER TOUCH THE TOPIC AGAIN, HOWEVER MUCH INNER PAIN THE AVOIDANCE MAY CAUSE ME, BECAUSE AFTER ALL THIS I SHALL HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT I SHALL NOT FIND HAPPINESS WITH WOMEN AT ANY POINT IN MY LIFE AND WILL REMAIN OSTRACISED. AN OUTCAST FROM THE HEARTS OF WOMEN. I AM NOT CLEAR WHETHER I AM JINXED IN SOME WAY OR AM I REALLY SO STUPID THAT WOMEN ARE EXPLOITING MY STUPIDITY AND GOOD NATURE?

I CERTAINLY DON'T HAVE ANY INFERIORITY COMPLEX, BUT SOMETIMES I HAVE TO ASK REPEATEDLY 'FATE, WHY DO YOU PERSECUTE ME SO? MISFORTUNE, WHY DO YOU ALWAYS APPEAR WHEN I AM EXPECTING HAPPINESS?'

SOMETIMES I AM SO INTIMIDATED BY MY DESTINY THAT I HARDLY RECOGNIZE MYSELF. AND YET, AGAIN AND AGAIN I BEGIN TO TRUST YOU WOMEN ONCE MORE AND IMAGINE THEY CANNOT BE ALL THE SAME. REPEATEDLY AFTER ALL THESE CATASTROPHIES AND

STROKES OF FATES WITH WOMEN I HAVE FOUND THE COURAGE TO REBUILD THE EDIFICE OF MY TRUST IN WOMEN AND TODAY, THIRTEEN YEARS LATER, MAKE FOR THE FIRST TIME ONCE MORE AN ATTEMPT TO TRUST A FEMALE SOUL, TO OFFER HER LOVE, TO ASK WHETHER I AM AT LEAST NOT UNACCEPTABLE TO HER AND AGAIN I ALREADY FEAR THAT OTHER FACTORS WILL BRING ABOUT THE 'NO' ANSWER. BUT OF COURSE I CANNOT COMPEL OR BLACKMAIL A WOMAN AND THEREFORE I AM SILENT IF SHE FEELS NOTHING FOR ME. ONE THING, I KNOW WITH CERTAINTY HOWEVER IS, THAT YOU, LIEBE SABINE, WILL HAVE BEEN THE LAST WOMAN BEFORE WHOSE FEET I HAVE LAID DOWN MY HEART AND TO WHOM I HAVE OFFERED MY HAND IN ALL HONESTY.

I WANT, HOWEVER, ALSO TO BE A FRIEND TO YOU DESPITE EVERYTHING AND TO REMAIN SO, BUT FOR THE DIFFERENCE THAT WE SHALL NOT BE PERMITTED TO SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN AND SHALL EXCHANGE OUR THOUGHTS ONLY IN WRITING. I CAN NO LONGER BEAR THE INNER PAIN OF SEEING YOU IN THE FLESH, BECAUSE I GOT TO KNOW AND VALUE YOUR SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL VALUES IN OUR SHORT CONVERSATIONS WHEN WE ARE PHYSICALLY TOGETHER.

AND NOW TO MORE MATERIAL CONCERNS.

YOU HAD ASSURED ME AND GIVEN YOUR HAND ON IT THAT I HAVE YOUR PERMISSION TO LOOK AFTER YOU AND ABOVE ALL CARE FOR YOUR HEALTH AND WELL BEING DURING YOUR TIME HERE. I REQUEST HOWEVER THAT YOU MAKE USE OF THE ITEMS WHICH YOU WILL RECEIVE ON A REGULAR AND DAILY BASIS WITHOUT OBJECTION AND STRICTLY FOR YOUR PERSONAL USE.

I SHALL BE SERIOUSLY ANGRY WITH YOU IF YOU RAISE OBJECTIONS A SECOND TIME TO MY INSTRUCTIONS, WHICH IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO ME.

IT IS 02.00 IN THE MORNING AND I MUST SLEEP AT LAST AND DREAM OF YOU AND YOUR FUTURE. I SHALL TELL YOU ONE DAY WHAT I HAVE DREAMT SO FAR.

WAITING FOR A FAVOURABLE ANSWER OR AT LEAST A LOVING COMMENT AND I HOPE GOOD BYE AND TO YOU TOO, "GET WELL SOON".

I SEND YOU HEARTFELT GREETINGS.

FRANZ

LETTER 5 1-4-1945

5 WEEKS LATER ON MAY 5TH MAUTHAUSEN WAS LIBERATED BY AMERICAN TROOPS.

SUNDAY 1ST APRIL 1945

LIEBE SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN

EASTER SUNDAY

ON RECEIVING, JUST NOW, YOUR DEAR LETTER I FELT BLESSED, THANKS TO MY POSITION IN THE CAMP, WITH A GLIMPSE OF YOUR APPEARANCE (ITSELF A TRANQUILIZER FOR MY BAD NERVES).

I SHOULD LIKE TO WRITE A FEW LINES TO MY RAY OF SUNSHINE, WHICH ARE FULL OF JOY AFTER A DIFFICULT NIGHT.

MY FESTIVAL OF EASTER AND THE BIRTH PANGS OF SPRING – LAMENTATION AND MISERY EVERYWHERE, BUT MY POOR EMOTIONAL RESOURCES ARE INSUFFICIENT TO OFFER HELP IN SO MANY INSTANCES OF NEED. MY NERVES ARE SHATTERED, BUT ONE THING GIVES ME STRENGTH AGAIN AND AGAIN TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF MY WORK HERE.

IN THE FIRM CONVICTION THAT ABOVE ALL THESE LAST FEW DAYS WILL HAVE BEEN THE LAST EASTER AND MAJOR FESTIVAL WHICH WE SHALL HAVE TO EXPERIENCE IN THIS OPPRESSIVE COMMUNITY OF DESTINY, WHICH HAS PROVIDED US WITH SO MANY FRIENDS AND TRUE COMRADES AND WELDED US TOGETHER IN A STRONG BOND IRRESPECTIVE OF THE NATIONALITY OF THESE FRIENDS. AND SO, LIEBE SABINE, LET US IN LOYALTY AND HONEST FELLOWSHIP, WHATEVER FORM IT EVENTUALLY MAY TAKE, LOOK OUR FATE STRAIGHT IN THE FACE AND FIGHT HAND IN HAND AGAINST PERDITION AND DEATH, IN THE HOPE OF A BETTER FUTURE AND PERHAPS OF AN ETERNAL BOND BETWEEN US.

YES, LIEBE SABINE, YOUR 'HAPPY EASTER' WAS QUITE RIGHT EVEN IF EASTER WILL NOT BE WITHOUT HARDSHIP. BUT FREEDOM WILL SOON BE HERE, PERHAPS EVEN MORE IMMINENT THAN MY PREDICTIONAND THEN?

MORE ON THIS SUBJECT LATER.

YOU ASK IF I TOO HAVE THE FEELING OF A HEALTHY FRIENDSHIP IN OUR RELATIONSHIP AND AM ALSO HAPPY TO THE SAME DEGREE AS YOU ARE.

YES AND YES A SECOND TIME, THOUGH I MUST MODERATE IT THE WAY I EXPRESS IT.

YOU COULD EASILY BE IRRITATED OR EVEN ANGRY AT WHAT I MIGHT WRITE. IT IS HARD FOR ME, BUT I KNOW THAT I HAVE FOUND IN YOU A GOOD, INDEED A VERY GOOD COMRADE AND FRIEND WHO DESERVES BEING CARED FOR AND PROTECTED WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND IF YOUR MOTHER HAS RECEIVED THE LETTER BEFORE EASTER, THEN SHE WILL KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT HER 'SUNSHINE' CHILD IS IN GOOD HANDS AND WILL

SUFFER NO PAIN THIS EASTER, BECAUSE HER DEAR LITTLE SABINE –CHILD IS ABSENT FROM THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

TELL ME, MEINE LIEBE, NAUGHTY GIRL, WHY YOU CONSTANTLY TELL ME TO SEND NOTHING MORE TO YOU AND TO STOP SPOILING YOU. EXPLAIN YOURSELF.

WOULD YOU NOT DO THE SAME IF OUR POSITIONS WERE REVERSED?

IT IS MY HOLY MISSION AND DUTY TO HELP ANYONE WHO IS IN NEED AND CLOSE TO PHYSICAL COLLAPSE EVEN IF ON OCCASION THE ODD UNWORTHY INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS FROM MY EFFORTS. BUT IN YOUR CASE, MEIN LIEBES SABINSCHEN, THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE MASSIVELY AND FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT. THE DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND OTHER CAMP MATES BEING THAT OF CHALK AND CHEESE.

THEREFORE LET US HAVE NO FURTHER MENTION OF PAMPERING AND INDULGING, OTHERWISE MY LITTLE SUNSHINE I COULD GET ANGRY WITH YOU, DO YOU HEAR?

WHAT IS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO ME AND GIVES ME JOYS OF UNKNOWN PROPORTIONS IS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT YOU ENJOY THE FOOD AND THAT YOUR APPETITE RETURNS OF ITS OWN ACCORD. FOR NATURE REQUIRES IN A HEALTHY HUMAN BEING GOOD HEALTH AS BY RIGHT.

I AM OVERJOYED TO LEARN THAT THE LUNCH WHICH I PREPARED FOR YOU MYSELF TASTED GOOD.

(YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ME IN THE ROLE OF COOK). SO I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY OBJECTIONS IN THE FUTURE, OK?

IF WE ARE TO BE FRIENDS YOU WILL HAVE TO PUT UP WITH MY PAMPERING A LITTLE. I REFER OFCOURSE TO OUR LIVES HERE, CONSTRAINED BY CIRCUMSTANCES.

OUTSIDE? WELL, WE SHALL SEE. YES, LITTLE FRIEND SABINE, I HAVE BEEN DRINKING MILK AND FRUIT JUICE TO RECOVER AND KNOW ITS VALUE, BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT PREFER TO HAVE MADE YOURSELF A COFFEE OR A PUDDING OR PERHAPS SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT, OR HAVE SOMEONE MAKE YOU AN OMELETTE. BUT IF YOU LIKE WHAT I BROUGHT, THEN WE CAN PROVIDE MILK ETC ON A DIFFERENT OCCASION.

I HOPE THAT MY LITTLE FRIEND SABINE WILL THEN GROW HEALTHY. YOU ALREADY KNOW MY DIAGNOSIS FOR YOUR RECOVERY. YOU SHOULD, INDEED, MUST EAT, OTHERWISE THERE WILL BE TROUBLE.

AS REGARDS YOUR DAMAGED FOOT, I HAVE JUST SOUGHT THE OPINION OF OUR DOCTOR AND DESCRIBED YOUR SYMPTOMS TO HIM. HIS OPINION IS THAT THESE ARE NO MORE THAN NORMAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE HEALING PROCESS, WHICH I ACCEPT, BUT ON MY INSISTENCE HE WILL INSPECT YOUR FOOT TOMORROW.

IN GENERAL PAIN IS NORMAL DURING INITIAL ATTEMPTS AT WALKING, PARTICULARLY IN THE GROIN AND AROUND SWOLLEN GLANDS, AS WELL AS THE BREAK ITSELF.

IF THE PAIN ARISES FROM A DIFFERENT SOURCE, THE DOCTOR WILL XRAY THE AREA. BE BRAVE MY LIEBE SABINE, AND DON'T BE ANXIOUS. BE AWARE THAT I STAND GUARD OVER YOU AND YOU ARE NOT ALONE HERE IN THE CAMP. THAT I AM ACTIVE IN YOUR INTERESTS, THAT YOUR WORRIES ARE ALSO MY WORRIES AND THAT I AM HAPPY TO BEAR THEIR BURDEN WHENEVER AND HOWEVER IT PROVES NECESSARY. BE CAREFREE, MY SMALL AND BRAVE FRIEND. THE SUNSHINE IS NOT FAR AWAY AND I MUST MAINLY BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DO NOT GET TOO MUCH OF IT IN ONE GO AND SUFFER AN ATTACK OF SUNBURN, SO THAT THERE IS NO SUN LEFT FOR ME. SO CHIN UP, SABINE, BE OF GOOD CHEER!

IN THE MATTER OF YOU AND YOUR FELLOW INMATE IN THE BED BEHIND YOURS, I HAVE SPOKEN WITH THE DOCTOR WHO IS AWARE OF THE CASE. HE INTENDS TO TAKE THE MATTER UP. WHAT I AM ABLE TO DO, PLEASE BELIEVE ME LIEBE SABINE, I SHALL DO FOR YOU WOMEN JUST AS WILLINGLY AS I DO FOR US MEN, PERHAPS EVEN MORE WILLINGLY OUT OF A SENSE OF TACT AND MY INNER MOST INSTINCTS. BUT FOR TODAY IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE FOR THE DOCTOR TO DO ANYTHING SINCE THE GATES TO THE CAMP ARE NOW CLOSED. BUT TOMORROW IT WILL BE WITH COMPLETE CERTAINTY.....

AS REGARDS NADJA, I HAVE NO DEEPER INSIGHT INTO HER DUTIES AND HER EXPERTISE, BUT I BELIEVE THAT SHE IS DEFINITELY TRYING TO DO HER BEST IF SHE HAS THE MEANS TO DO SO.

YES, SUCH CASES AND EVENTS ARE PARTICULARLY SAD AND MANY A YOUNG AND BLOOMING HUMAN BEING SHAMEFULLY PERISHES UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. SUCH HUMAN SUFFERING ONLY INTENSIFIES IN ME A HATRED OF SUCH BRUTE FORCE AND ITS STOOGES AND HENCHMEN EVEN MORE THAN BLAZES CURRENTLY WITHIN ME.

ABOUT THIS MATTER I SHOULD LIKE AT SOME POINT TO TALK TO YOU WHEN WE LIVE IN FREEDOM. IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE I TAKE THE VIEW THAT THERE IS NO GREATER CRUELTY THAN THE TORTURE THAT IS SUFFERED BY THOSE IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS.

MY LITTLE RAY OF SUNSHINE, YOU WROTE YOU ARE CURIOUS WHETHER YOU WILL GET A LETTER FROM ME TODAY. WELL, OF COURSE YOU WILL. I DON'T WANT TO REVEAL TO YOU HOW MUCH I LONGED FOR THE ONE YOU HAVE JUST SENT TO ME AND THE JOY I FELT WHEN ASSINKA DELIVERED IT. I AM RATHER CURIOUS WHETHER HE WILL REVEAL TO YOU WHAT I WAS DOING AT THE TIME I RECEIVED AND READ YOUR LETTER.

HIS COMMENT TO ME WAS THAT HE HAD NEVER BEFORE SEEN SUCH A GOOD HUMAN BEING IN GERMANY AND YOU SHOULD BEAR IN MIND HE STUDIED IN RUSSIA TO BECOME A TEACHER AND IS THEREFORE BY NO MEANS WITHOUT INTELLIGENCE. PLEASE DON'T ASK HIM ABOUT IT!

PEACE! YOU ASK ME IF I HAVE FOUND ANY. YES AND YES A SECOND TIME. YOU PROMISED ME IN PERSON THAT YOU COULD GIVE ME YOUR ANSWER WHEN YOU ARE BACK AT HOME AND I WILL WILLINGLY WAIT FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, HOWEVER PAINFUL THAT MAY BE FOR ME. WHENEVER, FOR INSTANCE, IN THE QUIET HOURS OF THE NIGHT I THINK

ABOUT OUR SITUATION AND THROUGH INNER PAIN CANNOT SLEEP, I RESOLVE
NONETHELESS TO WAIT AND TO PUT NO PRESSURE ON YOU.

LIEBE KLEINE SABINE, YOU WRITE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE GIVEN ME AN EASTER
PRESENT TOO. YES, BUT WHAT EXACTLY? YOU ALREADY HAVE GIVEN ME SO MUCH
SUNSHINE AND MORE SUNSHINE. AND I HOPE ITS RAYS WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE MY
LIFE WITH PURPOSE AND HAPPINESS. THOUGH THERE IS THE ONE THING I WOULD HAVE
WISHED FOR TO COMPLETE MY LIFE'S HAPPINESS. I BOTH HAVE TO AND WISH TO BE
SILENT ON THE MATTER UNTIL YOUR HEART REACHES A DECISION.

ONE OPTION IS NOT OPEN TO ME, NAMELY TRYING TO FORGET YOU. IT WOULDN'T BE
POSSIBLE. YOU HAVE ALREADY TAKEN TOO CENTRAL A ROLE IN MY THOUGHTS, MY DAILY
LIFE AND MY AFFECTIONS AND THIS ROLE I INTEND TO PRESERVE LOYALLY AND
HONOURABLY FOR YOU FOREVER, EVEN IF YOUR 'NO' WOULD HAVE SUCH A
CATASTROPHIC EFFECT ON ME.

BUT I COULD NOT FORGET MY LITTLE SABINE EVER, COME WHAT MAY.

I THEREFORE ASK YOU MOST IMPLORINGLY, DO NOT WRITE TO ME ON THE SUBJECT OF
YOUR DECISION AS LONG AS YOUR HEART HAS NOT REACHED A CONCLUSION. TELL ME
HOWEVER, DIRECTLY AND HONESTLY WHEN YOU ARE READY TO 'BE MINE FOR ALL TIME'

IT HURTS ME TOO MUCH TO BE REMINDED OF MY UNCERTAINTY AND I WISH ABOVE ALL
TO BE A DEAR FRIEND TO YOU, EVEN IF IT IS NECESSARY FOR ME TO DO WITHOUT THAT
WHICH I LONG FOR AND PLUNGE MY WHOLE LONGING AND HOPING INTO THE CRUELLEST
DEPTH OF DESPAIR, OR DO YOU REALLY WISH TO HURT ME, MEINE LIEBE SABINE
SONNENSCHEN?

NO! YOU ARE TOO HONOURABLE FOR THAT AND WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO. YOU ARE TOO
HONEST AND I AM SO PROUD OF YOU AND YOUR CHARACTER AND BEARING AND
THEREFORE OFFER YOU LOYALTY AND COMRADESHIP UNTIL YOU YOURSELF WISH TO
SPEAK ABOUT IT OR PRESENT ME WITH A SIGN OF YOUR LOVE.

IF I WERE PERMITTED BUT ONE REQUEST MOTIVATED BY MY HONOURABLE DISPOSITION
AND COMRADESHIP AS A FRIEND AND IT WERE TRULY GRANTED BY YOUR HEART, THEN I
SHALL BE SERENE AND SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT YOUR FAVOUR AND GOODWILL
WILL ALWAYS SHINE ON ME. PLEASE DO NOT THINK ILL OF MY REQUEST.

THIS WOULD BE MY SMALL EASTER WISH. THE LARGE ONE WILL SOON BE UPON US OF ITS
OWN ACCORD.

NOW TO THE LETTER OF DR STEYNS. I HAVE JUST THIS MINUTE TRIED TO REACH HIM AND
I SHOULD LIKE TO MEET HIM AND FIND OUT WHAT I CAN DO FOR HIM, WHICH I SHALL DO
IN RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST AND THE STRONG COMRADESHIP FOR YOU AND ALL MY
DEAR CONFEDERATES AND FRIENDS. THUS I SHALL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHEN AND IF
HE APPEARS AND WHAT HIS CONCERNS AMOUNT TO, WHICH WILL CERTAINLY BECOME
APPARENT FROM OUR CONVERSATION. IT IS ALWAYS A JOY TO ME AND ALL THE MORE

SO WHEN YOU DISCOVER A BELOVED ACQUAINTANCE AND FELLOW COUNTRYMAN FROM YOUR HOMELAND, WHO HELPED YOU AT SOME POINT.

THUS IT IS ENTIRELY RIGHT THAT MY HELP SHOULD BENEFIT HIM TOO. BUT I MUST ADVISE YOU OF ONE THING, MY DEAR CHILD SABINE, MAKE NO LISTS OF NAMES. IN YOUR OWN INTERESTS AND THOSE OF ALL YOUR DUTCH WOMEN AND COMRADES. IT COULD EASILY BE WRONGLY UNDERSTOOD IF SUCH A LIST WERE TO BE FOUND IN THE CURRENT REGIME OF STRICT AND DETAILED CHECKS AND CONTROL VISITS.

IT WOULD MEAN DEATH FOR MANY OF YOU, INCLUDING YOU IF YOUR NAME WERE MENTIONED. SO PLEASE, WORD OF MOUTH ONLY, NOTHING IN WRITING. AFTER YOUR COMRADE HAS BEEN IN THE BUNKER, HERE OR IN VUGHT, THEY ARE BEING CRUELLY VIGILANT OF EVERYTHING HE DOES.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR WISHES I WILL DO ALL I CAN FOR HIM AND YOUR WISH MY HEART INTERPRETS AS A COMMAND.

I WILL REPORT BACK TO YOU ON ANY CONTACT I MAKE WITH HIM.

AS FAR AS THE FEMALE CAMP GUARD IS CONCERNED, PLEASE DON'T WORRY, YOU HAVE FREE PASSAGE TO ME. THEIR POSITIONS IN MY OFFICE ARE NOT GOING TO BE CHANGED, BUT ALL FOUR OF THEM ARE IN MY POWER AND I AM HERR DR GEBELE TO THEM.

THEY ARE NOT GOING TO BETRAY THEIR SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

WHO WERE YOUR IMPORTANT VISITORS, I WONDER? I HOPE THEY WERE FRIENDLY.

OF COURSE I CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH PYJAMA TROUSERS, MY LITTLE SUNSHINE. PLEASE REMIND ME ABOUT IT WHEN I AM NOT DISTRACTED AND CAN THINK STRAIGHT. JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU WISH FOR AND I AM ALWAYS OVERJOYED TO PROVIDE IT.

ON THE SUBJECT OF YOUR LOW SPIRITS MY FRIEND. WHAT IS WRONG WITH MY DEAREST? DON'T BE DESPONDENT PLEASE. WHAT NADJA SAID TO YOU IS OF COURSE RUBBISH. IT IS NOW ONLY A MATTER OF DAYS. IN FOUR WEEKS YOU WILL BE FREE TO GO. MOREOVER, THE DOCTOR HIMSELF WILL SORT OUT THE OTHER MATTER TOMORROW. YOU JUST NEED TO BE PATIENT MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL.

AND NOW TO THE STATE OF THE WAR.

VERY MUCH TO THE ADVANTAGE OF OUR FRIENDS, THE ROUTE, IE. THE FRONT IS ALREADY 20 KILOMETERS THE OTHER SIDE OF VIENNA ALONG A 400 KM WIDE FRONT STRETCHING INTO CZECHOSLOVAKIA. IN BAVARIA THERE HAVE BEEN FURTHER AND SERIOUS ENEMY ADVANCES AND LOSS OF CONTROL IN TOWNS ALL OVER THE PLACE.

IN THE WEST THE REPORTS HAVE BEEN WHOLLY ENCOURAGING, FAR EXCEEDING MY PREDICTIONS BY AN ENORMOUS MARGIN OF ERROR.

AN EARLY END TO HOSTILITIES IS POSSIBLE. THE TROOPS HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED MUTINIES AND MASS DESERTION, SUBVERSION OF ALL KINDS AND AT ALL LEVELS. LACK OF MUNITION AND STARVATION HAVE BROKEN OUT WITHIN THE GREATER GERMAN

REICH. PLEASE, MEINE LIEBE SABINE, GATHER YOUR POSSESSIONS ABOUT YOU IN GRADUAL READINESS. WHEN THE TIME COMES I SHALL GET YOU OUT AND INTO SAFETY.

IN CONCLUSION, DR STEYNS HAS STILL NOT APPEARED AND WITH THAT NEWS I HAVE TO FINISH MY LONG LETTER IN THE HOPE THAT I CAN FIND PEACE IN SLEEP.

I SEND YOU HEARTFELT GREETINGS.

FRANZ

YOUR UNDERGARMENTS ETC SHOULD GO IN WITH THE WASHING.

WERE THE CLOTHES OK?

LETTER 6

4TH APRIL 1945

SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN!

IN THE FIRM CONVICTION THAT YOU CAN NOW WALK BETTER AND THE PAIN WILL CONTINUE TO DECLINE, I SHOULD LIKE TO PLEAD WITH YOU IN YOUR OWN INTEREST. IN RESPECT OF THE COMING WAR EVENTS, THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTISE WALKING, SO THAT YOU ARE COMFORTABLY MOBILE WHEN THE TIME COMES.

ON A DIFFERENT MATTER, I MUST ASK YOUR FORGIVENESS ON BEHALF OF L'N', WHO WAS BESTIALLY DRUNK YESTERDAY, ON ACCOUNT OF HIS MEANNESS AND ESPECIALLY HIS CRUDE LANGUAGE TOWARDS YOU. HE SHOULD HAVE APOLOGISED TO YOU ANYWAY AFTER THE CRITICISM LEVELLED AT HIM BY THE DOCTOR AND OTHERS.

I SHALL LOOK INTO THE MATTER OF YOUR WASHING MORE DEEPLY.

YOU WILL RECEIVE A LONGER LETTER THAN USUAL FROM ME TODAY.

GREETING FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

YOUR FRANZ

LETTER 7

APRIL 4TH 1945

LIEBE SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN!

I AM JUST RETURNING FROM WORK AT 0.2.00 IN THE MORNING. IT IS A BUSY TIME AT THE MOMENT. I AM IN RECEIPT OF YOUR DEAR LETTER WITH TODAY'S DATE ON IT AND AT THE LAST MOMENT ALSO OF YOUR WASHING, WHICH HAD ENDED UP WITH THE DOCTOR BY MISTAKE.

MY HEARTFELT THANKS BY THE WAY FOR YOUR LETTER, THOUGH I AM ASTONISHED AT ITS CONTENTS.

NOW TO YOUR LETTER FIRST OF ALL. I MUST CLEARLY STATE MY POSITION FOR YOU.

SO THERE IS TALK OF A 'POSSIBLE' RELEASE; THAT IS TO SAY OF A SPECIFIC EXCHANGE ROUTE FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF RELEVANT NATIONALITIES LIKE HOLLAND, NORWAY AND DENMARK, BUT WE ARE NOT DEALING HERE WITH AN IMMINENT EVENT AS THESE COUNTRIES NEED TO CONFER FIRST VIA SWITZERLAND AND THE RED CROSS IN GENEVA; THAT IS TO SAY, MORE DETAILED AND PRECISE CIRCUMSTANCES NEED TO BE NEGOTIATED, AS THESE, AS OF TODAY'S REPORTED STATE OF PLAY, CURRENTLY LACK ALL OFFICIAL GUIDE LINES.

I HAVE JUST BEEN BUSY FINALISING THIS DOCUMENT. SO THERE IS A POSSIBILITY AND THEORETICAL CONTINGENCY THAT YOU ALL WILL BE RELEASED AND I WHOLEHEARTEDLY REJOICE AT THIS. ALL THE MORE FOR YOU AND YOUR MOTHER AS WELL AS FOR YOUR BELOVED FELLOW NATIONALS, AND THIS MAY, UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES HAPPEN SWIFTLY AND/OR VERY QUIETLY.

IN ANY CASE, THE EVACUATION LISTS AND THE COMPILING OF NAMED PARTICIPANTS OF THE AFFECTED NATIONALITIES WERE COMPLETED TODAY. AMONGST THEM ALSO A LITTLE SABINE ZUUR. I TOOK ALL THE MORE PLEASURE IN WORKING ON THE LIST THINKING AND HOPING THAT MY WORKING THROUGH THE NIGHT MAY HAVE SOME POINT AND SENSE, IN THAT IT MAY ENABLE YOU ALL TO GET HOME.

IN CONCLUSION, FOR YOUR INFORMATION, OUR SUPERIORS ARE VERY KEEN TO ARRANGE THIS PROCESS, APPARENTLY FOR REASONS CONNECTED WITH THE SAFETY OF SPECIFIC NATIONALITIES, BUT IN REALITY THE TOP BRASS ARE SCARED WITLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THEM PERSONALLY, AS THE MATTER COULD NEGATIVELY AFFECT THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

THEY ARE SIMPLY TRYING TO RESCUE THEIR REPUTATIONS, THESE GANGSTERS.

YOU LITTLE SUNSHINE, I AM VERY EMBARRASSED-PLEASE FORGIVE ME- FOR MAKING YOU WAIT SO LONG, ESPECIALLY AFTER YOUR QUESTION WAS PHRASED SO URGENTLY.

IN RESPONSE THEREFORE I SHALL WRITE TO YOU THROUGH THE NIGHT UNTIL THE MORNING.

I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET HOME AT ALL TODAY, OTHERWISE YOU WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE HEARD FROM ME ALREADY, SINCE I WOULD NOT WISH YOU TO DIE OF CURIOSITY AND JOY.

YOU WRITE, MY LITTLE SUNSHINE SEELCHEN, YOU MY LITTLE SABINE, THAT IT IS VERY REGRETTABLE AFTER WE HAVE GOT TO KNOW EACH OTHER SO LITTLE, THAT WE SHOULD NOW ALREADY BE PARTED ONCE MORE AND THAT I AM LIKELY TO FORGET YOU. NO MY DEAR GIRL, I HAVE TOLD YOU OF MY FEELINGS FOR YOU AND THE MEMORY OF MY OWN CHILD INTENSIFIES THEM. I CAN ONLY REASSURE YOU AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT I LOVE YOU MY SABINE SEELCHEN ENDLESSLY AND THAT THIS FLAME CANNOT BE EXTINGUISHED EITHER BY YOU OR ANYONE ELSE.

I KNOW THAT YOUR DEPARTURE WILL HIT ME HARD AND THAT, PERHAPS AT THE KEY MOMENT I MAY BEHAVE IN A SOMEWHAT UNMANLY FASHION FROM A MIXTURE OF JOY AND TEARFUL PAIN, BUT I SHALL ONLY BE HAPPY PROPERLY WHEN YOU ARE RELEASED AND AT HOME AGAIN WITH YOUR DEAR RELATIVES. ONLY THE FUTURE AND FATE WILL REVEAL TO US WHAT IS TO BECOME OF ME AND THEN I SHALL BE PLEASED TO RESUME OUR CORRESPONDENCE AND INDEED COME TO VISIT YOU, BUT ONLY IF YOU FEEL FOR ME MORE THAN FRIENDSHIP. OTHERWISE HOWEVER, I ASK THAT YOU KEEP ME LOYALLY IN REMEMBRANCE AND NEVER FORGET THAT MY CONCERN FOR YOU ALL STEMS FROM COMRADESHIP IN THE TRUEST MEANING OF THE WORD, BUT THAT MY LOVE ENOBLED YOU PERSONALLY. I KNOW AND FEEL NOW, IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT, THAT YOUR DEPARTURE WILL DEVASTATE ME AND THAT I SHALL SUFFER DREADFUL MENTAL PAIN, LOVING AS I MUST, SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN HOLY TO ME. I HAD BUILT FOR YOU IN MY HEART A PURE AND HONEST TEMPLE OF LOVE AND I BELIEVE THAT WHEN YOU ARE AT HOME AGAIN IT WILL COLLAPSE.

I DON'T WISH TO REFLECT ON THIS ANY FURTHER FOR THE MOMENT IN THESE LINES OR I COULD STILL BE SITTING HERE THIS TIME TOMORROW.

I KNOW THAT I AM FORTY YEARS OLD TODAY, AM 'UNFORTUNATELY' GERMAN, MY DEGREE QUALIFICATION AND MY DOCTORATE WERE REVOKED BY THE PEOPLE'S COURT OF JUSTICE ON 20TH AUGUST 1936 ON THE BASIS OF MY CONVICTION. I CANNOT AND WILL NOT RETURN TO LIFE IN THIS UNJUSTLY BIASED GERMAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE FROM WHICH I HAVE BEEN EJECTED MERELY BECAUSE I SOUGHT TO BRING TO SAFETY HUMAN BEINGS WHO HAD BEEN PERSECUTED AND ROBBED AND PLUNDERED DOWN TO THE LAST PENNY OF THEIR SAVINGS, JUST FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE MASSES. ELEVEN YEARS FOR THAT- THE HIGH POINT OF MY LIFE, MY YOUTH AND MY SUCCESS. I WAS FORCED TO SACRIFCE MY FUTURE TO THE IGNOMINY OF A REGIME AND THEIR OWN CRIMES, IN ORDER, FINALLY TO END UP LOVELESS AND DISHONOURED IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP, BRANDED AS A BLACKGUARD AND A CRIMINAL.

DO YOU IMAGINE, MY LITTLE SABINE SEELCHEN, THESE THINGS CAN HAPPEN TO A HUMAN BEING WHO STILL POSSESSES SOME INTEGRITY AND SENSE OF HONOUR

WITHOUT LEAVING ANY PERMANENT SCARS, AS IF IT WERE MERELY A PASSING EPISODE IN A HUMAN LIFE? I HAVE BORNE THESE ELEVEN YEARS WITH GRAVE DIFFICULTY, ALBEIT WITH AN INTENSE HATRED OF THOSE WHO STOLE EVERYTHING FROM ME AND PROTECTED THEIR OWN CRONIES WITH DECREES AND LEGISLATION.

SABINE, DO YOU THINK THAT I SHALL EVER FIND MY WAY BACK INTO A WORLD OF SUCH RELATIONSHIPS AND REGIMENTATION? WHERE IS THE WOMAN TODAY, WHO CAN LOVE A MAN OF MY AGE WITH SUCH A HISTORY OF INFAMY AND SERIOUS DISHONOUR HANGING OVER HIM? WHERE IS THE WOMAN WHO IS ABLE TO SUMMON UP SYMPATHY FOR ALL THE CRUEL DEPREVATIONS AND MISERABLE SETBACKS I HAVE SUFFERED? WOMEN WILL NEVER BELIEVE OR UNDERSTAND; NEVER BE ABLE TO IMAGINE THEMSELVES IN SUCH A SITUATION WHERE DEEP SADNESS WAS MORE OR LESS A LIFE SENTENCE. BUT YES, YOU SABINE, KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE TO DRINK FROM THE CHALICE OF FATE UNTIL IT IS EMPTY. TO CARRY OUT AND TOLERATE THE HARDEST TASKS AND THE MEANEST BRUTALITIES IN EVERY FORM AND EVERY CONTEXT. YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT MY HEART LONGS FOR A FELLOW HUMAN BEING, FOR A WOMAN WHO HAS SHARED THE SAME FATE IN TRUE COMRADESHIP AND LOVE AND IS A FEMALE COMRADE OF SHARED MISERY AND MASS ANNIHILATION, ABLE TO SHARE THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL THESE APPALLING MARTYRDOMS WITHOUT HERSELF TREMBLING OR SHUDDERING; I DON'T KNOW WHETHER ALL THAT CAN OR SHOULD WELD TOGETHER, THROUGH A SERIES OF STROKES OF FATE, TWO HUMAN BEINGS WITH AN INDESTRUCTABLE CHAIN INTO AN ETERNAL AND UNALTERABLE PARTNERSHIP FOR LIFE. YES –AND IN ALL HONESTY, I LOVE YOU TO THE LAST DROP OF BLOOD AND THUS I ASK YOU, IF WE ARE NOT TO MEET AGAIN IN LIFE, TELL ME JUST ONE THING. IF YOU BOTH WISH AND ARE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND HOW I FEEL, WILL YOU PLEASE OFFER ME YOUR HAND AS MY WIFE? I PROMISE YOU WILL NEVER HAVE CAUSE TO REGRET THE DECISION. NO DISAPPOINTMENT WILL EVER ROB YOU OF WHAT YOU DESIRE OR MAKES YOU UNHAPPY.

GIVE ME JUST A SMALL SIGN, IF YOU KNOW WHAT PAIN, DISTRESS AND SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION ASSAILS ME, I BELIEVE YOU WOULD ACT TO HELP ME. I KNOW THERE IS A WORLD OF DISTANCE BETWEEN THE TWO OF US; I, DISHONoured AND OLD, YOU YOUNG AND CELEBRATED. OTHERS WOULD HAVE ENDED THEIR LIVES IN A COWARDLY FASHION GIVEN THE LENGTH OF MY SENTENCE. THIS I COULD NOT DO, PARTLY TO SPITE THE HUMILIATION AND PARTLY ON ACCOUNT OF MY CHILD, BECAUSE I WISH TO REMAIN TRUE TO MY NATURE, THOUGH I NOW FACE THE ULTIMATE FATE.

I THINK BACK OVER ALL THESE ISSUES WHICH LIFE HAS AFFLICTED ME WITH, IF I HAVE EVER ACTED MORALLY OR KINDLY TOWARDS MY FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS IN THIS SPHERE OF HORROR, THE THOUGHT OF SOME KIND OF MERCIFUL SAMARITAN ALWAYS ENTERS MY MIND. BUT IF I REFLECT ON THOSE DISAPPOINTMENTS AND DISGRACEFUL INTRIGUES, ON THE WOUNDS WHICH WOMEN HAVE VENGEFULLY AND REMORSEFULLY INFLICTED ON ME, I WOULD RATHER FORGO HAPPINESS FOR EVER IN THE FACE OF ETERNAL REMEMBERANCE AND THE TRAGEDY OF SUCH A FATE AND SIMPLY REPLY LIKE WITH LIKE. BUT I CANNOT DO THAT, BECAUSE IT IS IN MY NATURE ALWAYS TO BE MOST IMPRESSED

BY THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS I AND HAVE NOT LOST THE COURAGE TO PREVAIL.

AND SO, LITTLE SABINE SEELCHEN, I IMAGINE WHOLE BOOKS HAVE YET TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SUBJECT AND I HAVE NEITHER TALENT NOR INCLINATION TO WRITE THEM. I'D PREFER TO REMAIN SILENT AS EVEN THE MOST ELOQUENT WORDS WILL NOT SUFFICE IF ONE'S HEART AND MAGNANIMITY ARE NOT IN IT AND THE HONESTY OF TWO HEARTS IS NOT ASSURED.

YES! MY LITTLE SEELCHEN, WHAT BECOMES OF ME IS WRITTEN IN THE STARS AND AS YET THEY HAVE NOT SEEN FIT TO PASS ON THE INFORMATION TO ME.

LET'S HOPE FOR THE BEST AND PUT OUR TRUST IN FATE; I GUESS THAT WILL ENSURE THAT WE ARE DISAPPOINTED. PLEASE DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME HOWEVER, OR WASTE TIME WONDERING ABOUT MY FATE. NOT EVEN I AM GOING TO BE ABLE TO AVOID WHATEVER MY DESTINY HAS IN STORE FOR ME. FATE IS CERTAIN TO CARVE UP OUR LIVES WITH CRUDE STROKES WHATEVER WE DO. BUT I REJOICE OVER YOUR SYMPATHY WITH MY POSITION AND WILL NOT YET RENOUNCE THE LITTLE HOPE I HAVE LEFT. THE LITTLE SPARK OF HOPE COULD AFTER ALL FLARE UP INTO SOMETHING MUCH BRIGHTER IF YOUR IS MENTIONED.

ANYWAY, I SHOULD LIKE TO REVEAL TO YOU TODAY THE GOAL I HAVE SET MYSELF FOR LIFE AFTER OUR RELEASE. I HAVE ALREADY ARRANGED IN WRITING WITH THE RELEVANT PARTIES ABROAD FOR MY FUTURE THERE. I SHALL SELL MY PARENTAL INHERITANCE IN AS FAR AS SUCH IS STILL AVAILABLE TO ME AFTER THE TOTAL OBLITERATION OF MY HOME.

INITIALLY I SHOULD LIKE TO ESTABLISH MYSELF IN VALENCIA AND TO SET UP HOME THERE AND A BUSINESS BASED ON AUTOMOBILES OR AEROPLANES OR THE RETAILING OF TYPEWRITERS AND DEALERSHIPS, OR SETTING UP AN OFFICE-BASED BUSINESS BUILT ON MY PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AS AN ENGINEER. I KNOW I AM A GERMAN AND EVERY GERMAN AFTER THIS CALAMITOUS WAR WILL WANDER AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD STIGMATIZED, INERADICALLY JUST LIKE THE BRANDING OF A SLAVE. I, HOWEVER, DO NOT SUFFER WITH ANY INFERIORITY COMPLEXES IN PERSONAL TERMS, BUT RATHER, I HAVE THE COURAGE TO REBUILD MY LIFE AS AN INNOCENT FRIEND OF THOSE HISTORICAL VICTIMS WHO WERE IN DIRE STRAITS AS A RESULT OF THE CRIMES OF OTHER EUROPEANS. EVEN NOW, WHEN I AM ABOUT TO ENTER UPON THE AUTUMN OF MY LIFE, I FACE THIS TASK ANEW AND THUS WITH EVEN GREATER ENERGY.

MOREOVER, I KNOW THAT IN MY HOMETOWN YOUNG GIRLS, WHO IN THE MEANTIME HAVE GROWN UP INTO MATURE WOMEN, WOULD BE WAITING FOR ME IN ANTICIPATION OF THE MATERIAL ADVANTAGE OF A SWIFT MARRIAGE ALLIANCE, OR PERHAPS THEY MIGHT CONVINCED THEMSELVES HAPPILY INTO THE ROLE OF MY SOULMATE FOR LIFE, OUT OF SYMPATHY AND MERCY ON A VICTIM OF THE HARDSHIPS OF WAR, AS THEY SEE IT.

WELL, THANKS FOR THE THOUGHT, BUT I NEED TO GET AWAY, THE FARTHER THE BETTER, ON MY OWN WITH MY WIFE AND DEAR CHILDREN. I'D BUILD A BEAUTIFUL HOME FOR MYSELF AND MY FAMILY ALONE, LOYAL AND TRUE TO THE OATH WHICH I HAVE SWORN IN MARRIAGE.

SO NOW YOU HAVE GAINED A BRIEF GLANCE INTO MY HEART AND MY TRUE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT LIFE. I HAVE LAID MY VULNERABILITY AND MY HEART'S CONTENTS AT YOUR FEET AND NOW YOU KNOW MY INNERMOST FEELINGS.

NOW, IN CONCLUSION, I SHOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS AND DISCUSS WHAT YOU WRITE AT THE END OF YOUR LETTER.

IN CONNECTION WITH THE AVANKA MATTER, THERE IS NO DISLOYALTY INVOLVED AS FAR AS I CAN SEE. HE HIMSELF CONFESSED ALL TO THE DOCTOR/PROF AND THE LATTER ACCOMPANIED AVANKA WHEN HE CAME TO ME. SO I THINK YOU ARE MISTAKEN IN WHAT YOU WRITE.

YES! UNFORTUNATELY I WAS NOT ABLE TO COME AND SEE YOU YESTERDAY EVENING, AS THE GATE WAS LOCKED UNTIL THE HAUPTSTORMFUHRER APPEARED. I HAD SUCH A GOOD SUPPER PREPARED FOR YOU, BUT HAD TO RETREAT WITHOUT REACHING YOU.

YOUR WASHING IS BEING COMPLETED TODAY, THURSDAY, AND WILL BE IRONED TOMORROW. I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH DR STEYNS TODAY AND HE SENDS GREETINGS TO YOU VIA MY ADJUDANT.

IT IS, MEANWHILE, 4.00AM IN THE MORNING AND I CAN NO LONGER FUNCTION PROPERLY. TIREDNESS AND PAIN SUMMON ME TO STOP. WHAT IS ON MY TONGUE, I MAY NO LONGER SAY.

IF THE ISSUE OF YOUR RELEASE SUDDENLY BECOMES IMMINENT, PLEASE SEND NADJA TO CALL ME IMMEDIATELY AND IF WE DON'T SEE ONE ANOTHER AGAIN, MY LITTLE SUNSHINE, PLEASE ALWAYS REMEMBER, THERE IS SOMEONE WHO LOVES YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF HIS HEART, YOU LITTLE SEELCHEN.

AND WILL REMAIN LOYAL TO YOU, WAITING, FREE FROM ALL SADNESS, FOR A SINGLE WORD. A MAN TO WHOSE LIFE YOU GAVE MEANING.

THINK OF OUR MEETING AGAIN PLEASE AND SO I GREET YOU SINCERELY WITH MY BEST WISHES. WIEDERSEHEN.

YOUR FRANZ

FORGIVE THE HANDWRITING TODAY. I AM EXHAUSTED.

LETTER 8

5-4-1945

I HAVE JUST RECEIVED THE LONG AWAITED VISIT FROM DR STEYNS AND AM TOTALLY IN SHOCK AT HIS CONDITION. IT IS VERY REGRETTABLE THAT HE FINDS HIMSELF IN SUCH A POOR PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE AND IN SUCH SERIOUS DECLINE, IN ADDITION TO BEING TOTALLY OUT OF SORTS. I ASSURED HIM OF MY COMPLETE SUPPORT AND AM ALREADY ARRANGING FOR HIM TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM WORK IN THE SICK BAY AND ALLOCATED A BETTER POSITION WHICH WILL ENSURE A BETTER DIET.

I DEPLORE HIS CONDITION GREATLY. MY OPINION OF HIM IS EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH AND HIS TECHNICAL DESCRIPTIONS AS WELL AS HIS PERSONAL MANNER ARE THOSE OF A SENSITIVE MAN. AMONGST OTHER THINGS HE HAS RELATED TO ME THE DETAILS OF HIS SUFFERINGS IN VUGHT AND SO ON AND I AM PLEASED TO HAVE FOUND IN HIM AN UPRIGHT AND GENUINE COMRADE WHOM I AM HAVING TO PLUCK FROM THE CLAWS OF DEATH.

UNFORTUNATELY I CANNOT GO INTO THE DETAILS OF OUR CONVERSATION, BUT ONE THING I SHOULD NOT WISH TO FORGET, NAMELY TO CONVEY TO YOU, MY LITTLE SUNSHINE, HIS WARMEST GREETINGS AND GRATITUDE FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO HELP. HE HAS NOT YET RECEIVED A LIST OF DUTCH WOMEN, BUT WILL DESTROY IT IMMEDIATELY IT ARRIVES. I HAVE JUST WRITTEN TO HIS WIFE AND HOPE VERY MUCH TO BE ABLE TO DO HIM SOME GOOD AND THAT MY EFFORTS IN THIS MATTER WILL NOT PROVE INEFFECTIVE. ALL FURTHER DETAILS BY WORD OF MOUTH WHEN YOU NEXT COME TO MY OFFICE, IN THE FIRM CONVICTION, THAT YOU, MY LITTLE SELCHEN, WILL ALSO BE SATISFIED IN THIS MATTER AND THAT WE SHALL SEE THE AFFAIR IN THE SAME LIGHT. I MOVE ON SWIFTLY TO THE QUESTION WHETHER YOU, MY LITTLE SABINE HEART, RECEIVED MY LETTER TO YOU YESTERDAY AND CAN UNDERSTAND MY PAIN. I SHOULD LIKE TO REQUEST AN ANSWER.

HEARTFELT GREETINGS

YOUR FRANZ

MEIN KLEINER SABINE, LIEBLING.

I LEARNED WITH GREAT JOY THIS AFTERNOON THAT THE EXPECTED CONFERENCE CAME TO A DECISION IN YOUR FAVOUR AND THAT YOU ALL WILL GET HOME VIA THE SWEDISH RED CROSS. FOR ME THIS MEANS THAT TODAY IS A DAY OF GREATER JOY THAN I HAVE YET EXPERIENCED IN THE CAMP OR INDEED AT ALL OVER THE LAST ELEVEN YEARS.

MY ANGEL SABINE IS GOING HOME AND ALTHOUGH I DEPLORE THE FACT, I IN NO WAY REGRET WISHING YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART ALL THE VERY BEST FOR YOUR JOURNEY AND YOUR ARRIVAL IN YOUR HOMELAND.

I ASK FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS THEREFORE IF YOU, POOR LITTLE SABINE, WERE HUNGRY AND THE STUPID BIG BOY FAILED AT THE DECISIVE MOMENT TO PROVIDE YOU WITH ANYTHING TO EAT.

FOR YOUR COMING JOURNEY I WILL GLADLY DO MY BEST TO PROVIDE YOU WITH SOMETHING TASTY AND, IF THE OPPORTUNITY OFFERS ITSELF, TO DELIVER IT AND LOOK INTO YOUR LOVELY EYES. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME, AFTER FALLING IN LOVE WITH YOU SO DEEPLY AFTER SUCH A SHORT TIME - MORE DEEPLY THAN I HAVE EVER LOVED ANY WOMAN BEFORE - TO LOSE YOU AGAIN SO QUICKLY, EVEN IF IT IS PERHAPS FOR NO MORE THAN A SHORT TIME, BUT ENOUGH TO CAUSE ME SERIOUS SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION SUCH THAT IT THREATENS TO CRUSH ME TO DEATH IN ITS SEVERITY.

IF IT IS YOUR WISH I SHALL WILLINGLY COME TO VISIT YOU, DEAR HEART, IN HOLLAND AND RECEIVE YOUR ASSENT TO MARRIAGE THERE, SO THAT I CAN TAKE YOU AND YOUR MOTHER BACK TO MY HOME.

BUT FIRST OF ALL I NEED TO ACQUIRE A HOME AND A FIRM SOURCE OF INCOME ON WHICH TO BUILD AND THAT WILL TAKE TIME AND PATIENCE, SABINE SEELCHEN!

I AM CERTAIN YOU WILL NOT GIVE YOUR HEART AND YOUR ASSENT AND PROMISE YOURSELF TO AN UNWORTHY MAN. NO. IN ACCORDANCE WITH MY PROMISE I INTEND TO HONOUR THE DUTY WHICH MY PERSONALITY AND SENSE OF HONOUR IN LOVE DICTATE TO ME.

WHEN I SHED TEARS OF LOVE AND JOY WHILE READING YOUR LETTERS OR SAYING 'GOODBYE', I KNOW AT LEAST THAT THEY ARE NOT SHED FOR AN UNWORTHY WOMAN OR COMRADE, BUT FOR FIGHTERS AND HEROES OF LIBERATION FROM CONFLICT.

EVEN IF TEMPORARY PAIN IS INVOLVED, I HOPE THAT VERY SOON HEALING BALM WILL FLOW FROM YOUR DEAR MOUTH AND YOUR DEAR HANDS ONTO THE WOUND WHICH ONE NATION HAS INFLICTED UPON AN OTHER. I HAVE SAID TO YOU ALREADY, MY DEAR SABINE, THAT I SHALL HAPPILY GIVE UP MY GERMAN NATIONALITY AND THEN BE NATURALIZED IN SOME OTHER STATE OF WHICH MY WIFE WILL DEFINITELY BE A CITIZEN AND WHICH WOULD DO NO HARM TO THE INTERESTS OF MY CHILDREN.

IN ANY EVENTUALITY,MY SEELCHEN, IF WE NEED TO CHANGE OUR ADDRESSES AND OUR HOME AREA CHANGES ALSO, PLEASE NOTE THAT I SHALL SET UP A PUBLIC SEARCH MESSAGE VIA THE NEWSPAPERS ON THE 1ST,10TH, AND 20TH OF THE MONTH. IN OTHER WORDS, AT TEN DAY INTERVALS, TO ESTABLISH YOUR WHEREABOUTS. SO PAY ATTENTION TO THESE TWO MEDIA AT ALL TIMES AND YOU WILL GET YOUR BIG BOY BACK AGAIN SOON ENOUGH.

ALL THIS MAY TURN OUT TO BE REALITY IF YOUR COUNTRY TOO IS IN COMPLETE RUINS AFTER THE FIGHTING AND YOU NEED TO CHOOSE A DIFFERENT PLACE TO LIVE, JUST AS I SHALL, AND A POLICE SEARCH TURNS OUT TO BE POINTLESS.

THAT'S THE FIRST ISSUE. THE OTHER THING I SHOULD LIKE TO ASK OF YOU, MEINE KLEINER SONNENSCHIN, IS; GIVE ME A SMALL SOUVENIR, EVEN IT IS A SMALL LOCK OF YOUR HAIR. THIS SHALL BE MY LUCKY CHARM.

MY ADDRESS, IT JUST OCCURS TO ME, IS TO BE FOUND IN THE DUDEN GERMAN DICTIONARY I GAVE YOU. I ASK THAT YOU LEAVE THE OTHER BOOK BEHIND FOR GERMAINE FROM ME, AS IT BELONGS TO THE CAMP COMMAND ADMINISTRATOR. YOU WILL DEFINITELY GET A PICTURE OF ME, EVEN IF I HAVE TO SEND IT BY POST AFTER YOU LEAVE.

I SHALL NOT GET ANY POST FROM YOU AS LONG AS THE WAR PERSISTS IN GERMANY, BUT YOU WILL HEAR FROM ME.

AND NOW, TO CLOSE, MY SEELCHEN, PLEASE GREET YOUR DEAR MUM FROM ME (ALTHOUGH SHE DOES NOT KNOW ME) FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART AND PLEASE, SABINE CHILD, I SHOULD BE PROUD TO BE PERMITTED TO MEET HER AND HER CHILDREN AND ABOVE ALL, WOULD ASK IN PARTICULAR FOR HER AFFECTION AND GOODWILL.

IT WILL BE A GREAT JOY FOR ME TO BE ALLOWED TO GET TO KNOW HER AND VALUE HER AND PERHAPS (SOMEWHAT TOO BOLD AND PREMATURE AT THIS STAGE) ALSO BE ALLOWED TO GREET HER AS MY 'MUM' RATHER CHEEKY, I ADMIT.

MY CHILD SABINE, IF YOU KNEW HOW HAPPY AND CHEERFUL I FEEL WHEN I ENTERTAIN SUCH THOUGHTS OF YOU AND A FUTURE IN YOUR COMPANY, THEN YOU WOULD TAKE PLEASURE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP, AS IF I WERE STILL A BOY OF 26 OR EVEN YOUNGER. YOU WILL BE TAKEN ABACK AT FIRST WHEN YOUR BIG BOY FINDS YOU AGAIN WHEN THE WAR IS OVER, AND I AM CURIOUS WHAT YOU WILL HAVE TO SAY ABOUT IT, MY SUNSHINE.

YOU CAN RECKON ON MY FINDING YOU FOUR WEEKS AFTER THE WAR ENDS, WHEN I HAVE SORTED OUT EVERYTHING IN MY HOME TOWN.

NOW TO YOUR REQUEST ABOUT YOUR FRIEND FROM RAVENSBRUCK, I SHALL KEEP YOU INFORMED ABOUT EVERYTHING BY MESSENGER.

IN THE MATTER OF KAHAR, THE PROBLEM SHOULD NOT ARISE.

AS FAR AS YOUR FOOT IS CONCERNED, YOUR PLASTER WILL BE REMOVED TOMORROW. THE PROFESSOR HAS JUST AGREED TO DO THIS ON MY PROMPTING.

PERHAPS WE SHALL MEET ON THAT OCCASION AND HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE OUR LEAVE OF ONE ANOTHER AND SAY A FEW IMPORTANT WORDS; THIS EVENING I AM SO NERVOUS WITH JOY AND LACK A CLEAR HEAD FOR WRITING LETTERS ANY LONGER.

I AM LOST IN MY THOUGHTS OF BEING WITH YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY.

DR STEYNS WILL ACCOMPANY YOU IN THE FIRST GROUP, IF NOT, THEN IN THE SECOND ON 15-4-45, VIA SWITZERLAND. SO, UNTIL YOUR DEPARTURE THEN. IF YOU END UP IN THE SECOND GROUP, YOU CAN COME AND STAY IN MY ROOM IN THE COMMAND BLOCK WHERE YOU WILL BE SAFE AND OUT OF DANGER.

SO. AND NOW, MY SEELCHEN, MEINE LIEBE KLEINE SABINE, SONNENSCHIN, I GREET AND KISS YOU A THOUSAND TIMES IN MY SOUL AND FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART---

FROM YOUR BIG BOY

FRANZ JOSEF----UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN IN HOLLAND, WITH MUM.

PLEASE LEAVE THE SOUVENIR WITH NADJA OR GERMAINE. DITTO THE BOOK.

LETTER 5

MAUTHAUSEN 8TH APRIL 1945

MEIN KLEINER SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN

TODAY I FINALLY FIND THE TIME I HAVE LOOKED FORWARD TO FOR A WHILE, TO READ THROUGH YOUR COMPLETE LETTERS TO ME AND TO RESPOND TO THEM ALL AND OF COURSE PRIMARILY TO YOUR LAST LETTER OF 5TH APRIL AND TO OUR CONVERSATION BY WAY OF A CLEAR AND EXPLICIT ANSWER, IN AS FAR AS THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE IN MY LAST LETTER. I TOO AWAIT A LETTER FROM YOU TODAY FULL OF IMPATIENCE AND WITH GREAT LONGING AND HAVE JUST HEARD, THAT YOU, MY SUNSHINE, ARE IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING TO ME JUST AS I AM TO YOU.

THE MESSENGER I HAD TO EMPLOY TO CONVEY TO YOU, MY LITTLE SABINE, THE FOOD STOVE AND THE FOOD ITSELF TOGETHER WITH THE SALT, YOU WILL HAVE MET. SHE DOES THIS WILLINGLY FOR ME, BECAUSE SHE IS UNDER MY COMMAND. SO YOU CAN CERTAINLY TRUST HER.

I AM REALLY ANNOYED AT THIS APOLOGY OF A TYPEWRITER AND CAN ONLY ASK FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS AT ITS SHORTCOMINGS.

AND NOW TO YOUR LETTER, SABINE. IS IT REALLY TRUE THAT YOU WERE IMPATIENT OVER THE ARRIVAL OF MY LAST LETTER? THAT MUST BE A GOOD SIGN, FOR ME AT LEAST, IF THIS IS SO.

AT THE MOMENT I TOO AM SITTING IN THE OPEN AIR WRITING TO YOU, MY LITTLE SABINE, BUT NEXT TO ME THERE IS NO FRIEND WRITING RECIPES, BUT JUST A MOUNTAIN OF PAPER WORK CONCERNED WITH THE RE DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN DETAINEES. BUT THE WORK WILL HAVE TO WAIT ITS TURN TODAY.

ARE YOU IN THE SUN AS WELL? I HOPE SO. GETTING LOTS OF FRECKLES NO DOUBT. I PRESUME YOU LIKE THEM.

YOUR CRUTCHES WILL ACCOMPANY THIS LETTER TO YOU TODAY AND I HOPE THEY WILL FULFILL THEIR PURPOSE FOR MY DEAREST SABINE AND HELP YOU BACK TO HEALTH WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED.

IN THE MATTER OF THE RE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FOREIGN DETAINEES, NOTHING NEW HAS HAPPENED TODAY AND I AWAIT PROGRESS WITH INCREASING IMPATIENCE, SO THAT I CAN ENSURE THAT YOU AT LEAST ARE SAFE. AS FOR ME, I CAN LOOK AFTER MYSELF.

ON MONDAY 9TH APRIL ALL GERMAN NATIONALS, SPANIARDS AND EASTERN EUROPEANS OF GERMAN EXTRACTION FROM THE GOVERNEMENT AND THE SUDETENLAND PARTS OF POLAND ARE TO BE READY FOR DEPARTURE, AS THEY ARE TO BE EMPLOYED AS TRANSIT GUARDS AND CAMP MILITIA FOR THE PLANNED TOTAL EVACUATION TO INNSBRUCK IN

THE TIROL. AS VIENNA IT SELF FELL TODAY AND THE SURROUNDING AREA HAS ALREADY BEEN OCCUPIED BY OUR "FRIENDS".

THE GENERAL MILITARY SITUATION ON THE EASTERN FRONT IS THEREFORE A SERIOUS MATTER FOR US AND MIGHT EASILY TURN VERY UGLY IF THINGS GO BADLY. OVER THE LAST 24 HOURS LARGE TRANSIT COMPANIES , TOTALLING 16,500 DETAINEES, HAVE BEEN MARSHALLED AND MADE READY TO LEAVE AGAIN FROM HERE AS SOON AS COMMANDED TO DO SO. I AM THEREFORE VERY WORRIED ON YOUR ACCOUNT, MY DEAREST THAT IF AND WHEN WE FINALLY GET GOING, THAT YOU MAY BE STUCK HERE IF YOUR TRANSFER HAS NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED BY THAT TIME.

HOWEVER, HAVE NO FEAR. I SHALL ARRANGE TO STAY BEHIND WITH YOU IF THAT IS WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS. MY LITTLE MAID, YOU WRITE THAT MY LETTER MADE YOU HAPPY AND I HOPE YOU WILL STAY THAT WAY IN THE FUTURE.

WHEN I WRITE LETTERS TO YOU, MY BELOVED, THEN THEY ARE OF COURSE AN EXPRESSION OF MY LOVE AND OUR COMMON INTEREST AND PEACE OF MIND. THE SLEEP I SACRIFICE BY WRITING THROUGH THE NIGHT, I CAN CATCH UP ON THE FOLLOWING MORNING WHEN MY WORK IS COMPLETED. I AM WELL AWARE THAT MY NERVES WILL SUFFER IN THE LONG RUN, BUT NOTHING HAS A HIGHER PRIORITY FOR ME THAN ANSWERING YOUR LOVING LETTERS TO ME. FOR THAT REASON YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT MY STATE OF HEALTH HAS BEEN EXCELLENT FOR TWO DAYS NOW DESPITE MY ANXIETY ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF FREEDOM. YOU ARE, MY DEAREST, A CONSIDERABLE DIPLOMAT IN YOUR INTERPRETATION OF WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU ON THE SUBJECT. I FEAR YOUR GUESS IS VERY CLOSE TO THE TRUTH.

YES, I AM INDEED SOMEWHAT FEARFUL IF I CAN PUT IT LIKE THAT. BUT IT ISN'T FREEDOM THAT FRIGHTENS ME, BUT MY POSSIBLE FATE AND THAT OF SO MANY OTHER MILLIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS WHO MUST LEARN TO LIVE WITHOUT A HOMELAND, A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS OR A PROVIDER FOR THEIR NEEDS, OR A BROTHER OR FATHER.

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BRING FOR ME? ONLY WORRIES I FEAR. WORRIES ABOUT A NEW LIFE AND A NEW WAY FORWARD IN ESTABLISHING MYSELF. IT IS NATURAL ENOUGH THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE PRE OCCUPIED BY SUCH CONCERNS. IT WOULD BE VERY SAD IF A 39 YEAR OLD MAN, AFTER BITTER SUFFERING HITHERTO, WERE TO LOSE ALL COURAGE AND, HANDS THRUST DEEP IN HIS POCKETS, WERE TO BEG FOR SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT FROM OTHER PEOPLE. "COMETH THE MAN" HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY BASIC PRINCIPLE AND IT HAS SERVED ME WELL THROUGHOUT THE YEARS. WITHOUT STRAYING TOO FAR INTO SELF PRAISE I CAN SAY THAT MY RESULTANT SUCCESS HAS BEEN IMPRESSIVE IN EVERY RESPECT. MY COLLEGUES HAVE EVEN SPOKEN OF A DEGREE OF GENIUS IN MY ACHIEVEMENTS. IN SHORT, I KNOW I AM RESOURCEFUL AND TRUSTWORTHY AND THAT THIS SPEAKS LOUDLY IN MY FAVOUR. I THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART FOR THE TRUST YOU HAVE PLACED IN ME SO FAR, DEAREST SABINE. YOU WILL DOUBTLESS WATCH AND EXPERIENCE MANY FUTURE TRIALS OF MY ABILITIES AND STRENGTHS.

ONCE I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEM, OVER THE COURSE OF TIME, I DO NOT DOUBT THAT THEY WILL ASTONISH YOU, IF FATE WILLS THAT WE FACE THE PROBLEMS TOGETHER. YES, I HAVE ALWAYS ACHIEVED WHAT I SET OUT TO ACHIEVE AND HAVE NEVER GIVEN UP ON ANYTHING, WHETHER IT WAS PROFESSIONAL AND IN UNIFORM OR INDEED IN PERSONAL OR EMOTIONAL MATTERS. I HAVE ALWAYS FOUGHT TO ACHIEVE MY GOAL AND ENDED UP VICTORIOUS. AS FAR AS MY FUTURE IS CONCERNED, I BELIEVE I HAVE ALREADY OUTLINED MY PLANS.

DETAILS OF THE APPROACH I INTEND TO ADOPT TO REALISE THEM ARE AS FOLLOWS. A FEW MONTHS AGO I NEGOTIATED, ILLEGALLY, WITH A FOREIGN COMPANY, VIA A SWISS FIRM IN CONNECTION WITH A PLAN TO ESTABLISH A FRANCHISE AGENCY FOR AMERICAN AUTOMOBILES AFTER THE WAR. YES I KNOW I AM A VERY BAD GERMAN, BUT THIS COMPANY HELD OUT THE PROSPECT OF JUST SUCH AN AGENCY ON THE BASIS OF REFERENCES AND DECLARATIONS OF GOOD CHARACTER, WHICH I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE.

A FURTHER COMPANY, IN SEVILLE, HAS GRANTED ME, THROUGH A FRATERNAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ABOVE MENTIONED CONCERN, INVOLVING MY MOST TRUSTED FRIEND, SOLE AGENCY RIGHTS FOR TYPEWRITERS AND THE LIKE. I AM AWARE THAT THIS OFFER HAS ALREADY BEEN CONFIRMED IN WRITING, BUT I HAVE NO UP TO DATE DETAILS. SIMILAR NEGOTIATIONS ARE CURRENTLY BEING PROCESSED BY MY CONTACT. HOWEVER, EVEN WITHOUT HIS ASSISTANCE I AM RELIABLY ABLE TO ASSESS THE RANGE OF MY BUSINESS CONTACTS FROM OTHER SOURCES.

BUT, TURNING TO ANOTHER QUESTION WHICH RELATES DIRECTLY TO YOU, MY DEAR SABINE, I HAVE ASKED ONCE BEFORE, BUT NO ANSWER EVER REACHED ME AS FAR AS I CAN RECALL. COULD YOU, FOR EXAMPLE, PERHAPS IN THE INITIAL PERIOD OF MY ESTABLISHING MYSELF PROFESSIONALLY, LEND ME YOUR HELP, OR, PUT RATHER CLEARER, BE PREPARED TO ACT AS MY COMPANY CHAIRMAN OF A CONCERN LIKE THE ONES ABOVE. I RATHER HOPED THAT IF YOU SAY YES TO MY BIGGER QUESTION TO YOU, YOU AND YOUR DEAR MOTHER WOULD MOVE TO A NEW HOMELAND WITH ME AND BUILD THERE OUR NEW HOME AND OUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER IN LOYAL FRIENDSHIP. DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME, MEIN LIEBES SABINCHEN? YOU SAY SO WONDERFULLY THAT YOU TRUST ME SO COMPLETELY AND I CAN ONLY REPEAT AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT YOUR TRUST IN ME WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED AND THAT YOU WILL DEFINITELY NEVER HAVE CAUSE TO REGRET EMBARKING ON A FUTURE WITH ME.

YOU ASK ME WHY I AM SO DOWNHEARTENED. YOU SAY RIGHTLY THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP AND MATTERS BETWEEN US WOULD BE QUITE DIFFERENT IF WE WERE TO SEE EACH OTHER MORE OFTEN AND FOR LONG ENOUGH FOR A PROPER CONVERSATION.

I THINK, FOR MYSELF AT LEAST, WE WOULD DEFINITELY QUICKLY FEEL AT ONE AND SECRET DESIRES OF INTIMACY WOULD BE FULFILLED WITHOUT HESITATION, YOU DEAR GIRL. YOU MUST BELIEVE ME, YOU OWN MY SOUL, EVEN NOW. I FEEL SUCH A PERMANENT AND GREAT LONGING FOR MY LITTLE SABINE, JUST TO HEAR THE FIRST DEAR TERM OF ENDEARMENT WHISPERED CONSPIRATORILY, JUST TO BE QUITE ALONE WITH

YOU. BUT "BE SILENT", YOU SILLY BOY MY HEART INSTRUCTS ME AGAIN. I SHOULD NOT WISH TO HURT MY SUNSHINE AGAIN. I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL IN THE STAFF QUARTERS, SURROUNDED BY SO MANY UNBIDDEN AND CURIOUS ONLOOKERS.

I SHALL ENSURE THAT WE ARE ENTIRELY ALONE FOR YOUR NEXT VISIT AND THAT YOU ARE FREE TO SAY AS MUCH AS YOU WISH TO AND THAT ALSO MY SECRET WISHES MAY BE FULFILLED.

AS TO THE NEXT POINT YOU RAISE IN YOUR LAST LETTER. I MUST BE SILENT ON GROUNDS OF DECENCY, SINCE IT IS RIGHTLY YOUR WISH THAT I SHALL NOT COMPLETELY, MY DEAREST ONE, DO ANYTHING WHICH YOU LATER REGRET. YOU CANNOT IMAGINE WHAT PAIN EVEN THE THOUGHT OF DOING ANY SUCH THING CAUSES ME. IF YOU COULD, YOU WOULD NOT TORTURE ME BY CAUSING MY LONGINGS AND HOPES TO FLARE UP AS THEY DO. YOU YOURSELF SAY AFTER ALL THAT I AM WITHOUT DOUBT GOOD FOR YOU, THAT YOU TRUST ME MORE THAN YOU DO ANYONE, BUT THEN AGAIN YOU HESITATE. YOU SAY YOU WANT TO MAKE ME HAPPY FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART. MEINE LIEBE KLEINE SABINE, LOOK HOW INEXHAUSTIBLE MY LOVE FOR YOU IS , HOW I WOULD HAPPILY GIVE YOU ALL I POSSESS, CARRY YOU ABOUT SAFE IN MY HANDS, PROTECTING YOU LIKE A PRICELESS JEWEL, AND YOU ANSWER IT WOULD BE UNREASONABLE TO DECIDE ON MARRIAGE FOR A LIFETIME ON THE BASIS OF SUCH LOVE.

MY CHILD, DO YOU BELIEVE THAT MY LOVE FOR YOU OR MY PERSONALITY PROFILE COULD CHANGE AND THAT WHAT YOU SEE NOW COULD TURN OUT TO BE A MASK? I CAN ONLY SAY THAT I HOLD AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT OPINION AND AM SADDENED BY YOUR WORDS. I KNOW IT TO BE AN UNALTERABLE FACT THAT I SHALL HATE LIFE AS A WHOLE BECAUSE MY NATURE IS SUCH THAT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO LOVE THAT WHICH HAS BECOME FOREIGN TO ME AND WHICH TO OTHERS IS THE PURPOSE OF THEIR WHOLE LIVES, FALLING IN LOVE WITH ONE WOMAN ONE DAY AND QUITE A DIFFERENT ONE ON THE NEXT. I KNOW THAT I AM A LOYAL PERSON AND KEEP PROMISES THAT I HAVE MADE. I HAVE ALWAYS TREATED EVERY WOMAN WITH TOTAL HONESTY AND HAVE BEEN DECEIVED AND STILL I FEEL A LOVE FOR YOU SUCH AS I HAVE NEVER FELT BEFORE, SUCH EVEN THAT I DO NOT RECOGNISE MYSELF IN THIS STATE OF MIND. I KNOW MY QUALITIES. I KNOW WHAT MERITS I HAVE IN OTHER WOMEN'S EYES, BUT "NO THANKS"

I FEEL MYSELF ALREADY COMMITTED ELSEWHERE EVEN IT IS NO MORE THAN A MODEST HOPE THAT MOTIVATES ME.

MY DEAREST, YOU SAY THAT IT IS DEFINITELY NEITHER EVENTS IN MY FORMER LIFE, NOR THE FACT THAT I AM GERMAN WHICH PREVENTS YOU FROM GIVING ME AN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION. WHAT IS IT THEN, MY SUNSHINE?

PLEASE THINK OVER ALL THAT I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU AND I AM CONFIDENT YOU WILL HAVE TO CONCEDE THAT I AM RIGHT. BUT I DON'T WANT TO FORCE YOU INTO ANYTHING WHICH YOU CANNOT GIVE OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL AND WITH AN OPEN HEART. I KNOW MEINE KLEINE SABINE NEEDS AN ADVISOR AND A MATERNAL ONE AT BEST, WHO IS UNFORTUNATELY NOT AVAILABLE TO YOU HERE AND FOR THAT REASON AMONGST

OTHERS, MY DECISION TO SAY "YES" TO MY QUESTION WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR YOU.

MY DEAR, I HAVE BEEN FACED BY MANY A HARD DECISION IN LIFE, BUT I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO SERIOUSLY AFFECTED IN CONNECTION WITH A WOMAN AS I AM NOW BY YOU.

I HAVE HAD TO LEARN TO TOLERATE, TO SUFFER AND TO PUT UP WITH A GOOD DEAL, BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT I HAVE NEVER LOVED ANY WOMAN IN MY LIFE AS MUCH AS I LOVE YOU.

I AM OLD AND KNOW THAT I AM NO LONGER IN A POSITION TO BE CHOOSY ABOUT MY "CHOICE OF LADY", FOR FEAR PERHAPS OF MISSING OUT ON THE JOYS OF AFFECTION, HAPPINESS, HOME AND CHILDREN. I SOMETIMES THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER IF A STRAY BULLET WERE TO HIT ME AND PUT A SWIFT END TO MY FATE.

I AM SAD WHEN I READ PARTICULARLY THIS PART OF YOUR LETTER AND YOU CONTINUE TO HESITATE OVER A DECISION, ALTHOUGH YOUR HEART HAS LONG SINCE SAID "YES". BUT LET US BE SILENT ON THE SUBJECT, OTHERWISE, MY DEAREST, THERE IS A DISTURBED NIGHT AHEAD FOR ME AND DAYS OF EMOTIONAL COLLAPSE THEREAFTER.

SO—AND WHY ARE YOU SO PROUD OF ME THEN? YOUR LETTER IS FULL OF SO MUCH ELSE, BUT YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN TO ME WHY YOU ARE SO PROUD OF ME. YOU REALLY MAKE ME VERY CURIOUS. JUST YOU WAIT, SABINE, I SHALL GET REVENGE FOR YOU TORTURING ME IN THIS WAY. TELL ME ABOUT IT PLEASE WHEN YOU CAN WHISPER IN MY EAR.

OH MY DEAR SABINCHEN, YOU WROTE THAT MY LETTERS SOFTEN YOUR HEART AND THAT YOU DON'T WANT YOUR HEART TO BE SOFT WHEN IT MAKES DECISIONS OR SPEAKS OF LOVE. YOU SPEAK OF FEELINGS OF SYMPATHY WHICH YOU FEEL FOR ME. ALAS MY DEAREST, I HOPE THERE MAY BE SOME ERROR, POSSIBLY A LINGUISTIC ONE, IN YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT YOU HAVE WRITTEN. LOVE BASED ON SYMPATHY IS NOT WHAT I SEEK. I'D PREFER TO DIE RATHER THAN SETTLE FOR SUCH A RELATIONSHIP. THIS SENTENCE ON ITS OWN HURTS ME SO MUCH THAT I CAN NO LONGER COMPREHEND IT. I KNOW IT IS A SERIOUS STEP IN A WOMAN'S LIFE TO DECIDE ON THE CHOICE OF A HUSBAND IF ONE'S HEART IS NOT ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE. I WANT TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU BY MAKING THE SUGGESTION THAT FROM TODAY ONWARD YOU REGARD YOURSELF AS MY LITTLE BRIDE UNTIL THE DECISION COMES TO FRUITION IN YOUR MIND DESPITE EVERYTHING, TO BECOME MY WIFE. IN THE COURSE OF THIS TIME, WHEN WE ARE REUNITED AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER MORE (FROM YOUR SIDE OF COURSE) AND YOUR HEART HAS REACHED A DECISION. IF YOU WANT TO ACCEPT THIS SUGGESTION, JUST GIVE ME A STEADFAST "YES". IT WILL COMMIT YOU TO NOTHING THAT IS CONTRARY TO YOUR WISHES. FOR MY PART I SHALL REGARD YOU AS MY WIFE FROM NOW ON, BECAUSE I KNOW YOU WILL FEEL AND ACT IN FUTURE AS YOU DO NOW. ON THE CONTRARY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TRUST ME ALL THE MORE AND LEARN TO LOVE ME MORE FULLY.

ALL AROUND US IS DARKNESS, I KNOW, I HAVE NO ONE I CAN LOVE BESIDES MY MOTHER, BUT I CAN NOT LIVE MY LIFE IN DARKNESS, MY HEART DEMANDS LOVE ALSO, OR AM I TO BE CAST OUT BY LOVE AS I WAS FROM HUMAN SOCIETY AFTER RECEIVING MY PRISON SENTENCE? WILL FATE HAVE NO MERCY ON ME AT ALL?

SONNENSCHNEID, I KNOW YOUR HEART HAS ALREADY SPOKEN AND SOMETHING PREVENTS YOU STILL FROM SAYING "YES" TO YOUR BIG SILLY BOY. HAVE I GOT IT RIGHT? OR AM I BADLY MISTAKEN? YES, YOU MAY OF COURSE BE AS PROUD OF ME AS I AM OF YOU FOR LOVE OF YOU AND FOR YOUR CHARACTER, YOUR TRUE AND HONEST NATURE AND VERY PARTICULARLY FOR YOUR HONEST AFFECTION. I THINK MY FIRST ATTRACTION TO YOU WAS RIGHTLY SPARKED BY YOUR HONEST HEART, WHICH DESERVES TO BE LOVED AND OFFERS THE SAME TRUST IN OTHERS AS IT INSPIRES ITSELF. I BELIEVE THAT WE TWO HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED TOO MUCH AT THE HANDS OF FATE; LIFE HAS DEALT US ENOUGH PAINFUL BLOWS FOR ONE LIFETIME, SUCH THAT WE REALLY BELONG TOGETHER.

YOU SAY THAT YOU WERE RESTLESS BECAUSE YOU HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY POST FROM ME! ----I SEE AND YOU THINK I REACT IN MUCH THE SAME WAY TODAY FOR EXAMPLE AND ON MANY OTHER DAYS, SO THAT MY THOUGHTS NEVER WHOLLY COME TO REST OR ENABLE ME TO THINK OR INDEED TO ACT STRAIGHT. SONNENSCHNEID, PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR "YES" ANSWER TO THE ETERNAL QUESTION. YOUR LAST LETTER TELLS ME THAT YOU REALLY LOVE ME; YOUR CONCERN FOR MY WELL - BEING REVEALS WHAT YOU REALLY FEEL FOR ME. LOOK, WHY NOT GIVE US BOTH THE PEACE OF MIND OF A DECISION? YOU SAY YOU DON'T WISH TO LEAVE ME ALONE NOW WITH MY HEAVY BURDEN OF CONCERNS AND WORRIES. COME ON, JUST SAY IT, YOU SHALL DEFINITELY NEVER REGRET THE DECISION, NEITHER TODAY NOR AT ANY TIME IN THE FUTURE. I DREAMT OF YOU IN SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DREAM LAST NIGHT. I HELD YOU IN MY ARMS BY THE LIDO IN ITALY. WE WERE ON OUR HONEYMOON AND YOU WERE SO IN LOVE WITH ME. WE WERE BOTH SO HAPPY. CAN THIS NOT ACTUALLY HAPPEN? I ASKED THE FLOWERS AND THEY SAID "YES", I ASKED THE STARS AND THEY ANSWERED "YES". THIS IS NOT A SILLY JOKE OR SOME GAME. IT REALLY HAPPENED. I SWEAR BY GOD IT DID.

SABINE MY DEAREST, YOU SAY THAT AFTER MY RELEASE AND IN FREEDOM I SHOULD COME TO YOU AND YOUR DEAR MOTHER, THAT YOU HAVE ENOUGH ROOM FOR ME- AND IN YOUR HEART TOO? YES, I SHALL COME QUITE DEFINITELY, BECAUSE I KNOW THAT FIRST OF ALL I HAVE A PROMISE TO KEEP, SECONDLY I SHALL WANT TO LEAD MY DEAREST SABINE TO THE ALTAR OF LOVE AND THIRDLY I BOTH CAN AND MUST HELP YOU AND YOUR MUM (AND MINE) I THINK WE SHALL BE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT THE DETAILS. I AM FLEXIBLE FOR EXAMPLE, ABOUT MY PLAN FOR YOU AND YOUR MOTHER TO MOVE TO MY NEW ADDRESS IMMEDIATELY OR WHETHER YOU WILL HAVE ROOM FOR ME TOO IN YOUR HOME IN HOLLAND OR WHETHER I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING YOUR MOTHER. I GUESS WITH THESE LAST TWO YOU ARE BEGINNING TO PULL MY LEG. I HOPE YOU DON'T NEED TO ASK THAT YOU LITTLE MINX. A LITTLE MORE RESPECT, IF YOU DON'T MIND OR I SHALL NEED TO PUNISH YOU I AM AFRAID.

BUT ONE THING YOU HAVE BEEN KEEPING FROM ME UP TILL NOW IT SEEMS, WHAT YOUR FATHER WAS AND YOUR BROTHERS. PERHAPS YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE A SURPRISE OUT

OF IT, BUT THAT WOULD BE AGAINST OUR AGREEMENT (LOYAL AND HONEST AND MUTUALLY WITHOUT SECRETS) THERE WOULD BE FURTHER PUNISHMENT FOR BREAKING THE RULES HERE. I THINK YOU WILL HAVE UNDERSTOOD MY POINT IN THE LAST LETTER CONCERNING POSSIBLE CHANGES OF ADDRESS AND BY WHAT MEANS I SHOULD LOCATE YOU IN HOLLAND. YOU MUST PROMISE TO PAY DUE ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM. YES, I SHALL COME TO HOLLAND AND SHALL STRAIGHT AWAY SUMMON ALL OUR DUTCH FELLOW SUFFERERS IN THE PLACE AROUND ME AND ASK THEM THAT THEY PUT IN A GOOD WORD FOR ME WITH MY LITTLE SABINE AND ACT AS WITNESSES AT THE WEDDING TOO. I THINK YOU MIGHT FEEL A LITTLE UNCOMFORTABLE WHEN MY FRIENDS FROM MAUTHAUSEN INTERCEDE FOR ME. YOU MIGHT WELL FEEL IT WOULD BE EASIER TO SAY "JA" NOW. JUST WAIT, PUNISHMENT WILL BE INEVITABLE! I JUST LIKE TO MENTION SOME NAMES OF SIGNIFICANCE, FOR EXAMPLE VAN HOUTEN, OR BEHRINGMEYER OR DIRECTOR GENERAL VAN SCHOOL VON DER FOKE WULF (FLUGZEUGBALL AG) AND SO ON. THESE PEOPLE COULD ALL GIVE ME A VERY GOOD REFERENCE WHICH SHOULD PROBABLY BE ENOUGH TO SATISFY YOU.

I'LL CHANGE THE SUBJECT AND MOVE ON TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT VALENCIA. WHEN WILL I GET MORE DETAILS ABOUT IT? ORALLY OR IN WRITING? OFFICIALLY OR UNOFFICIALLY? DR STEYNS IS WITH ME IN THE ROOM AT THE MOMENT AND SENDS HIS WARMEST GREETINGS TO YOU AND FIRMLY HOPES TO SEE YOU AGAIN SOON. HE IS TRYING TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU PERSONALLY. BETWEEN US WE HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE AND PLEASE DON'T TRY TO GIVE ME ALL THE CREDIT FOR IT. HE WANTS TO ACCUSE ME OF RAPING YOU AND TO APPOINT YOU AS MY JUDGE AND SO I REQUEST AT THIS POINT IN THE PROCEDURE A MILD SENTENCE PLEASE, MISS "COURT OF JUSTICE" IF YOU WISH HOWEVER TO CONDEMN ME TO A LIFE SENTENCE OF MARRIAGE TO A CERTAIN SABINE ZUUR FROM DEN HAAG, THEN I PLEAD GUILTY TO THE ACCUSATION AND THE JUDGEMENT AND ACCEPT THE PUNISHMENT WITH THE GREATEST OF PLEASURE FOR LONGER THAN JUST THE LIFE SENTENCE.

YOU HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THE HOT PLATE WHICH I HOPE YOU WILL USE TO MAKE SOMETHING NOURISHING AND TASTY FOR YOURSELF. I REALLY WOULDN'T MIND A TASTE OF IT. YOUR SECOND REQUEST CONCERNING SALT I ALREADY HAVE FULFILLED IN ABUNDANCE. HAS NADJA STILL NOT GIVEN YOU THE CALCIUM INJECTION FOR TODAY? PLEASE JUST ASK HER WHERE IT HAS GOT TO, AS THE DOCTOR SAYS HE GAVE IT TO THE NAUGHTY NADJA FOR YOU WITH CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO USE IT.

SO, THAT IS ENOUGH FOR TODAY. NOW THE FOREIGN NATIONALS BECOME A PRIORITY. THE SECURE BELIEF THAT YOU WILL NOT THIS TIME BE OFFENDED BY WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN AND WILL BE HAPPY TO ACCEPT MY SUGGESTION, ACCEDE TO MY REQUESTS AND WILL SAY SOMETHING AFFECTIONATE TO ME.

I GREET YOU, MEINE KLEINE SABINE, SONNENSCHIN WITH A HEARTFELT KISS

YOUR FRANZ

YOU CAN SEE THAT I AM NO LONGER ABLE TO WRITE LETTERS, MISTAKE UPON MISTAKE. THE TYPEWRITER (LAUTER?) IS UNRELIABL, BUT THE MACHINE DOES AT LEAST SUIT ME WELL ENOUGH.

LETTER 11 LETTER 11A ?

LIEBE KLEINE SABINE! SONNENSCHEN !

HEARTFELT THANKS FOR YOUR LETTER TODAY. TOGETHER WITH THE ENCLOSURE, VERY NICELY WRITTEN AND ABOVE ALL, VERY MUCH TO THE POINT.

THE LADY INVOLVED CAN CONGRATULATE HERSELF ON HER SKILL.

SEELCHEN, NOW SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT. YOU ARE ALL TO BE MOVED DOWN TO THE 'WIENER GRABEN' INTO THE BARRACKS THERE. BEDS WILL ARRIVE TOMORROW. I SHALL DO MY BEST IN WHATEVER PROVES POSSIBLE AND I SHALL DEFINITELY NOT LEAVE YOU IN THE LURCH. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN SELECTED FOR THE SS TODAY, BUT ON YOUR ACCOUNT I KEPT MYSELF OUT OF THE GENERAL DRAFT IN ORDER TO SERVE YOU AND THE GENERAL INTEREST. I CANNOT SIMPLY LEAVE YOU IN ADVERSITY.

NOW. PAY ATTENTION! I WILL REGULARLY GIVE ANNI FOOD FOR YOU TO EAT, AS WELL AS WHATEVER ELSE YOU MAY NEED, AND POST AND I ASK THAT YOU SHOULD ALWAYS CONVEY YOUR WISHES TO HER, WHICH SHE WILL THEN PROMPTLY CARRY OUT. SO DON'T FORGET ANNI, THE ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR.

I ASK THAT YOU ALLOW ME TO PICK UP FROM YOU IN PERSON THE LOCK OF HAIR THAT I ASKED FOR AND MY EASTER PRESENT. MORE EXACTLY, THE LATTER I SHALL NEED TO COLLECT IN PERSON. THE LOCK OF HAIR SHOULD BE SENT ENCLOSED WITH YOUR NEXT LETTER PLEASE.

IF YOU HAVE DIRTY LAUNDRY TO BE WASHED, PLEASE JUST SEND IT ACROSS. PLEASE GIVE ME AN ANSWER TO MY LAST QUESTION IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR PROVISIONAL 'YES' TO MY OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

MAY I REGARD YOU AS MY LITTLE BRIDE UNTIL YOU REACH HOME AND WOULD YOU ALSO IN RETURN LIKE TO CHERISH MY STATUS AS YOUR LOYAL BRIDEGROOM (UNTIL WE ARE REUNITED)? PLEASE GIVE ME AN ANSWER AND AS MUCH LOVE AS YOU LIKE. GIVE ME YOUR HEART, YOUR FUTURE. I SHALL ALWAYS KEEP MY WORD TO YOU IN LOYAL AFFECTION AND SINCERITY.

IF YOU HAVE NO USE FOR THE LITTLE COOKING STOVE AND THE BOOKS, PLEASE GIVE THEM TO KATJA OR THE FIREMAN OR ALSO ANNI, IF YOU CANNOT USE IT IN YOUR NEW HOME.

HEARTY GREETINGS WITH AN INTENSE KISS.

YOUR FRANZ

WHILE THE CAMP ITSELF WAS SITUATED AT THE TOP OF THE STEEP HILL, THE WIENER GRABEN QUARRY WAS RIGHT AT THE BOTTOM. THE HEAVY FORTRESS LIKE CAMP WAS BUILT WITH THE STONE FROM THE QUARRY.

MAUTHAUSEN WAS BUILT AS A PUNISHMENT/EXTERMINATION CAMP. THE HARD LABOUR INVOLVED THE PRISONERS HAVING TO CARRY HEAVY (UP TO 50 KGS) ROCKS UP THE STEEP FLIGHT OF 186 UNEVEN AND SLIPPERY STEPS AT A FAST PACE, PURSUED BY THE SS GUARDS BEATING AND PUSHING THEM, OFTEN OVER THE EDGE. MANY COMMITTED SUICIDE BY JUMPING OFF THE TOP, ROUGHLY 40 METRES. THE MOST TIMES ANY ONE MAN WAS KNOWN TO DO THIS TRIP WAS THREE. MOST DID NOT MAKE IT EVEN ONCE.

THE WIENER GRABEN BARRACKS WERE SITUATED OUTSIDE THE CAMP AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN AND CLOSE TO THE INFAMOUS STAIRWAY. WHEN WOMEN FIRST CAME TO MAUTHAUSEN THEY WERE ACCOMODATED THERE, BUT WITH THE ENORMOUS INFLUX TOWARDS THE END OF THE WAR, WHICH SABINE WAS PART OF, SPECIAL BARRACKS WERE SECTIONED OFF FOR THEM WITHIN THE MAIN CAMP.

THE CONDITIONS AT THE WIENER GRABEN, AN IRONIC NAME, AS IT WAS NAMED AFTER ONE OF THE MOST UPMARKET AREAS OF VIENNA, HAD NO SANITATION OR FACILITIES FOR SO MANY WOMEN. AS A RESULT DESEASES INCREASED AND THE MORTALITY ROSE RAPIDLY.

THUS THE NEWS THAT THEY WILL BE MOVED THERE IS A SERIOUS AND FRIGHTENING PROSPECT.

SABINE WOULD NOT BE AS PROTECTED AS SHE HAD BEEN UP TO NOW. THE GREATEST FEAR AMONGST ALL OF THEM WAS TO DIE NOW THAT THE END OF THE WAR WAS CLEARLY SO NEAR.

LETTER 11B

MEIN KLEINER LIEBLING! SABINE SONNENSCHIN!

HAVE JUST RECEIVED YOUR LOVELY LETTER AND I THANK YOU A THOUSAND TIMES FOR IT.

I CANNOT UNFORTUNATELY ACT ON IT AT THE MOMENT OR INDEED TODAY, BUT I SHALL COME AND SEE YOU IN PERSON AS SOON AS THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF.

A FURTHER 1000 NEW WOMEN ARE ABOUT TO JOIN YOU IN THE CAMP AND I MUST HURRY TO GET THIS LETTER TO YOU FINISHED BEFORE THAT HAPPENS.

SEELCHEN, MY SUNSHINE, DO YOU KNOW WHAT SPLENDID JOY YOUR WRITING TO ME TODAY HAS CREATED IN ME? YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE IT, I LEPT INTO THE AIR LIKE A LITTLE BOY.

SABINE, SEELCHEN, NOW ALL IS WELL WITH ME. YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME, AND SEELCHEN, I AM SO ENDLESSLY HAPPY ABOUT IT.

YOU CAN HAVE NO IDEA, YOUR BIG STUPID BOY.

I HAVE ACTUALLY DISCHARGED MYSELF FROM MILITARY SERVICE WHILE 900 OTHERS FROM THE GERMAN PERSONNEL ALONE HAVE BEEN FORCED INTO THE SS.

I LOVE YOU—I CANNOT LEAVE YOUR SIDE AND THUS IT IS BETTER IF I AM WITH YOU WHEN MY LITTLE DARLING NEEDS HELP.

YES, TOMORROW MORNING YOU WILL BE MOVED TO THE 'WIENER GRABEN' AND INTO THE BARRACKS THERE AND YOU KNOW ALREADY WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR LETTERS ETC. YOU CAN TRUST ANNI. IF THE WAR IS NOT OVER BY 20TH APRIL, ALLOWING YOU TO GO FREE, THEN YOU CAN JOIN ME IN THE COMMAND OFFICES IF YOU ARE STILL HERE. IF I KNOW THAT MY SEELCHEN WANTS TO STAY WITH ME, THEN PLEASE, MY DEAR HEART, I ASK YOU TO DO JUST THAT.

I SHALL STAND GUARD OVER YOU. SEELCHEN, PLEASE DON'T FORGET THE LOCK OF YOUR HAIR. I SHALL WAIT FOR IT AT THE CAMP GATE.

WHAT'S HAPPENED ABOUT YOUR WASHING? PLEASE GIVE IT TO ME AT THE SAME TIME AND I'LL DELIVER IT.

I SHALL FIND SOMETHING APPROPRIATE FOR YOU IN THE WIENER GRABEN, WHERE YOU WILL BE SECURE.

TOMORROW, MY LITTLE SEELCHEN, YOU WILL RECEIVE A NICE LETTER FROM ME AND YOU WILL CERTAINLY BE HAPPY WITH ME.

FOR THE MOMENT I AM IN A HURRY.

HEARTFELT GREETINGS AND A THOUSAND PASSIONATE KISSES FROM YOUR FRANZ WHO LOVES YOU.

I AM WAITING FOR MY LOCK OF HAIR, YOU LITTLE DARLING AND THE DIRTY WASHING! PLEASE SEND THEM IMMEDIATELY!

SUCH PRE-OCUPATION WITH HER WASHING. HE IS PROBABLY RIGHT IN THINKING THAT CLEAN CLOTHES AT LEAST WILL KEEP HER MORALE UP.

I THIK THESE LAST TWO LETTERS WERE WRITTEN IN GREAT HAST ON THE 8TH, PERHAPS IN THE EVENING AND THE 9TH APRIL.

LETTER 11C

MEIN KLEINER SABINE LIEBLING

AM 10-4-1945

VERY UNFORTUNATELY I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO COME DOWN TO VISIT YOU, EITHER YESTERDAY EVENING OR EARLY THIS MORNING (SEE LETTER 12k) AND I THEREFORE ASK THAT YOU SHOULD NOT REGARD THIS AS IMPROPRIETY OR BAD MANNERS.

NO, I HAVE BEEN STANDING (ON DUTY?) AT THE CAMP GATE SINCE 6.00 AM, UNFORTUNATELY IN VAIN WITHOUT CATCHING A GLIMPSE OF YOU. BUT, MY SEELCHEN, I STILL OFTEN SEE YOU IN MY MIND'S EYE. DON'T WORRY, I AM NEARBY AND ON GUARD.

IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR QUESTION WHETHER YOU SHOULD DESTROY THE LETTERS, MY RESPONSE IS: NO! IF YOU LOVE THEM AND REGARD THEM AS SACRED I SHALL NOT BE CHECKING UP TO ENSURE THAT YOU DON'T THOUGH. I AM SO AT PEACE OVER YOUR LAST LETTER TO ME. YOU CAN HAVE NO IDEA WHAT A WONDERFUL PRESENT AND WHAT A JOY IT HAS BEEN TO ME. AND NOW TO CONCLUDE, THIS AFTERNOON THERE WILL BE LOTS AND LOTS OF POST FROM ME.

GREETINGS AND KISSES FROM MY HEART

YOUR FRANZ

COMMENTS

* (NOT CLEAR WHETHER WITH A FIREARM OR METAPHORICALLY.)

*2 IS HE IMPRESSING HIS STATUS AS A CAMP GUARD, ARMED AND INVOLVED? AS A KAPO BERUFSBRECHER IT WOULD BE VERY UNLIKELY. BUT HE IS A TRUSTED EMPLOYEE AND THE CAMP IS AT IT'S WITS END, AS THE END OF THE WAR IS SO NEAR. DISCIPLINE IS DISINTEGRATING AND AS PRISONERS FEEL THE TENSE ATMOSPHERE AMONG THE GERMANS AND THE NEARLY THERE LIBERATION, MORE AND MORE INCIDENTS OF FIGHTS AND MURDERS OCCUR.

LETTER 12B

MEIN KLEINER LIEBLING SABINE, SONNENSCHEN!

10-4-1945

IT IS THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AT 2.00 AM. I HAVE JUST GOT HOME AND AM VERY SAD ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATIVE BLUNDER COMMITTED BY THE SWISS ALLIANCE AND YET I STILL HAVE TO WRITE THE PROMISED LONG LETTER TO MY SABINE SONNENSCHEN.

DEAR SEELCHEN, YOU CAN HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU HAVE GIVEN ME IN YOUR LETTER OF YESTERDAY AND OUR CONVERSATION WHEN I VISITED YOU TODAY.

I REJOICE, COMPLETELY OVERCOME WITH BLISS AS IF I WERE A CHILD STILL OR EXPERIENCING LIFE AS A BOY OF EIGHTEEN - OR AS IF I HAD JUST RECEIVED A WORLD PATENT FROM THE EMPEROR OF CHINA HIMSELF. THAT IS HOW YOUNG I FEEL AND NOW, MY SEELCHEN, I KNOW THAT YOU REALLY AND HONESTLY LOVE ME FROM THE VERY BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART AND I THANK YOU UNCEASINGLY FOR IT.

MY LITTLE SUNSHINE, YOU WILL NEVER HAVE CAUSE TO REGRET THIS DAY AND WILL CARRY IT IN YOUR MEMORY ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE DISTANT DAYS OF MY OLD AGE. I SHALL NEVER DO INJURY

TO OR ABUSE THE TRUST THAT HAS BEEN PLACED IN ME, REMAINING EVER LOYAL TO YOUR LOVE AND RETURNING IT ACCORDINGLY.

NOW TO THE LETTER ITSELF AND I NEED TO SAY TO YOU AT THE VERY ONSET THAT IT WAS THE SWISS LEAGUE THAT REFUSED TO CARRY OUT THE AGREED TRANSFER OF THE DUTCH NATIONALS, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RISK TO THEIR CHARGES. THE RADIO MESSAGE TO THIS EFFECT WAS RECEIVED AT 21.00 YESTERDAY, SO THAT FOR THE MOMENT NOTHING WILL COME OF THE PLANS TO RELEASE YOU AS LONG AS THE GENEVA CONVENTION DOES NOT MEET AGAIN.

THIS IS A MATTER OF EXTRAORDINARY REGRET TO ME, GIVEN BOTH YOUR PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT AND INDEED THAT OF DR STEYNS AND SO MANY OTHER COMRADES, MALE AND FEMALE. I COULD PUT A BOMB UNDER THE WHOLE LOT OF THEM, SO ANGRY AM I AT WHAT THOSE IN CHARGE HAVE DONE.

SEELCHEN, YOU WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO BE PATIENT TO THE BITTER END I FEAR.

ONE THING I WANT TO WARN YOU OF AND ENCOURAGE YOU ALSO TO PASS IT ON TO YOUR FELLOW COUNTRY MEN - BE CAREFUL, THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE AIR, BE ALERT TO EVERYTHING WHICH IS GOING ON DOWN THERE IN THE WIENER GRABEN. I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS, THOUGH AS YET I KNOW NOTHING SPECIFIC. HOWEVER, I EXPECT TO FIND OUT MORE TOMORROW.

I DEFINITELY SHOULD NOT WISH TO ALARM YOU, NO; BUT IT IS MY SOLEMN DUTY TO WARN YOU OF POSSIBLE DANGERS.

SEELCHEN, MY LITTLE DARLING, PLEASE FOR THE SAKE OF OUR LOVE, I PLEAD WITH YOU TO PRACTISE WALKING NORMALLY AGAIN AS MUCH AND AS ENERGETICALLY AS YOU CAN, SO THAT IF DANGER SHOULD THREATEN, YOU WILL BE EQUAL TO THE EXERTIONS NEEDED TO SAVE YOURSELF. LISTEN TO ME, SABINE HEART, PLEASE FOLLOW MY ADVICE.

THIS IS AFTER ALL MY ANSWER, MY DARLING, TO YOUR QUESTION CONCERNING A POSSIBLE EVACUATION AND IF I WRITE THAT YOU HAVE NO NEED TO BE FEARFUL AND THAT I SHALL REMAIN WITH YOU, THEN YOU CAN RELY ON IT.

I SHALL REMAIN HERE AND NOT GO TO THE SS OR THE FRONT. NO, I HAVE CALLED MY LITTLE GROUP OF FRIENDS TOGETHER TO PROVIDE OUR SPECIAL PROTECTION AND HELP TO YOU WOMEN SHOULD THE POSSIBLE ORDER FOR EVACUATION BE RECEIVED.

DR STEYNS HAS JUST WOKEN UP: HE IS AS DEJECTED AT MY NEWS AS I WAS, BUT HE SAYS ONE MUST NOT GET DOWNHEARTED. HE IS ACTUALLY IN A VERY BAD WAY, BUT IT IS BETTER THAT I DO NOT TELL HIM SO, THOUGH I SERIOUSLY FEAR FOR HIS SURVIVAL. IT IS A REAL SHAME. HE IS A GOOD COMRADE AND AN UPRIGHT MAN. HE IS ALWAYS SO HAPPY WHEN I TELL HIM ABOUT YOU AND HE SAYS HE WOULD WISH THE LITTLE ZUUR NO BETTER OR MORE LOVING LIFE COMPANION THAN ME. (HE SAYS I HAVE TO TELL YOU THIS BY HIS COMMAND)

HOW ARE THINGS IN THE WIENER GRABEN? DO YOU NEED ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR TO MAKE LIFE MORE COMFORTABLE? YOU NEED ONLY SAY THE WORD. I SHALL BE ANGRY WITH YOU IF YOU FAIL TO SAY WHAT YOU COULD URGENTLY USE OR SERIOUSLY LACK. I CAN GET ANYTHING YOU ASK IMMEDIATELY, NO MATTER WHAT, SO PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR ORDERS. I COULD KICK MYSELF FOR BRINGING AWAY THE ITEMS I INTENDED FOR YOU TODAY - VERY ANNOYING THAT YOU STILL

HAVEN'T GOT THEM DOWN THERE. BUT THEY WILL REACH YOU STRAIGHT AWAY TOMORROW MORNING.

I THEREFORE ASK MY LITTLE DARLING FOR FORGIVENESS FOR THE OMISSION AND THE RESULTING NEGLECT.

ON THE SUBJECT OF MY CALL UP FOR THE SS, DEAR SABINE, I HAVE ALREADY EXPLAINED THAT I HAVE HAD MYSELF DISCHARGED PARTLY IN OUR PERSONAL INTERESTS AND PARTLY OUT OF PURE HATRED OF THIS REGIME. SO THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY ON THAT PARTICULAR SUBJECT. WERE YOU AFRAID ON MY ACCOUNT, MY SEELCHEN? YOU SHOULDN'T BE; YOUR FRANZ, YOUR BIG BOY IS WELL AWARE WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO AND WHAT TO AVOID DOING IN THESE MATTERS. I AM NOT GOING TO GET IT WRONG AND AM CLEAR WHAT I WANT TO ACHIEVE. YOUR TAROT CARD AND GRAPHOLOGY EXPERT HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD, THAT I PLAN MY APPROACH TO A GIVEN TASK WITH PRECISION AND ALWAYS ACHIEVE SUCCESS AND VICTORY IN THE END.

DEAR SABINE, REVIEWING WHAT I WROTE ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF SYMPATHY, I THINK I NEED TO CORRECT A MISUNDERSTANDING AND I ASK THEREFORE FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS. I NOW KNOW THAT I CAN AND MAY TRAVEL TO HOLLAND WITH PEACE OF MIND WHEN THE WAR IS OVER, SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT MY SUNSHINE IS MINE ALONE. FOR THE TIME BEING HOWEVER I CAN CONTROL MYSELF AND I WILL ABIDE BY YOUR PROMISE. JUST WAIT UNTIL WE ARE IN HOLLAND, YES! AM I YOUR BIG BOY OR AM I NOT?

PLEASE BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL YOU HOW HAPPY I SHOULD BE IF YOU AND YOUR MUM WILL ALLOW ME TO STAY WITH YOU LONG ENOUGH FOR YOU TO BECOME MY WIFE, DEAR SABINE, AND THAT I AM PLEASED ALSO AT THE THOUGHT OF GETTING TO KNOW YOUR MUM. OF THAT YOU CAN LIKewise REST ASSURED. I HOPE SHE TOO IS GOING TO BE KIND TO YOUR BIG BOY AND ACCEPT HAVING ONE MORE SON THAN SHE HAD BEFORE AND SUCH A BIG ONE TOO. YES SEELCHEN, YOU WERE RIGHT WHEN YOU WROTE THAT AT HOME WE SHALL LIVE FREER AND LESS CONSTRAINED THAN BEFORE AND WILL BE ABLE TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER PROPERLY AND I ACCEPT THAT YOU AND YOUR HEART ARE MORE RATIONAL THAN I AM AND MY HEART FEELS.

BUT SABINE DARLING, YOU WRITE THAT MUM WOULD NEVER WANT TO LIVE WITH ANY OF HER CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE MARRIED, THOUGH I AM SURE I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY. YOU SHOULDN'T EXPECT LIVING CONDITIONS AFTER THE END OF THE WAR TO BE STRAIGHT FORWARD SO THAT WE ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO LEAVE MUM TO LIVE ON HER OWN. NO, NO, MY DEAREST, YOU ARE DEFINITELY ON THE WRONG TRACK WITH SUCH A PLAN AND IT WOULD CERTAINLY END BADLY. I SHOULD NEVER PERMIT MUM TO LIVE ALONE FAR AWAY FROM US, HER CHILDREN.

SHE MUST LIVE WITH US, BUT QUARRELLING ABOUT IT NOW WOULD BE NONSENSICAL AND QUITE POINTLESS. WE SHALL SEE WHICH OF US, YOU OR I OR MUM HERSELF IS VICTORIOUS IN THE END.

IT HAS JUST OCCURRED TO ME AGAIN THAT YOU HAVEN'T YET ANSWERED MY QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT YOUR FATHER, MOTHER AND BROTHERS WERE AND DID BEFORE THE WAR. JUST WAIT, YOU BAD GIRL. WHEN I COME DOWN TO SEE YOU ON FRIDAY WITH THE PROFESSOR, THEN WATCH OUT. PUNISHMENT IS INEVITABLE AND I SHALL KISS YOUR LIPS SO MUCH THAT THEY WILL BE SORE FROM IT AND NEED THE SERVICES OF THE PROFESSOR TO APPLY A BANDAGE. SO PLEASE, SOME ANSWERS IN YOUR NEXT LETTER, ALRIGHT?

CONCERNING MY LETTERS TO YOU, I HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN OF THE SUGGESTION THAT, IN AS FAR AS THEY GIVE YOU PLEASURE AND REMIND YOU OF ME, YOU SHOULD NOT DESTROY THEM.

IN FACT, IT IS MY FOND WISH THAT YOU SHOULD PRESERVE THEM, SO THAT THEY REACH YOUR HOME SAFELY.

SABINE, MY ANGEL, ONE THING I MUST TELL YOU NOW HOWEVER. WHEN IT BECOMES GENERALLY KNOWN AT HOME THAT WE ARE ENGAGED, I DON'T WANT, NOR AM ABLE TO WAIT TOO LONG FOR THE WEDDING. I DON'T WANT A LONG ENGAGEMENT OR ABREIBUNG AS THEY SAY IN GERMAN Y- OR WILL YOU HAVE YOUR OBJECTIONS TO THAT TOO? HMM, LITTLE SABINE, PLEASE DON'T OBJECT. YOU ONCE SAID TO ME THAT YOU WOULD LIKE CHILDREN AND IT IS PRECISELY FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILDREN THAT MUM SHOULD COME TO LIVE WITH US. BUT NOT AS A COMMON OR GARDEN NANNY. NO, NO, SHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY HER GRAND-CHILDREN AND I VERY MUCH WANT TO SHARE OUR JOY AND LOVE WITH HER, OFFERING HER IN OUR COMPANY AN AGREEABLE FINAL CHAPTER TO HER LIFE. LOOK SABINE, THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF MUM'S LIFE ARE ALREADY OVER AND AUTUMN IS ABOUT TO MAKE ITS ENTRANCE. DOES IT HAVE TO BE A LONELY TIME FOR HER? NO, SHE BELONGS WITH HER CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN AND THAT IS MY HOLY ASPIRATION.

TO YOUR COMMENTS ON THE DEPUTY SUPERVISOR, THE ONLY THING I WOULD ADD IS THAT SHE SAID TO ME TODAY THAT SHE IS MORE THAN HAPPY TO DO ANYTHING TO HELP US AND THAT, IF SHE WERE A MAN, SHE WOULD BE CONSUMED WITH PASSION FOR YOU AND THAT SHE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY, I, LIKE MANY OTHERS, HAD NOT VISITED YOU EARLIER YESTERDAY EVENING AND DID NOT DO SO TILL EARLY THIS MORNING. SHE SUGGESTED THAT WE COULD HAVE HAD A CHANCE FOR A GOOD LONG CONVERSATION THEN, THOUGH I AM OF A DIFFERENT OPINION AS IT HAPPENS. DESPITE ALL THIS SHE IS DEVOTED IN ALL COMMON DECENCY TO US BOTH AND ALWAYS ASKS ME WHETHER I HAVE ANYTHING SHE MIGHT DELIVER TO YOU FROM ME OR WHETHER THERE IS ANYTHING THAT YOU MIGHT BE CURRENTLY IN NEED OF.

I ASK YOU THEREFORE, MY SEELCHEN, IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT YOU MIGHT NEED, TELL HER AND THE MESSAGE WILL REACH ME DIRECTLY. (MY BLACK INK HAS RUN OUT, WILL CONTINUE IN BLUE) THROUGH ANNI I HAVE SENT YOU TODAY: THREE DRESSES, THREE PAIRS OF STOCKINGS AND A PAIR OF SHOES. DID YOU RECEIVE THEM? PLEASE LET ME KNOW. TOMORROW UNDERGARMENTS AND THE LIKE SHOULD REACH YOU AND IF MY SEELCHEN CAN WALK A LITTLE, THEN PLEASE DO SO BY COMING TO SEE ME IN THE COMMAND HEAD-QUARTERS. YES! DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH YOUR DEAR BOY? FOREVER? I SHOULD BE OVERJOYED IF WE COULD BE TOGETHER THIS VERY MOMENT AND TO STAY THAT WAY, COOKING AND EATING IN EACH OTHER'S COMPANY. THAT WOULD BE JUST SPLENDID AND THEN, WHEN THE WAR IS AT AN END, MAKING OUR WAY TO MUNCHEN FOR A FEW DAYS AND THEN STRAIGHT AWAY ON TO YOUR MUM IN HOLLAND. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

YES, SEELCHEN, IT SEEMS YOU WILL HAVE TO DRINK THE POISONED CHALICE DRY BEFORE WE ARE FREE TO DO ALL THAT. YOU WILL BE SPARED NOTHING. EVEN THIS DISASTER (FAILURE OF THE SWISS LEAGUE VENTURE) WILL HAVE TO BE BORNE, THOUGH, THANK GOD, NOT FOR LONG, PERHAPS FOR NO MORE THAN A FEW DAYS. THE REPORT FROM THE FRONT IS VERY GOOD AND I AM VERY HAPPY ABOUT IT.

I PASSED ON YOUR GREETINGS TO DR STEYNS AND HE RETURNS THEM TO YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF HIS HEART TOGETHER WITH HIS BEST WISHES FOR MEETING UP AGAIN IN YOUR HOMETLAND IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND A SWIFT RECUPERATION FROM YOUR INJURY.

THAT YOU ARE SAD AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT WHERE YOU WOULD PREFER TO BE - HERE WITH ME OR AT HOME IN HOLLAND - THIS STRIKES A CHORD WITH ME TOO AND I CAN WHOLLY

SYMPATHISE. I FEEL EXACTLY THE SAME. AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, I SHALL STAY WITH YOU UNTIL I BREATHE MY LAST BREATH, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

WHAT YOU WROTE IN YOUR LAST LETTER BUT ONE ABOUT YOUR GRANDFATHER, YES, YOU GUESSED MY REACTION CORRECTLY. I AM PLEASED THAT HE WAS A GERMAN AND THAT HIS GREAT GRANDCHILDREN HAVE BECOME GOOD DUTCHMEN. I THINK THAT OUR CHILDREN WILL EXPERIENCE MUCH THE SAME. THE GENERATIONS REPEAT THE SAME PATTERN OVER AND OVER.

HEREDITY IS A MIXTURE OF THE BLOODLINE AND THE HUMAN SPECIES. THERE WILL BE LITTLE CHANCE FOR VARIATION IN IT ALL, MORE A MATTER ONLY OF UPBRINGING AND THE NATIONALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S FATHER. IF THE MOTHER IS THAN AN UPRIGHT DUTCHWOMAN, THE OUTCOME CANNOT BE BUT A SUCCESS.

AND SO NOW I CONCLUDE WITH THE REQUEST THAT YOU SHOULD TELL ME YOUR WISHES AND NEEDS IN RESPECT OF YOUR PHYSICAL COMFORT AND FOOD STUFFS AND I SHALL FULFIL THEM IMMEDIATELY.

HEARTFELT GREETINGS AND PASSIONATE KISSES FROM YOUR DEAREST BOY

FRANZ

PLEASE HAND OVER YOUR WASHING- ALL OF IT.

LETTER 11A?

LIEBE KLEINE SABINE! SONNENSCHEN!

HEARTFELT THANKS FOR YOUR LETTER TODAY. TOGETHER WITH THE ENCLOSURE, VERY NICELY WRITTEN AND ABOVE ALL, VERY MUCH TO THE POINT.

THE LADY INVOLVED CAN CONGRATULATE HERSELF ON HER SKILL.

SEELCHEN, NOW SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT. YOU ARE ALL TO BE MOVED DOWN TO THE 'WIENER GRABEN' INTO THE BARRACKS THERE. BEDS WILL ARRIVE TOMORROW. I SHALL DO MY BEST IN WHATEVER PROVES POSSIBLE AND I SHALL DEFINITELY NOT LEAVE YOU IN THE LURCH. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN SELECTED FOR THE SS TODAY, BUT ON YOUR ACCOUNT I KEPT MYSELF OUT OF THE GENERAL DRAFT IN ORDER TO SERVE YOU AND THE GENERAL INTEREST. I CANNOT SIMPLY LEAVE YOU IN ADVERSITY.

NOW. PAY ATTENTION! I WILL REGULARLY GIVE ANNI FOOD FOR YOU TO EAT, AS WELL AS WHATEVER ELSE YOU MAY NEED, AND POST AND I ASK THAT YOU SHOULD ALWAYS CONVEY YOUR WISHES TO HER, WHICH SHE WILL THEN PROMPTLY CARRY OUT. SO DON'T FORGET ANNI, THE ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR.

I ASK THAT YOU ALLOW ME TO PICK UP FROM YOU IN PERSON THE LOCK OF HAIR THAT I ASKED FOR AND MY EASTER PRESENT. MORE EXACTLY, THE LATTER I SHALL NEED TO COLLECT IN PERSON. THE LOCK OF HAIR SHOULD BE SENT ENCLOSED WITH YOUR NEXT LETTER PLEASE.

IF YOU HAVE DIRTY LAUNDRY TO BE WASHED, PLEASE JUST SEND IT ACROSS. PLEASE GIVE ME AN ANSWER TO MY LAST QUESTION IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR PROVISIONAL 'YES' TO MY OFFER OF MARRIAGE.

MAY I REGARD YOU AS MY LITTLE BRIDE UNTIL YOU REACH HOME AND WOULD YOU ALSO IN RETURN LIKE TO CHERISH MY STATUS AS YOUR LOYAL BRIDEGROOM (UNTIL WE ARE REUNITED)? PLEASE GIVE ME AN ANSWER AND AS MUCH LOVE AS YOU LIKE. GIVE ME YOUR HEART, YOUR FUTURE. I SHALL ALWAYS KEEP MY WORD TO YOU IN LOYAL AFFECTION AND SINCERITY.

IF YOU HAVE NO USE FOR THE LITTLE COOKING STOVE AND THE BOOKS, PLEASE GIVE THEM TO KATJA OR THE FIREMAN OR ALSO ANNI, IF YOU CANNOT USE IT IN YOUR NEW HOME.

HEARTY GREETINGS WITH AN INTENSE KISS.

YOUR FRANZ

LETTER 11B

MEIN KLEINER LIEBLING! SABINE SONNENSCHNEID!

HAVE JUST RECEIVED YOUR LOVELY LETTER AND I THANK YOU A THOUSAND TIMES FOR IT.

I CANNOT UNFORTUNATELY ACT ON IT AT THE MOMENT OR INDEED TODAY, BUT I SHALL COME AND SEE YOU IN PERSON AS SOON AS THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF.

A FURTHER 1000 NEW WOMEN ARE ABOUT TO JOIN YOU IN THE CAMP AND I MUST HURRY TO GET THIS LETTER TO YOU FINISHED BEFORE THAT HAPPENS.

SEELCHEN, MY SUNSHINE, DO YOU KNOW WHAT SPLENDID JOY YOUR WRITING TO ME TODAY HAS CREATED IN ME? YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE IT, I LEPT INTO THE AIR LIKE A LITTLE BOY.

SABINE, SEELCHEN, NOW ALL IS WELL WITH ME. YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME, AND SEELCHEN, I AM SO ENDLESSLY HAPPY ABOUT IT.

YOU CAN HAVE NO IDEA, YOUR BIG STUPID BOY.

I HAVE ACTUALLY DISCHARGED MYSELF FROM MILITARY SERVICE WHILE 900 OTHERS FROM THE GERMAN PERSONNEL ALONE HAVE BEEN FORCED INTO THE SS.

I LOVE YOU—I CANNOT LEAVE YOUR SIDE AND THUS IT IS BETTER IF I AM WITH YOU WHEN MY LITTLE DARLING NEEDS HELP.

YES, TOMORROW MORNING YOU WILL BE MOVED TO THE 'WIENER GRABEN' AND INTO THE BARRACKS THERE AND YOU KNOW ALREADY WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR LETTERS ETC. YOU CAN TRUST ANNI. IF THE WAR IS NOT OVER BY 20TH APRIL, ALLOWING YOU TO GO FREE, THEN YOU CAN JOIN ME IN THE COMMAND OFFICES IF YOU ARE STILL HERE. IF I KNOW THAT MY SEELCHEN WANTS TO STAY WITH ME, THEN PLEASE, MY DEAR HEART, I ASK YOU TO DO JUST THAT.

I SHALL STAND GUARD OVER YOU. SEELCHEN, PLEASE DON'T FORGET THE LOCK OF YOUR HAIR. I SHALL WAIT FOR IT AT THE CAMP GATE.

WHAT'S HAPPENED ABOUT YOUR WASHING? PLEASE GIVE IT TO ME AT THE SAME TIME AND I'LL DELIVER IT.

I SHALL FIND SOMETHING APPROPRIATE FOR YOU IN THE WIENER GRABEN, WHERE YOU WILL BE SECURE.

TOMORROW, MY LITTLE SEELCHEN, YOU WILL RECEIVE A NICE LETTER FROM ME AND YOU WILL CERTAINLY BE HAPPY WITH ME.

FOR THE MOMENT I AM IN A HURRY.

HEARTFELT GREETINGS AND A THOUSAND PASSIONATE KISSES FROM YOUR FRANZ WHO LOVES YOU.

I AM WAITING FOR MY LOCK OF HAIR, YOU LITTLE DARLING AND THE DIRTY WASHING! PLEASE SEND THEM IMMEDIATELY!

LETTER 11C

AM 10-4-1945

MEIN KLEINER SABINE LIEBLING

VERY UNFORTUNATELY I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO COME DOWN TO VISIT YOU, EITHER YESTERDAY EVENING OR EARLY THIS MORNING (SEE LETTER 12k) AND I THEREFORE ASK THAT YOU SHOULD NOT REGARD THIS AS IMPROPRIETY OR BAD MANNERS.

NO, I HAVE BEEN STANDING (ON DUTY?) AT THE CAMP GATE SINCE 6.00 AM, UNFORTUNATELY IN VAIN WITHOUT CATCHING A GLIMPSE OF YOU. BUT, MY SEELCHEN, I STILL OFTEN SEE YOU IN MY MIND'S EYE. DON'T WORRY, I AM NEARBY AND ON GUARD.

IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR QUESTION WHETHER YOU SHOULD DESTROY THE LETTERS, MY RESPONSE IS: NO! IF YOU LOVE THEM AND REGARD THEM AS HOLY. I SHALL NOT BE CHECKING UP TO ENSURE THAT YOU DON'T THOUGH. I AM SO AT PEACE OVER YOUR LAST LETTER TO ME. YOU CAN HAVE NO IDEA WHAT A WONDERFUL PRESENT AND WHAT A JOY IT HAS BEEN TO ME. AND NOW TO CONCLUDE, THIS AFTERNOON THERE WILL BE LOTS AND LOTS OF POST FROM ME.

GREETINGS AND KISSES FROM MY HEART

YOUR FRANZ

COMMENTS

* (NOT CLEAR WHETHER WITH A FIREARM OR METAPHORICALLY.)

*2 IS HE IMPRESSING HIS STATUS AS A CAMP GUARD, ARMED AND INVOLVED? AS A KAPO BERUFSBRECHER IT WOULD BE VERY UNLIKELY. BUT HE IS A TRUSTED EMPLOYEE AND THE CAMP IS AT ITS WITS END, AS THE END OF THE WAR IS SO NEAR.

LETTER 12B

10-4-1945

MEIN KLEINER LIEBLING SABINE, SONNENSCHIN!

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AT 2.00 AM. I HAVE JUST GOT HOME AND AM VERY SAD ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATIVE BLUNDER COMMITTED BY THE SWISS ALLIANCE AND YET I STILL HAVE TO WRITE THE PROMISED LONG LETTER TO MY SABINE SONNENSCHIN.

DEAR SEELCHEN, YOU CAN HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU HAVE GIVEN ME IN YOUR LETTER OF YESTERDAY AND OUR CONVERSATION WHEN I VISITED YOU TODAY.

I REJOICE, COMPLETELY OVERCOME WITH BLISS AS IF I WERE A CHILD STILL OR EXPERIENCING LIFE AS A BOY OF EIGHTEEN - OR AS IF I HAD JUST RECEIVED A WORLD PATENT FROM THE EMPEROR OF CHINA HIMSELF. THAT IS HOW YOUNG I FEEL AND NOW, MY SEELCHEN, I KNOW THAT YOU REALLY AND HONESTLY LOVE ME FROM THE VERY BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART AND I THANK YOU UNCEASINGLY FOR IT.

MY LITTLE SUNSHINE, YOU WILL NEVER HAVE CAUSE TO REGRET THIS DAY AND WILL CARRY IT IN YOUR MEMORY ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE DISTANT DAYS OF YOUR OLD AGE. I SHALL NEVER DO INJURY TO OR ABUSE THE TRUST THAT HAS BEEN PLACED IN ME, REMAINING EVER LOYAL TO YOUR LOVE AND RETURNING IT ACCORDINGLY.

NOW TO THE LETTER ITSELF AND I NEED TO SAY TO YOU AT THE VERY ONSET THAT IT WAS THE SWISS LEAGUE THAT REFUSED TO CARRY OUT THE AGREED TRANSFER OF THE DUTCH NATIONALS, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE RISK TO THEIR CHARGES. THE RADIO MESSAGE TO THIS EFFECT WAS RECEIVED AT 21.00 YESTERDAY, SO THAT FOR THE MOMENT NOTHING WILL COME OF THE PLANS TO RELEASE YOU AS LONG AS THE GENEVA CONVENTION DOES NOT MEET AGAIN.

THIS IS A MATTER OF EXTRAORDINARY REGRET TO ME, GIVEN BOTH YOUR PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT AND INDEED THAT OF DR STEYNS AND SO MANY OTHER COMRADES, MALE AND FEMALE. I COULD PUT A BOMB UNDER THE WHOLE LOT OF THEM, SO ANGRY AM I AT WHAT THOSE IN CHARGE HAVE DONE.

SEELCHEN, YOU WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO BE PATIENT TO THE BITTER END I FEAR.

ONE THING I WANT TO WARN YOU OF AND ENCOURAGE YOU ALSO TO PASS IT ON TO YOUR FELLOW COUNTRY MEN - BE CAREFUL, THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE AIR, BE ALERT TO EVERYTHING WHICH IS GOING ON DOWN THERE IN THE WIENER GRABEN. I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS, THOUGH AS YET I KNOW NOTHING SPECIFIC. HOWEVER, I EXPECT TO FIND OUT MORE TOMORROW.

I DEFINITELY SHOULD NOT WISH TO ALARM YOU, NO; BUT IT IS MY HOLY DUTY TO WARN YOU OF POSSIBLE DANGERS.

SEELCHEN, MY LITTLE DARLING, PLEASE FOR THE SAKE OF OUR LOVE, I PLEAD WITH YOU TO PRACTISE WALKING NORMALLY AGAIN AS MUCH AND AS ENERGETICALLY AS YOU CAN, SO THAT IF DANGER SHOULD THREATEN, YOU WILL BE EQUAL TO THE EXERTIONS NEEDED TO SAVE YOURSELF. LISTEN TO ME, SABINE HEART, PLEASE FOLLOW MY ADVICE.

THIS IS AFTER ALL MY ANSWER, MY DARLING, TO YOUR QUESTION CONCERNING A POSSIBLE EVACUATION AND IF I WRITE THAT YOU HAVE NO NEED TO BE FEARFUL AND THAT I SHALL REMAIN WITH YOU, THEN YOU CAN RELY ON IT.

I SHALL REMAIN HERE AND NOT GO TO THE SS OR THE FRONT. NO, I HAVE CALLED MY LITTLE GROUP OF FRIENDS TOGETHER TO PROVIDE OUR SPECIAL PROTECTION AND HELP TO YOU WOMEN SHOULD THE POSSIBLE ORDER FOR EVACUATION BE RECEIVED.

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HOW ARE THINGS IN THE WIENER GRABEN? DO YOU NEED ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR TO MAKE LIFE MORE COMFORTABLE? YOU NEED ONLY SAY THE WORD. I SHALL BE ANGRY WITH YOU IF YOU FAIL TO SAY WHAT YOU COULD URGENTLY USE OR SERIOUSLY LACK. I CAN GET ANYTHING YOU ASK IMMEDIATELY, NO MATTER WHAT, SO PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR ORDERS. I COULD KICK MYSELF FOR BRINGING AWAY THE ITEMS I INTENDED FOR YOU TODAY - VERY ANNOYING THAT YOU STILL HAVEN'T GOT THEM DOWN THERE. BUT THEY WILL REACH YOU STRAIGHT AWAY TOMORROW MORNING.

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SABINE, MY ANGEL, ONE THING I MUST TELL YOU NOW HOWEVER. WHEN IT BECOMES GENERALLY KNOWN AT HOME THAT WE ARE ENGAGED, I DON'T WANT, NOR AM ABLE TO WAIT TOO LONG FOR THE WEDDING. I DON'T WANT A LONG ENGAGEMENT OR ABREIBUNG AS THEY SAY IN GERMAN Y- OR WILL YOU HAVE YOUR OBJECTIONS TO THAT TOO? HMM, LITTLE SABINE, PLEASE DON'T OBJECT. YOU ONCE SAID TO ME THAT YOU WOULD LIKE CHILDREN AND IT IS PRECISELY FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILDREN THAT MUM SHOULD COME TO LIVE WITH US. BUT NOT AS A COMMON OR GARDEN NANNY. NO, NO, SHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY HER GRANDCHILDREN AND I VERY MUCH WANT TO SHARE OUR JOY AND LOVE WITH HER, OFFERING HER IN OUR COMPANY AN AGREEABLE FINAL CHAPTER TO HER LIFE. LOOK SABINE, THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF MUM'S LIFE ARE ALREADY OVER AND AUTUMN IS ABOUT TO MAKE ITS ENTRANCE. DOES IT HAVE TO BE A LONELY TIME FOR HER? NO, SHE BELONGS WITH HER CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN AND THAT IS MY HOLY ASPIRATION.

TO YOUR COMMENTS ON THE DEPUTY SUPERVISOR, THE ONLY THING I WOULD ADD IS THAT SHE SAID TO ME TODAY THAT SHE IS MORE THAN HAPPY TO DO ANYTHING TO HELP US AND THAT, IF SHE WERE A MAN, SHE WOULD BE CONSUMED WITH PASSION FOR YOU AND THAT SHE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY, I, LIKE MANY OTHERS, HAD NOT VISITED YOU EARLIER YESTERDAY EVENING AND DID NOT DO SO TILL EARLY THIS MORNING. SHE SUGGESTED THAT WE COULD HAVE HAD A CHANCE FOR A GOOD LONG CONVERSATION THEN, THOUGH I AM OF A DIFFERENT OPINION AS IT HAPPENS. DESPITE ALL THIS SHE IS DEVOTED IN ALL COMMON DECENCY TO US BOTH AND ALWAYS ASKS ME WHETHER I HAVE ANYTHING SHE MIGHT DELIVER TO YOU FROM ME OR WHETHER THERE IS ANYTHING THAT YOU MIGHT BE CURRENTLY IN NEED OF.

I ASK YOU THEREFORE, MY SEELCHEN, IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT YOU MIGHT NEED, TELL HER AND THE MESSAGE WILL REACH ME DIRECTLY. (MY BLACK INK HAS RUN OUT, WILL CONTINUE IN BLUE) THROUGH ANNI I HAVE SENT YOU TODAY: THREE DRESSES, THREE PAIRS OF STOCKINGS AND A PAIR OF SHOES. DID YOU RECEIVE THEM? PLEASE LET ME KNOW. TOMORROW

UNDERGARMENTS AND THE LIKE SHOULD REACH YOU AND IF MY SEELCHEN CAN WALK A LITTLE, THEN PLEASE DO SO BY COMING TO SEE ME IN THE COMMAND HEAD - QUARTERS. YES! DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH YOUR DEAR BOY? FOREVER? I SHOULD BE OVERJOYED IF WE COULD BE TOGETHER THIS VERY MOMENT AND TO STAY THAT WAY, COOKING AND EATING IN EACH OTHER'S COMPANY. THAT WOULD BE JUST SPLENDID AND THEN, WHEN THE WAR IS AT AN END, MAKING OUR WAY TO MUNCHEN FOR A FEW DAYS AND THEN STRAIGHT AWAY ON TO YOUR MUM IN HOLLAND. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

YES, SEELCHEN, IT SEEMS YOU WILL HAVE TO DRINK THE POISONED CHALICE DRY BEFORE WE ARE FREE TO DO ALL THAT. YOU WILL BE SPARED NOTHING. EVEN THIS DISASTER (FAILURE OF THE SWISS LEAGUE VENTURE) WILL HAVE TO BE BORNE, THOUGH, THANK GOD, NOT FOR LONG, PERHAPS FOR NO MOE THAN A FEW DAYS. THE REPORT FROM THE FRONT IS VERY GOOD AND I AM VERY HAPPY ABOUT IT.

I PASSED ON YOUR GREETINGS TO DR STEYNS AND HE RETURNS THEM TO YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF HIS HEART TOGETHER WITH HIS BEST WISHES FOR MEETING UP AGAIN IN YOUR HOMETLAND IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND A SWIFT RECUPERATION FROM YOUR INJURY.

THAT YOU ARE SAD AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT WHERE YOU WOULD PREFER TO BE - HERE WITH ME OR AT HOME IN HOLLAND - THIS STRIKES A CHORD WITH ME TOO AND I CAN WHOLLY SYMPATHISE. I FEEL EXACTLY THE SAME. AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, I SHALL STAY WITH YOU UNTIL I BREATHE MY LAST BREATH, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

WHAT YOU WROTE IN YOUR LAST LETTER BUT ONE ABOUT YOUR GRANDFATHER, YES, YOU GUESSED MY REACTION CORRECTLY. I AM PLEASSED THAT HE WAS A GERMAN AND THAT HIS GREAT GRANDCHILDREN HAVE BECOME GOOD DUTCHMEN. I THINK THAT OUR CHILDREN WILL EXPERIENCE MUCH THE SAME. THE GENERATIONS REPEAT THE SAME PATTERN OVER AND OVER.

HEREDITY IS A MIXTURE OF THE BLOODLINE AND THE HUMAN SPECIES. THERE WILL BE LITTLE CHANCE FOR VARIATION IN IT ALL, MORE A MATTER ONLY OF UPBRINGING AND THE NATIONALITY OF THE CHILDREN'S FATHER. IF THE MOTHER IS THAN AN UPRIGHT DUTCHWOMAN, THE OUTCOME CANNOT BE BUT A SUCCESS.

AND SO NOW I CONCLUDE WITH THE REQUEST THAT YOU SHOULD TELL ME YOUR WISHES AND NEEDS IN RESPECT OF YOUR PHYSICAL COMFORT AND FOOD STUFFS AND I SHALL FULFIL THEM IMMEDIATELY.

HEARTFELT GREETINGS AND PASSIONATE KISSES FROM YOUR DEAREST BOY

FRANZ

PLEASE HAND OVER YOUR WASHING- ALL OF IT.

LETTER 13

11 -4 – 1945

MEIN KLEINER LIEBLING! SABINE SONNENSCHNEID!

AM WAITING TODAY, SO FAR IN VAIN, FOR POST FROM YOU AND WILL HAVE TO LEARN TO BE MORE PATIENT.

I HAVE JUST HEARD FROM THE CAMP COMMANDER THAT YOU WOMEN ARE TO COME BACK UP TO US IN THE MAIN CAMP FOR REASONS OF HYGIENE, WHICH WOULD BE VERY VERY DESIRABLE FROM MY PERSPECTIVE – A DAY OF JOY INDEED.

I HAVE HEARD THAT CONDITIONS DOWN THERE WHERE YOU ARE, IN THE VALLEY, ARE UNBEARABLE AND I ASK YOU, MY SEELCHEN, TO BE CAREFUL IN EVERYTHING YOU DO AND TOUCH, TO AVOID ABOVE ALL CONTRACTING AN INFECTION AT THIS LATE STAGE.

TOGETHER WITH THIS LETTER I AM TODAY SENDING FOOD AND AN OUTFIT WHICH CORRESPONDS TO YOUR WISHES. DID YOU GET THE TWO PACKAGES TODAY FROM THE CAMP SECRETARY? AND THE LAUNDRY AND THE SHOES YESTERDAY? I HAVE SECURED A SUITCASE FOR YOUR USE AND ASK YOU TO PACK YOUR BELONGINGS IN IT.

TODAY I RECEIVED FROM HOME A VERY SAD GREETINGS CARD, A BOMBING NOTIFICATION THAT MY COUNTRY HOUSE IN PRIEN AM CHIEMSEE HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO AN ARSON ATTACK AND IS IN PART SEVERELY DAMAGED. I AM NOT ANGRY WITH THE PERPETRATORS OR ABOUT THE DAMAGE THEY CAUSED, BUT I AM ANGRY WITH THE FORCES THAT HAVE DRIVEN THE WORLD TO THIS CATASTROPHIC STATE. I NEED TO SAY TO YOU MY DEAR SEELCHEN, THAT I SHOULD HAPPILY DO WITHOUT THE COUNTRY HOUSE AS I HAVE QUITE ENOUGH OF WHAT I NEED AND ABOVE ALL I HAVE YOU.

TODAY I RECEIVED A VERY WEIRD LOVE-LETTER FROM A YOUNG LADY AND HAVE TO LAUGH AT SUCH OVERTURES FROM A WOMAN TO A MAN – QUITE SHAMELESS.

SHE WROTE THAT SHE HAD HEARD FROM OTHER GIRLS, AND OBSERVED HERSELF, THAT I WAS IN THE HABIT OF SUPPORTING YOU WOMEN IN WHATEVER WAY I COULD. INITIALLY SHE ASKS FOR FOOD AND THEN OFFERS ME HER LOVE IN RETURN. TELL ME SABINE, ARE THERE ANY SUCH UNSCRUPULOUS INDIVIDUALS AMONGST YOU TOO? JUST INCREDIBLE. IT WAS A GERMAN OF COURSE. (I SHALL NOT USE THE EXPRESSION TO DESCRIBE HER WHICH IS ON THE TIP OF MY TONGUE).

AM I ABOUT TO RECEIVE FURTHER POST FROM MY LITTLE DARLING TOMORROW OR PERHAPS EVEN TODAY? PLEASE WRITE VERY SOON.

IN THE HOPE THAT A LONG LETTER OF LOVE WITH DETAILS OF YOUR PHYSICAL NEEDS WILL SOON REACH ME, I CLOSE WITH

THE MOST HEARTFELT GREETINGS AND A 1000 PASSIONATE KISSES.

YOUR BIG DARLING BOY FRANZ

I AM IN POSSESSION OF YOUR DEAR LETTER OF 10TH APRIL AND MY HEARTFELT THANKS FOR IT. IT HAS JUST TURNED 10PM AND I INTEND TO WRITE YOU AN ANSWER TO YOUR DEAR LETTER. I REALLY HAVEN'T HAD THE OPPORTUNITY BEFORE NOW.

FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, I MUST PASS ON HEARTFELT GREETINGS FROM DR STEYNS. HE IS WELL ON THE WAY TO RECOVERY, A GOOD PATIENT AND CONVALESCENT WITH A RAGING HUNGER TO PROVE IT.

NOW, MY DARLING, TO YOUR LETTER. UNFORTUNATELY WE ARE ONLY TOO WELL AWARE OF THE SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS (IN THE WIENER GRABEN) AND I THEREFORE MUST MOVE ON STRAIGHTAWAY TO THE SUBJECT OF YOUR FOOT AND REPEAT THE ARGUMENT FROM MY LAST LETTER TO YOU. I ASK YOU, MY SEELCHEN, MOST EARNESTLY TO HAVE THE PLASTER REMOVED FROM YOUR FOOT AND SERIOUSLY TO INTENSIFY YOUR ATTEMPTS TO WALK, IN AS FAR AS YOUR STRENGTH PERMITS. FOLLOW MINE AND THE GOOD ADVICE OF THE PROFESSOR (WHO, BY THE WAY SENDS HIS GREETINGS WITH BEST WISHES) AND BE BRAVE, MY LITTLE DARLING. CHIN UP, IT WON'T BE LONG NOW AND WE MUST ENSURE THAT WE CAN COPE WITH AN EVACUATION WHEN IT COMES OR EVEN WITH CATASTROPHIES OF A LESS FORESEEABLE KIND. THEY WOULD BE VERY SERIOUS FOR YOU, BECAUSE YOUR PLASTER WOULD ONLY GET IN THE WAY.

THEREFORE, PLEASE, HEAR MY PLEADING AND ACT UPON IT.

ON THE 14TH WE SHALL ALL BE JOINING YOU DOWN THERE IN THE VALLEY, INCLUDING ME, AND THEN THE PUNISHMENT FOR YOUR DISOBEDIENCE WILL BEGIN, MY LITTLE DARLING.

AS FAR AS I KNOW, A DETACHMENT OF ORDINARY RATINGS HAS BEEN DETAILED FOR GENERAL CLEANING OF THE TOILET BUILDINGS ETC. THE HALL IS TO BE DIVIDED UP WITH WOODEN PARTITIONS, MADE OF PLANKS, IN ORDER TO ISOLATE THE SICK. – IN SHORT – EMERGENCY MEASURES, WHICH ARE IN THEMSELVES UNSUSTAINABLE.

WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT THE ROMA GYPSY WOMEN IS DOUBTLESS APPROPRIATE ENOUGH, ABOUT THEIR BREED AND RACIAL ORIGINS AND IT IS ONLY VERY REGRETTABLE THAT SUCH CREATURES ARE STILL ALIVE AND AMONGST US. YES SEELCHEN, THIS WELL KNOWN STAIRWAY (OF DEATH) HAS ALREADY COST THOUSANDS THEIR LIVES AND IT IS THE EMBLEM OF THE MAUTHAUSEN CAMP. MANY A PROMINENT MEMBER OF SOCIETY WHO NO DOUBT NEVER EXPECTED TO END HIS LIFE THAT WAY, HAS PERISHED ON IT.

YOU WRITE THAT YOU WERE CLOSE TO TEARS AT THE SIGHT OF IT, BUT MY SEELCHEN, DON'T CRY. BE BRAVE. THIS IS JUST ONE MORE LESSON IN THE SCHOOL OF LIFE THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO LEARN IN ORDER TO BECOME AS HARD AS STEEL AND SO ENABLE YOU TO AWAKE FROM THIS LABYRINTHINE CHAOS INTO THE BEAUTIFUL AGE OF A DOUBLE RENEWAL OF LIFE. COURAGE AND HUMOUR WILL HELP YOU TO SURVIVE MANY A DIFFICULT HOUR OF BEING CRUSHED BY DESPERATION AND MISERY AND YOU WILL BE A FINE EXAMPLE OF A SURVIVOR MENTALITY FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW. (THE LIGHT HAS JUST GONE OUT HERE AND I SHALL CONTINUE TO WRITE BY CANDLELIGHT)

MY LITTLE DARLING, I CAN EASILY IMAGINE HOW YOU MUST BE FEELING AND CAN ONLY EXPRESS MY REGRET AT THE MARTYRDOM YOU, DEAR SEELCHEN, ARE BEING FORCED TO UNDERGO. YOU WROTE THAT YOU HAD NO BED. DO YOU AT LEAST HAVE ONE NOW? I HOPE SO. OTHERWISE I

SHALL HAVE TO COME DOWN THERE WITH THE PROFESSOR AND SORT THINGS OUT WITH THE LADY DOCTOR.

THE TWO KAFTAN BAGS WITH THE COMPLETE LISTS OF WHAT YOU ASKED FOR SHOULD HAVE REACHED YOU YESTERDAY VIA THE CAMP SECRETARY. I HOPE NOTHING IS MISSING.

TODAY I HAVE SECURED A BELT AND BUCKLE FOR YOUR FLARED TROUSERS AND SENT IT TO YOU VIA WEBER WITH THE REQUEST THAT YOU LET ME KNOW WHETHER IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO YOU. I DID MY HONEST BEST TO PERFECT THIS WORK OF ART FOR YOU. HAVE YOU ALSO RECEIVED THE OTHER ITEMS: NAIL CLIPPERS, MANICURE FILE SET, AMULET (?) AND SO ON, AS WELL AS THE SUITCASE YOU ASKED FOR? ANNI HAS THE KEY TO THIS LAST ITEM. IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHOICE OF GISELA AS GO-BETWEEN AND MESSENGER I AM IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT AND ALREADY AWAIT WITH LONGING HER FIRST DELIVERY OF YOUR POST AND YOUR AFFECTION.

YOU WRITE THAT YOU YEARN FOR INTIMACY WITH YOUR BELOVED BIG BOY, YES, YOU REALLY DO. YOU LITTLE ANGEL, I FEEL THE SAME FOR YOU, THOUGH MUCH STRONGER, A DESIRE FOR YOU AND A NEED TO IMPART LOVE. BUT TAKE COMFORT MY DEAR, VERY SOON WE SHALL BE UNITED FOR EVER. AND THEN? THEN I SHALL DESTROY ALL MY BRIDGES IN MY BURNING PASSION AND DESIRE FOR YOU.

YOU DO NOT KNOW AS YET THAT I AM HOT BLOODED OR INDEED WHAT SORT OF BIG BOY I AM DEEP DOWN. YOU WILL BE AFRAID OF ME WHEN YOU DISCOVER THE TRUTH, YOU LITTLE SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN.

YES, WHEN WE ARE IN HOLLAND A DOUBLE SPRING WILL BLOSSOM IN OUR HEARTS AND YOU AND I AND MUM WILL MAKE UP FOR ALL THAT AN EVIL STROKE OF FATE HAS TAKEN FROM US BY BRUTE FORCE.

YOU KNOW MY LITTLE DARLING, THAT I AM A NATURE LOVER AND I SHALL SPEND IN MY HEART SO MANY WONDERFUL SUMMERS WITH YOU AND MUM ON TRIPS IN THE OPEN AIR TO ADMIRE HOLLAND'S MAGNIFICENT BLOSSOMS AND BLOOMS.

I TOO SHOULD PREFER TO LEAVE BEHIND THE RAGS OF THE CAMP AND BE WITH YOU IN A MEADOW. I WOULD SAY TO YOU AND DO TO YOU MANY MANY LOVING THINGS FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART, BUT UNFORTUNATELY FATE IS INTENT ON TESTING US FURTHER.

BUT JUST YOU WAIT A LITTLE WHILE AND IF YOU ARE SENSIBLE AND FOLLOW MY ADVICE ABOVE ABOUT YOUR FOOT, YOU WILL BECOME VERY VERY HAPPY SOON ENOUGH.

IT IS WHOLLY DEPENDENT ON YOUR DOING WHAT I SAY, MY SEELCHEN, DO YOU HEAR ME? JUST REFLECT ON HOW MANY WOMEN KNOWN TO YOU HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT PHYSICALLY MANAGE THE EVACUATION PROCEDURE.

IT WOULD BE AN APPALLING OUTCOME FOR ME. I CANNOT BEAR TO THINK ABOUT IT.

SO, SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN, PLEASE PLEASE FOLLOW MY ADVICE EVEN IF IT IS VERY PAINFUL. TRY ANY METHOD YOU LIKE, JUST MAKE SURE YOU CAN WALK.

AS YOU HAVE LOST POSSESSIONS THROUGH THEFT, I HAVE INTENTIONALLY SENT YOU NOTHING TODAY AND DIRECTED THAT IT WILL BE DESPATCHED TOMORROW. IN THE MEANTIME, FIRST OF ALL, EAT UP WHAT YOU STILL HAVE. HERE IN THE CAMP PROPER THEY NOW ONLY GET 1/6TH OF THE OFFICIAL DAILY BREAD RATION AND WILL POSSIBLY GET EVEN LESS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. YOU MUST THEREFORE EAT EVERYTHING AND BECOME HEALTHY. YOU SHOULD NOT WORRY

ABOUT ME FOR A MOMENT, MY LITTLE SABINE. I AM FUNDAMENTALLY HEALTHY THROUGH AND THROUGH.

YOU WROTE THAT I SHOULD SEND NO MORE CLOTHES, BUT I HAVE YOUR SPECIAL OUTFIT HERE.

YOU WILL NO DOUBT THROW YOUR HANDS UP IN HORROR, BUT THAT ISN'T A PROBLEM. NOTHING IS TOO MUCH TROUBLE FOR YOU, MY SEELCHEN.

YOU SEE, I AM BEGINNING TO APPRECIATE HOW WOMEN'S MINDS WORK.

TODAY I HAD TO WRITE A LOVE LETTER FOR A COMRADE, WHO IS HOPELESSLY IN LOVE WITH A BELGIAN WOMAN, SINCE HE CANNOT WRITE GERMAN OR FRENCH FOR HIMSELF. THE POOR CHAP LANGUISHES IN PAIN AND FEELS HE HAS BEEN SPURNED. ANOTHER KAPO HAS RELIEVED HIM OF THE STATUS OF A BELOVED, WHICH HAS INVOLVED ME ALSO IN CONCILIATION BETWEEN JEALOUS SUITORS. LOVE IS A HOLY MATTER AND THE YOUNG LADY IS A SECRETARY IN THE COMMAND HEAD QUARTERS. INEVITABLY THE TWO MEN HAVE BECOME THE WORST OF ENEMIES TOWARDS EACH OTHER ON THE GIRL'S ACCOUNT AND ANTAGONIZE EACH OTHER CONSTANTLY IN THEIR RIVALRY.

MY DEAR SABINE SEELCHEN, YOU WRITE THAT YOU FEEL HOMESICK AT THE SIGHT OF THE MAGNIFICENCE OF THE SPRING BLOSSOM AND THE RURAL IDYLL AROUND HERE. NO ONE COULD CLAIM TO BE UNAFFECTED BY IT, UNLESS HE WERE MORALLY COMPLETELY AT SEA.

I CAN READILY SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR FEELINGS AND INDEED I SUFFER IN MUCH THE SAME WAY. YOU ONCE SAID TO ME WE SHOULD BEAR OUR SUFFERING TOGETHER AND IN COMMON; THEREFORE, MY SEELCHEN, CHIN UP! THINGS WILL CHANGE SOON ENOUGH AND THE THOUGHT OF OUR HONEST AND LOYAL AFFECTION AS FREE HUMAN BEINGS IS AS A BALSAM ON THE WOUND OF WHICH YOU WRITE.

YOU WRITE THAT YOU HAVE A LOT TO TELL ME ABOUT HOLLAND AND I SENSE, YOU DEAR LITTLE SCAMP, THAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO PAINT YOUR HOMELAND IN UNATTRACTIVE COLOURS. BUT THE MORALLY SOUND CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS HANDED DOWN THE GENERATIONS STILL FLOURISH IN YOUR HOMELAND AND REMAIN FUNDAMENTALLY UNCHANGED, COME WHAT MAY.

YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO FRIGHTEN ME OFF BY TELLING ME DIFFERENTLY, YOU NAUGHTY LITTLE DARLING AND CERTAINLY YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO SPOIL THE PROSPECT OF MARRIAGE BY THESE MEANS. NO NO, YOU NAUGHTY LITTLE SEELCHEN. WHEN WE GET MARRIED, I GUESS THE GAMES WILL BEGIN AND I SHALL CERTAINLY LET YOU GIVE ME A DUCKING, JUST THE ONCE THOUGH, BUT THAT IS NOT GOING TO COOL MY ARDOUR FOR YOU OR ALTER MY PLANS FOR OUR MARRIAGE ONE LITTLE BIT.

BY THE WAY, THERE WILL BE FURTHER PUNISHMENTS FOR SUCH TEASING - IN THE FORM OF SO MANY KISSES THAT YOU WILL NEVER PAY OFF THE DEBT. WELL, THAT IS CLEAR ENOUGH AND NOW YOU MUST TELL ME, IS YOUR LOVE FOR ME ANY GREATER THAN IT WAS, BY HOWEVER SMALL A MARGIN, OR HAS THE BAROMETER FALLEN?

IF I SEE YOU ON SATURDAY, I ADVISE YOU TO CONCEAL YOUR HANDS, AS I SHALL OTHERWISE EAT YOU UP OUT OF PURE PASSION: YES, MY LITTLE SABINE SONNENSCHN, YOUR BIG BOY REALLY LOVES YOU AND LONGS FOR YOU AND HOPES THAT YOU WILL SMOTHER HIS LONGING WITH MANY LOVING AND HEARTFELT KISSES. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

MAKE SURE THAT YOU GET HEALTHY AGAIN, MY DEAR SEELCHEN, AND THEN YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN WAY TO THE COMMAND HEADQUARTERS, IF IT CONTINUES TO BE ALLOWED.

THEN YOU CAN COOK FOR ME AND LOOK AFTER BOTH OF US AS MUCH AS YOU WISH. PLEASE
PLEASE – YES VERY SOON.

I WAS UNABLE TO SLEEP LAST NIGHT. MY THOUGHTS WERE CONSTANTLY OF YOU AND I REALLY
DREAMT MANY WONDERFUL THINGS ABOUT YOU.

YES, AND NOW MY SEELCHEN, THAT IS ENOUGH FOR TODAY AND IT IS INDEED MIDNIGHT.

I GREET YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART AND KISS YOU.

FROM YOUR DEAR BIG BOY

FRANZ

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE WASHING? JUST YOU WAIT, YOU NAUGHTY DARLING.

MEIN LIEBE KLEINER SABINE SONNENSCHEN

TODAY I HAVE RECEIVED THE FIRST LETTER DELIVERED BY OUR LITTLE FEMALE POSTMAN AND THANK YOU FROM MY HEART FOR IT.

YOU ARE THE CAUSE OF ALL MY JOY AGAIN AND AGAIN. I AM SENDING YOU AT THE SAME TIME AS THIS LETTER VIA OUR MESSENGER (WEBER) AND OUR LITTLE POSTMAN HERSELF VARIOUS CONSUMER ITEMS TO CARE FOR YOUR SWEET LITTLE FINGERS—AND LAUNDRY, TOGETHER WITH YOUR OUTFIT AND SOME FOOD ITEMS IN THE CONFIDENT HOPE THAT YOU WILL ENJOY THE LATTER AND FIND SOME USE FOR THE OTHER ITEMS.

MY LITTLE DARLING, YOU WROTE THAT MY PREVIOUS LETTER HAD BEEN IMMENSELY LONG. SHOULD I, OR RATHER MAY I NOT WRITE SUCH LETTERS TO MY LITTLE ANGEL, GIVEN THAT FROM SHEER LONGING FOR YOUR COMPANY I HARDLY FIND ANY TIME FOR OTHER DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS, SINCE I SPENT THE WHOLE DAY IN MY IMAGINATION IN YOUR COMPANY?

SABINE SEELCHEN, I THINK YOU ARE WELL AWARE THAT MY WHOLE BEING AND THE THOUGHTS THAT FILL MY DAY REVOLVE AROUND THE ONE SUBJECT, NAMELY A CERTAIN SABINE SEELCHEN AND THAT THEREFORE NOTHING IS TOO MUCH TROUBLE FOR ME WHICH I BOTH CAN AND SHALL CARRY OUT IN YOUR SERVICE. YOU NOW KNOW AT LAST, MY LITTLE DARLING, TO WHOM MY HEART HAS LONG TOTALLY BELONGED AND THAT IT HAS OPENED BEFORE YOU AND LOVES YOU, SO THAT EVERY DETAIL OF MY ACTIONS IS DESIGNED TO EXPRESS MY LOVE FOR YOU.

CONCERNING YOUR COMMENTS ON YOUR DEAR BROTHERS, I AM GRATEFUL TO TAKE NOTE OF THEM AND I LOOK FORWARD TO BEING PERMITTED VERY SOON TO GET TO KNOW THEM IN THE CONFIDENT HOPE THAT WE SHALL LIKE EACH OTHER AND GET ON WELL TOGETHER. DO THE TWO OF THEM ENJOY ANY PARTICULAR SPORT BESIDES SAILING? AFTER ALL YOU DUTCH MEN ARE WELL KNOWN AS WATER RATS PAR EXCELLENCE, SO THAT I AS AN AMATEUR AND LAYMAN WILL CERTAINLY HAVE TO MAKE DO WITH SECOND PLACE. BUT IN OTHER AREAS, SUCH AS AEROBATICS AND PARACHUTING I THINK THAT I COULD SHOW EVEN THE MILITARY PARACHUTE SPECIALISTS OF THE CURRENT GENERATION A THING OR TWO. OR PERHAPS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN CARS OR TENNIS ETC. WHATEVER, I SHOULD BE VERY PLEASED TO KNOW A LITTLE IN ADVANCE ABOUT WHAT YOUR BROTHERS ARE INTERESTED IN. I SHALL GET MORE DETAIL FROM THEM IN PERSON. I ALREADY EVEN NOW, FEEL SOME AFFINITY WITH YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER, DESPITE NOT KNOWING HIM OF COURSE, AND I CAN WELL IMAGINE THAT I SHALL FIND IN HIM A REALLY GOOD FRIEND AND BROTHER IN LAW.

I HAVE A FURTHER QUESTION FOR YOU, MY SEELCHEN, WOULD YOU NOT LIKE TO RETURN TO INDONESIA AT SOME STAGE? PLEASE LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ON THE SUBJECT. I THINK THAT AFTER THE WAR ONE COULD HAVE A VERY PLEASANT LIFE THERE AND THAT INCOME AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES ARE ABUNDANT THERE. WHERE IS YOUR LITTLE NEPHEW NOW, THE SON OF YOUR BROTHER? STILL AT HOME PERHAPS?

YOU HAVE SAID, MY DARLING, THAT YOU BEGAN AT SOME POINT TO WRITE DOWN YOUR LIFE STORY FOR ME, BUT DESTROYED WHAT YOU HAD WRITTEN. WHY? AT LEAST, AT THE MOMENT YOU HAVE TIME ENOUGH FOR IT. IF I HAD THE TIME, YOU WOULD BY NOW DEFINITELY HAVE MY LIFE STORY TO PERUSE, IN MANUSCRIPT FORM OR EVEN AS A SHORT NOVEL AND YOU WOULD THEN BE ABLE TO GAZE OPENLY AND WITHOUT FEARFUL TREMBLING INTO MY INNERMOST SOUL AND SEE

WHAT AN EVIL HUMAN BEING I AM! WELL, I GUESS YOU WILL PROBABLY LOOK AND RECOIL. DON'T TELL ME I DIDN'T WARN YOU. I AM INDEED A DREADFUL HUMAN BEING AND A THIEF. I AM SO IN LOVE WITH YOU THAT I HAVE STOLEN YOUR HEART. SO, IF YOU CAN FIND THE TIME, YOU CAN CERTAINLY TELL ME YOUR LIFE STORY. I'D BE OVERJOYED IF YOU DID AND IT WOULD GIVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW TOGETHER A LITTLE WHEN WE ARE AT HOME IN HOLLAND. UNFORTUNATELY MY COLLECTIONS OF VERY DETAILED PHOTOGRAPHS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED ALONG WITH EVERYTHING ELSE DAMAGED BY THE BOMBING. AMONGST THEM ALSO SOME VERY NICE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM SCHEVENINGEN AND ROTTERDAM.

NOW TO YOUR COMMENTS CONCERNING MY POOR LANGUAGE SKILLS. SABINE, SEELCHEN, YOU MUST BELIEVE ME. I WAS A VERY TALENTED PUPIL AT GRAMMAR SCHOOL, BOTH ABLE AND VERY WILLING TO LEARN, BUT MY LANGUAGE SKILLS HAVE SUFFERED NEGLECT OVER THE YEARS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE LACK OF CONVERSATION AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTISE AND, QUITE IN CONTRAST TO MY WORK RELATED STUDIES AND PRACTICAL SKILLS. HERE IN THE CAMPS, I DIDN'T WANT OR, PUT RATHER BETTER, WASN'T ABLE TO PREVENT MY ABILITY DETERIORATING, PARTLY ON THE ACCOUNT OF THE EXHAUSTION OF CAMP EMPLOYMENT AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF MY COMMITMENTS CARING FOR OTHERS. I ASK YOU THEREFORE TO BEAR THIS IN MIND IF MY SKILLS FALL SHORT, PARTICULARLY IN FRENCH. MY ENGLISH HAS SURVIVED RATHER BETTER IN MY MEMORY. BUT THAT YOU SHOULD WRITE THE WORDS "IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER WE GET MARRIED OR NOT" COMES AS A BIT OF A SHOCK TO ME, THOUGH I UNDERSTAND YOU COMPLETELY, MY SEELCHEN,. YOU ARE RIGHT AND FROM NOW ON I SHALL TRY MY HARDEST TO FULFIL YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF ME, DEAREST LADY, AND ABOVE ALL TO CATCH UP WITH MY STUDIES, ALBEIT RATHER LATE IN THE DAY.

WHAT I AM LACKING, HOWEVER IS A GOOD TEACHER AND I SHOULD HAVE PREFERRED OF COURSE TO ATTEND THE CLASSES OF MISS SABINE ZUUR AND TO FOLLOW LESSONS AND LEARN VOCABULARY UNDER HER GUIDANCE. HOWEVER, I THINK I SHOULD HAVE HAD MY HEAD FULL OF NONSENSE AND MY TEACHER WOULD HAVE BEATEN ME SOUNDLY, AMONGST OTHER PUNISHMENTS, AND WITHOUT A WORD OF PRAISE. BUT THERE WILL BE TIME TO PUT ALL THAT RIGHT AND I SHALL THEN WILLINGLY BE YOUR OBEDIENT PUPIL, HARDWORKING AND GIFTED.

WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT THE BREAD, MY DARLING, IS CORRECT AND THE SHORTAGES ARE INDEED SLOWLY BECOMING VERY PAINFUL, BUT, DON'T FORGET, YOUR DEAR BOY HAS RESERVES ENOUGH AND GOOD SOURCES.

ON A DIFFERENT SUBJECT, CONCERNING 'TROPHY WOMEN' I REALLY DON'T RECOGNIZE WHOM YOU HAVE IN MIND, BUT I DO KNOW THAT MANY MORE WILL PERISH IN THAT ROLE BEFORE WE ARE DONE. THAT I KNOW WITH COMPLETE CERTAINTY. FOR THIS REASON I SHOULD ADVISE YOU TO KEEP YOURSELF TO YOURSELF MY DARLING AND ENSURE THAT YOU STAY CHEERFUL AND HEALTHY FOR ME, YOUR BIG BOY (I REALLY AM AWFULLY SELFISH, AREN'T I?)

CONCERNING NEWS OF OUR FRIEND, I CAN ONLY TELL YOU THAT IT IS EXTRAORDINARILY POSITIVE, BUT NO FURTHER DETAIL IS AVAILABLE AS SOURCES IN GERMANY ITSELF HAVE PLACED AN EMBARGO ON ALL NEWS AND THEREFORE THERE IS NONE. MORE DETAIL BY WORD OF MOUTH...

AND NOW, MY LITTLE DARLING, MY SEELCHEN, IT IS ALREADY 10.15PM AND I HAVE TO FINISH WITH THE CONFIDENT HOPE THAT MY ANGEL WILL SEND ME DAILY , BY MEANS OF OUR COURIER, BOTH REGULAR POST AND POSSIBLY SOME DIRTY WASHING, TOWARD WHICH I LOOK FORWARD WITH MUCH LONGING.

I GREET YOU WITH PASSIONATE KISSES. YOUR BIG BOY. FRANZ

LETTER 16

MAUTHAUSEN 15TH APRIL 1945

MEIN LIEBER SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN

IT IS SUNDAY AND I AM DEEPLY UPSET AS MY LITTLE DARLING DIDN'T THINK OF WRITING ME A LETTER YESTERDAY. IN PARTICULAR AS I AM ALREADY TWO LETTERS AHEAD AND AWAITING REPLIES TO THEM, WHICH MAKES MY HEART SUFFER.

ARE YOU ANGRY WITH ME? I CANNOT THINK OF ANY REASON WHY YOU SHOULD BE ANGRY AND THEREFORE TRY TO PUNISH ME. ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL, OR HAS YOUR HEALTH DETERIORATED?

YOU SEE, LIEBE SABINE, THAT I WORRY ABOUT YOU, AND NOW YOU HAVE LEFT ME FOR TWO DAYS WITHOUT ANY NEWS, YOU NAUGHTY GIRL. JUST YOU WAIT, I MAY HAVE TO TAKE MY REVENGE IN A SIMILAR WAY.

I HAD ALREADY GIVEN GISELA TWO LETTERS FROM ME AND ONE FROM DR STEYNS TO PASS ON TO YOU. I WONDER WHETHER YOU DIDN'T GET THESE LETTERS? I ALSO WANT TO KNOW WHETHER MEIN KLEINE SABINE RECEIVED THE ITEMS I SENT HER, SUCH AS SEMOLINA, MARGARINE, PEA CUBES, BACON AND BREAD OR THE OTHER ITEMS FOR NAIL CARE ETC. IN PARTICULAR I AM KEEN TO KNOW WHETHER YOU RECEIVED THE TWO BOXES, AND WHETHER THE SAILING TROUSERS WERE SAFELY DELIVERED INTO YOUR HANDS?

DESPITE MY ASKING YOU REPEATEDLY REGARDING THESE ITEMS, I HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY ANSWER FROM YOU AND YOU PERSIST IN NOT REPLYING TO MY QUESTIONS. I HAVE NO PEACE AND I AM WORRIED, EVEN REPROACH MYSELF THAT I MAY NOT HAVE FULFILLED YOUR WISHES TO YOUR FULLEST SATISFACTION IN SOME WAY.

DESPITE INTENSELY THINKING THINGS OVER, I CANNOT FIND AN EXPLANATION! ARE YOU TIRED OF ME? IF SO, DO TELL ME AND I SHALL STOP PESTERING YOU WITH MY NOTES.

SINCE YOU HAD SEEN DR MAX YESTERDAY, SATURDAY, AND HE RETURNED WITH NO MESSAGE OF GREETINGS FROM YOU TO ME, AND, ACCORDING TO HIS CONVERSATION YOU SHOWED NO FURTHER INTEREST IN ME (EXCUSE THE ASSUMPTION), I HAVE TO CONCLUDE THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER INTERESTED IN ME. AND LITTLE GISELA EQUALLY RETURNED SATURDAY WITHOUT ANY MENTION OF GREETINGS OR MESSAGE FOR ME.

I THEREFORE MUST ASSUME IT IS YOUR STATE OF HEALTH THAT IS NOT AS GOOD AS IT SHOULD BE AND I WILL MAKE SOME FURTHER ENQUIRIES TOMORROW AND DRAW MY CONCLUSIONS THEREAFTER.

I MUST SAY I AM WORRIED, AND THESE WORRIES ABOUT YOU DEPRIVE ME OF PEACE, SLEEP AND APPETITE!

MY SUNSHINE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ME? DO YOU SERIOUSLY WISH TO BE PUNISHED? ENOUGH OF THIS NOW. I HAVE TO ASSUME THAT YOU WILL, IN YOUR OWN TIME LET ME KNOW HOW LITTLE I MEAN TO YOU.

AND NOW THE OTHER BIT. IT WAS, UNFORTUNATELY, NOT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO MANAGE TO VISIT YOU YESTERDAY, LIEBE SABINE. I AM ACTUALLY GLAD THAT I DIDN'T COME DOWN TO SEE YOU AS THE WORKS COMMANDER WAS THERE AND IT WOULD HAVE CAUSED A BIG ROW. I WOULD HAVE FELT DEEPLY EMBARRASSED HAD HE GIVEN ME A ROLLICKING IN FRONT OF YOU. I THINK I WOULD HAVE FELT SO ASHAMED THAT I COULD NOT HAVE LOOKED YOU IN THE EYES ANY LONGER, AND THEREFORE ASK YOUR KIND FORGIVENESS.

BUT I WAS ABLE TO WATCH YOUR GROUP OF WOMEN FROM A DISTANCE AT WORK GATHERING CROPS ON THE LAND AND TO TAKE SOME PLEASURE IN KNOWING THAT YOU WERE AMONGST THEM AND WITH THE QUIET HOPE THAT MY INSISTENT AND CONSTANT REQUESTS CONCERNING YOUR ATTEMPTS TO WALK AND THE REASONS I WAS ABLE TO PRESENT TO YOU, WERE LEADING TO A MORE POSITIVE RESPONSE AND NOT SIMPLY PASSING YOU BY UNNOTICED.

FROM WHAT THE PROF TOLD ME, YOU SHOULD WEAR THE PLASTER TILL MONDAY AND THEN IT MUST COME OFF ANYWAY. THEN YOU SHOULD WALK AS MUCH AS YOU CAN AND ON SATURDAY JOIN MY WORK DETACHMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME, IF THAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO YOU AND YOU WISH TO DO SO OF COURSE.

IF SO, I SHALL MAKE SURE THE ARRANGEMENTS ARE IN PLACE FOR IT TO HAPPEN. OF COURSE I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU WILL WANT TO COME TO ME AND WORK AND COOK TOGETHER, OR WHETHER I MAY IN FUTURE LOOK AFTER YOU AS I HAVE DONE THUS FAR. I SHALL HAVE TO AWAIT YOUR ANSWER TO THIS LETTER AND DRAW MY CONCLUSIONS ACCORDINGLY FROM YOUR ACTIONS. HOWEVER, I NEED TO SAY IN ADVANCE, THAT I ASK FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS IF ANY OF MY ABOVE ASSUMPTIONS ARE UNJUSTIFIED AND I MIGHT THEREFORE POSSIBLY HAVE ANGERED YOU BY REACHING SUCH CONCLUSIONS. I FIND MYSELF CONSTANTLY AT A LOSS AT TRYING TO UNDERSTAND YOU AND AM WORRIED ABOUT YOU. I JUST HOPE THAT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT.

IT IS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAY TODAY. I AM SITTING IN THE OPEN AIR; MY THOUGHTS ARE ENTIRELY IN YOUR COMPANY AND IN HOLLAND. HOW WONDEFUL IT WOULD BE TO BE

DRIVING HOME WITH YOU BY CAR, VIA SWITZERLAND TO ENJOY ITS NATURAL BEAUTY AND TO DELIVER YOU BACK TO YOUR MOTHER'S CARE IN AS HEALTHY A STATE AS WHEN YOU LEFT HER. WHAT A SPLENDID THOUGHT AND YET SO FAR FROM REALITY. IN A PERFECT WORLD IT WOULD BE MY MOST MODEST DESIRE AND HOLY WISH TO REALISE THIS THOUGHT AND TURN IT INTO FACT. THINGS CAN CHANGE HOWEVER, UNEXPECTEDLY AND QUITE QUICKLY TOO.

SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN, MY DEAR, I SHOULD LIKE TO SHOW YOU THE WHOLE WORLD AND JOURNEY WITH YOU ON MONTHS LONG TRIPS (HONEYMOON). WHEN I AM REMINDED OF THIS INTENTION BY WEATHER LIKE THIS, I AM AS HAPPY AS NEVER BEFORE. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE IDEA? AM I NOT BEING A BIT IRESPONSIBLE?

ENTERTAINING THOUGHTS OF SUCH OPTIMISM WHEN WE STILL HAVE NO IDEA WHAT FATE INTENDS TO DO WITH US AND WHAT KEY QUESTIONS IT WILL REQUIRE US TO ANSWER IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL.

LIEBE SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN, I HAVE SPENT THE LAST TWO DAYS DOING NOTHING BUT REPAIRING AND TESTING THE CARS AND THE MOTOR CYCLES OF THE CAMP COMMANDANT AND OF MY BOSS AND I HAVE ALREADY PREPARED A FAVORABLE OPPORTUNITY TO GET US TO OUR DESTINATION SAFELY.

IF YOU COULD SEE ME AT WORK, IT WOULD GIVE ME A LOT OF PLEASURE TO DEMONSTRATE THE STUNTS THAT I HAVE IN MIND. ARE YOU ABLE TO DRIVE A CAR AT ALL? DO YOU WANT TO LEARN? I COULD PROVIDE YOU WITH A FEW BOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONS TO THAT END AND YOU COULD WORK ON IT NOW WHILE YOU HAVE THE TIME AND THE OPPORTUNITY, JUST AS I FOR MY PART, IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR WISH, SHOULD LIKE TO REFRESH MY FRENCH AGAIN.

ONE MORE THING, YOU WILL NEED TO TEACH ME TO SAIL PROPERLY WHEN WE ARE AT HOME. ON OUR LIMITED WATERWAYS IN GERMANY IT IS CHILD'S PLAY IN CONTRAST TO THE SKILLS REQUIRED ON YOUR OPEN SEAS IN HOLLAND.

I AM SO DISQUIETED AND NERVOUS TODAY, AS NOT TO BE ABLE TO FORMULATE AND EXPRESS MY THOUGHTS. CONSTANT ANXIETY ABOUT YOU OVERSHADOWS MY LETTERS AND ALL MY THOUGHTS. SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN PLEASE TELL ME WHAT IS WRONG? I CAN FIND NO PEACE UNTIL I KNOW. I FEEL ABJECT MISERY AT THE THOUGHT THAT YOU ARE IN NEED AND THAT I COULD HELP IF I KNEW HOW TO. DR STEYNS SENDS HEARTFELT GREETINGS AND HIS BEST WISHES FOR A REUNION IN YOUR HOMETOWN AND SPEEDY RECOVERY TO YOUR AND HIS HEALTH.

HOW IS THE BUG PROBLEM? STILL GETTING ON EVERYONES NERVES? THE WOMEN WHO ARE DIVIDED UP INTO THE WORK DETACHMENTS WILL BE COMING UP TO THE CAMP AGAIN TOMORROW TO SLEEP IN BLOCK 19. ON THE ONE HAND I AM APPALLED EVEN BY THE THOUGHT OF THIS BLOCK WHICH ONLY RECENTLY WITNESSED SO MUCH NAMELESS MISERY AND THE HORROR OF DELIBERATE EXTERMINATION AND YET IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU ALL UP HERE AS THE CARE AND SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS ARE ORGANIZED DIFFERENTLY. IT IS QUIET AND SUPPORT IS AT HAND AT ALL HOURS OF THE DAY AND IF ANY FIGHTING BROKE OUT, THE MALE GUARDS WOULD BE THERE FASTER THAN IF YOU WERE DOWN IN THE VALLEY.

FOR THIS REASON IN PARTICULAR IT WOULD BE VERY DESIRABLE IF YOU, BY SATURDAY, WERE ABLE TO WALK A LITTLE. YOUR SITUATION WOULD CERTAINLY CHANGE FOR THE BETTER AND I SHOULD HAVE YOU AT ALL TIMES NEARBY, JUST IN CASE YOU NEED HELP. SO, CHIN UP! MEIN KLEINER SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN, MY SEELCHEN, GRIT YOUR TEETH AND CONQUER WHAT LITTLE PAIN YOU STILL FEEL. COME TO ME! YOU WILL MAKE YOUR BIG DEAR BOY IMMENSELY HAPPY IF YOU COME TO WORK WITH HIM, TAKE HIS ADVICE AND ACCEDE TO HIS REQUEST, ALL OF WHICH IS VERY MUCH TO YOUR OWN ADVANTAGE.

YOU KNOW I WANT ONLY THE BEST FOR YOU, TO MAKE YOU HEALTHY AND FIT AGAIN, TO SEE YOU LAUGH HEARTILY AND BE HAPPY IN MY COMPANY. YOU CAN SEE THAT I AM SO NERVOUS, SO DISQUIETED, I ALMOST CAN ALMOST NO LONGER WRITE PROPERLY.

SEELCHEN, DO YOU HAVE ANY NEEDS OR DESIRES THAT I CAN FULFIL? DO YOU HAVE BREAD? DO YOU NEED SUGAR? TOMORROW YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR JAM AND SUGAR. THE DAY AFER EGGS (10), BACON AND FLOUR AND GOOD BUTTER. DO YOU NEED UNDERWEAR? SLIPS AND SO ON? PLEASE TELL ME.

APART FROM THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE A DIFFERENT PAIR OF SHOES IN GOOD CONDITION SO THAT YOUR FOOT WILL GET BETTER SUPPORT. TO THE SAME END YOU WILL RECEIVE AN ELASTIC BANDAGE.

AS REGARDS TO YOUR WISH IN RESPECT OF MY ABILITY IN FRENCH, I REQUEST A KIND AND FRIENDLY TEACHING- STYLE AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LEARNING DURING WORK TIME, EVEN IF WE DO NOT GET MARRIED.

AND NOW TO CLOSE. I ADMIT I CAN TYPE NO MORE, AM TOO DEAD BEAT TO WRITE MORE AND DON'T WISH TO BURDEN YOU WITH OTHER MATTERS.

IN THE CONFIDENT HOPE, THAT MEIN KLEINER SONNENSCHNEIN WILL HAVE SOME SYMPATHY FOR HER BIG DEAR BOY'S STATE OF MIND, I WILL ACCEPT THE MINOR QUIBBLE WITH GENEROSITY AND BE ABLE TO FORGIVE IT AND THAT AT LEAST A FEW LOVING LINES WILL REACH ME FROM YOU (I SO LONG TO RECEIVE THEM)

I GREET YOU WITH 1000 PASSIONATE KISSES FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

YOUR BIG DEAR BOY

FRANZ

DID YOU RECEIVE THE SUITCASE AND THE LAUNDRY? ANNI WILL GIVE YOU THE KEY TO THE SUITCASE. PLEASE WRITE TO ME SEELCHEN. I HAVE SUCH A LONGING FOR YOU. PLEASE COME AND SEE ME SOON. I WILL LET YOU OFF ALL OUTSTANDING PENALTIES AND BE A MILD AND GENEROUS JUDGE, BUT IF YOU ARE WELL BEHAVED AND OBEDIENT AND LOVE YOUR DEAR BIG BOY UNSHAKEBLY, THEN A REALLY BIG SURPRISE AWAITS YOU.

YOU WILL BE ASTONISHED BY IT AND IT WILL CAUSE YOU IMMENSE JOY, A KEEPSAKE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

PLEASE MAKE ME HAPPY, MY SEELCHEN, I ASK YOU THIS FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TODAY? I HAVE JUST HEARD THAT THE GIRLS HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED IN BLOCK 20. YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN AMONGST THEM. WHAT A MISSED OPPORTUNITY!

FRANZ

LETTER 17

MAUTHAUSEN 21-4-1945

MEINE LIEBE KLEINE SABINE! KLEINER SONNENSCHIN!

A PARTING FOR BOTH OF US AND CERTAINLY HARD ENOUGH FOR ME, BUT AT LEAST I AM AT PEACE SOMEWHAT BY KNOWING SOMETHING OF YOUR COMPLAINT AGAINST ME.

SEELCHEN, I HAVE TOLD YOU THE FACTS BY WORD OF MOUTH AND ON THIS BASIS I HAVE NO BAD CONSCIENCE. I HAVE NO MERCY FOR SCHEMERS LIKE LISA AND TRICKSTERS OF THAT KIND. THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE 'TRUTH' IS ALREADY APPARENT FROM THEIR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONING ON ADMISSION TO THE CAMP.

A PROFESSIONAL BLACKMAILER BEFOREHAND CONTINUES HER CAREER IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMP; A CLEAR FLAW IN HER CHARACTER. IF YOU WISH TO BELIEVE HER STATEMENTS DESPITE MY HOLY PROMISES TO YOU, I CAN ONLY EXPRESS MY REGRET WITH THE GREATEST ANIMATION. YOU SAY SHE HAD PROVIDED EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HER ACCUSATION. WHAT EVIDENCE? IT IS ONLY A GREAT PITY THAT I AM UNABLE TO CONFRONT THIS LIAR. HATRED AND LUST FOR REVENGE ARE THE DRIVING FORCES OF HER ASPERSIONS.

I GIVE MY SACRED WORD OF HONOUR—I THINK I DON'T OVERUSE THIS TERM - WHEN I REITERATE BY THE LIVES OF MY MOTHER AND MY DEAD CHILD THAT I HAVE NEVER HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS FEMALE INTRIGUER, NOT LEAST AND MOST ESPECIALLY BECAUSE SHE IS ONLY 17. IS MY WORD ENOUGH FOR YOU?

I CAN GUARANTEE MY BEHAVIOUR PARTICULARLY IN SUCH MATTERS WHICH I TAKE EXTREMELY SERIOUSLY. BUT, IN PRACTICE, INDIFFERENCE IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE REWARD FOR THE SORT OF CARE AND CONCERN WHICH GERMAN WOMEN PROVIDE. YOUR WORDS HAVE PUT ME IN FULL POSSESSION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR THIS.

SABINE SEELCHEN, DO YOU REALLY THINK I AM SO FOOLISH? ON THE BASIS OF YOUR REPROACH, I AM VERY CLOSE TO PRESUMING THAT YOU DO. I HAVE NEVER BEEN A VILLAIN OR A DECEIVER AT ANY STAGE OF MY LIFE. IN THIS PRESENT CASE I REGRET ONLY MY GOOD NATURE, WHICH DOESN'T AMOUNT TO MUCH MORE THAN CARELESSNESS.

BUT I TAKE SOME COMFORT FROM MY CLEAR CONSCIENCE AND FROM WHAT I MUST DEDUCE FROM YOUR BEHAVIOUR, NAMELY THAT YOU REALLY LOVE ME. THAT AFTER ALL IS WORTH MORE THAN THE WHOLE WORLD TO ME AND I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU, MY SEELCHEN, FOR IT FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART. YOU WILL BE REWARDED FOR IT CONSTANTLY IN THE FUTURE AND THIS I PROMISE YOU BY THE DEATH OF MY CHILD AND MY MOTHER.

I LOVE YOU SEELCHEN AND NO OTHER, MORE LIMITLESSLY THAN YOU KNOW. REST ASSURED YOU CAN AND MAY TRUST YOUR BIG, DEAR BOY, WHO KNOWS THAT TRUST IS TO BE VALUED AND RESPECTED.

YOU MAY SAFELY BELIEVE ME AND THIS RENEWS THE SEAL ON MY SACRED PLEDGE TO YOU TO MEET AGAIN IN YOUR HOMELAND WHEN WE ARE FREE.

NOW I WISH YOU ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR JOURNEY A SWIFT REUNION WITH 1000 PASSIONATE KISSES WITH MY BEST AND HEARTFELT WISHES.

YOUR BIG DEAR BOY.

FRANZ

NOTES- A – B – C – D – E – F - G

A

SABINE KIND!

PLEASE HAND OVER YOUR DIRTY WASHING IMMEDIATELY. – ALL OF IT! A MEAL AND ALL THE OTHER ITEMS WILL REACH YOU THIS AFTERNOON.

FRANZ

B

SABINE!

PLEASE WRITE TO ME, AM THIS MINUTE WRITING TO YOU. FRANZ

C

SABINE SONNENSCHIN!

JOYFUL FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS AND A GOOD SUNDAY FROM FRANZ TO YOU. TODAY YOU WILL RECEIVE THE CALCIUM INJECTION. PLEASE COME INTO THE CAMP WITH THE OTHERS (TO VISIT ME).

FRANZ

D

SABINE!

THIS AFTERNOON I SHOULD LIKE TO REMAIN AT HOME IN THE HOPE THAT YOU VISIT ME. I INTENDED TO LEAVE YOU ALONE WITH YOUR THOUGHTS TO REFLECT ON THINGS. BY THE WAY, I SENT A JAR OF HONEY OVER TO YOU YESTERDAY EVENING. DID YOU RECEIVE IT? I HOPE SO!

ARE YOU WRITING TO ME TODAY, I WONDER. PLEASE SEND DIRTY WASHING AND CLOTHING WITH THE LETTER.

YOUR FRANZ

E

SABINE SONNENSCHNEIN!

WHY NO POST? IT IS NOT VERY NICE TO HAVE TO WAIT SO MUCH FOR WORD FROM YOU, YOU NAUGHTY CHILD, MY DARLING. MY HAIR IS GOING GREY WITH ALL THE WAITING. WHAT IS WRONG?

KISSES AND GREETINGS. YOUR FRANZ

F

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO YOUR DIRTY WASHING? TODAY IS THE LAST DAY ON WHICH I AM PREPARED TO REMAIN POLITE ON THIS SUBJECT. AN EVENING LETTER FROM YOU...

DO YOU NEED ANYTHING. PLEASE LET ME KNOW. PROF WILL SEND FOR YOU TODAY.

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! BE READY TO MOVE AND ACT WHEN THE TIME COMES. OUR FRIEND IS MOVING EVER CLOSER IN THIS DIRECTION AND IS CURRENTLY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF VIENNA.

FRANZ. IS THERE ANY POST FOR ME TODAY? PLEASE...

G

KLEINER SABINE LIEBLING

IN THE HOPE THAT YOU WILL USE THESE ITEMS STRICTLY FOR YOUR OWN PERSONAL BENEFIT I AM SENDING YOU THE FOLLOWING FOR YOUR MEAL PREPARATION,

SEMOLINA, SUGAR, NOODLES, SAUSAGE, DRIED ONIONS, MARGERINE, OATS, SPICES AND BISCUITS.

TOMORROW YOU WILL RECEIVE MILK, PUDDING-MIX, EGGS, FLOUR AND RASPBERRY JUICE, PERHAPS BLACK TEA IF YOU WOULD LIKE SOME.

I WISH YOU A GOOD APPETITE.

YOUR FRANZ