

Norman James Macdonald Lockhart

September 09, 1939

My dearest Madame Henderson,

How have your last few days been? For me, all I can say is: what a waste of time! Instead of returning to parliament on October 2nd, as was scheduled, our overly liberal Prime Minister, Mr. King, decided to seek the opinion of the MPs before declaring war on Germany. How completely unnecessary! Britain is at war. How can we possibly not support our mother country?? Furthermore, even if Britain had not yet declared war, does King truly need the approval of all us MPs to declare war on a country as despicable as Germany? It is ridiculous.

The Germans have always been troublemakers. In the last century, Otto von Bismarck brought Germany together through aggression, war, and violence. Then for years Germany was thought to be peaceful, but we all know they were secretly scheming the entire time. Next, they started the Great War through their outdated imperialist ideals; they were the first to use the hideous Chlorine gas that crippled and killed many, and they carried out many other atrocious war crimes. After 1918, it seemed they were peaceful once again: a struggling nation of jolly beer-drinkers. But again they slowly built up their armies, broke the rules of the treaties and eventually invaded Poland.

It is clear to see that evil lies at the heart of the Germans. The Nazi regime is just the most recent product of this innate malevolence. Any country that so violently discriminates against a single race, then invades its neighbors in order to gain more power is obviously extremely dangerous, and there is no knowing where they will stop. Moreover, disregarding the stern declarations of our media by assuming all Germans are *not* completely evil, it must have taken great skill to get an entire population to hate Jews and become violent murderers and vandals. We must fear Hitler and fight against his evil land. Is it not obvious?

Have you heard that many Americans are boycotting German goods and businesses? That is action! We still have much to learn from the Americans when it comes to business.

I am sorry to bore you with such political talk, but really it was weighing on my soul. I will see you soon! (Once our dunce Prime Minister releases us)

With love,
Norman

Johann-Baptist Doerr

February 22, 1940

My leather factory is now filled with Polish and other eastern laborers who have suffered beyond belief. Up until last year I still employed Jews, but the pressure got too much and I had to let them go. I was the only company in the area still employing Jews! The Poles are not much better off. I feel bad for them because they are actually good workers but they are having such a hard time. They wear purple shirts with large yellow 'P's to let everyone know that they are not to be spoken to. I am forced to pay them much lower wages, and to punish them more harshly than necessary. They get so little food; I cannot believe they are still functioning! Today, like many days before, I took my rationed lunch and split it up among a group of Polish workers. I always assume the factory is a safe for me to do things like this, but really nowhere is safe these days.

Of course right at that moment an SS officer came in angrily and took the food from my workers. Luckily for me, my leather factory is an important manufacturer of goods used in the army, and so they never dare to treat me too badly. I was not reported this time. The SS officer had come to tell me that a large amount of new garments were needed for some upcoming campaign. I spoke to my friends, and nobody knows anything about this campaign. It must be something big. It is even rumored that we will be invading Russia soon, but that is insane. At any rate, I immediately started preparing a new batch.

After a long day's work, I returned home, dropping by the Martinssift, where Hanno smuggled me some medications. After dark, I went out again, this time to my friend Sigmund's house. Sigmund and I go way back, having first met in the Austrian Alpine Club years ago. Together we built a cabin in the Black Forest, and have spent many happy winters skiing there. I fear, however, that our close friendship will soon end. He, being a Jew, hopes to flee to America soon with his family. He has it very hard these days. The Jews are not permitted in any shops. They are unemployed and in grave danger. I only hope the Gusdorfs' visas arrive before the Nazis do to deport them.

Sigmund used to own a successful furniture business before he was shut down. Now he has been reduced to secretly building furniture in a small workshop I helped him erect last year. It is the only way he will be able to afford to emigrate. I visit him and some others almost every night, bringing food, clothes, medicine, and other provisions. More importantly, I give Sigmund English lessons. He will have to speak good English to get on in America!

Tonight I had another close call, as I just managed to slip by some Gestapo patrolling the entrance to the Judengasse, where they now force most of the Jews to live. It is dangerous business helping enemies of the state, but what else can I do? Submit to the bullying as most of the

others have? Tonight, however, my help paid off. I was relieved to see that Sigmund's two boys had already been sent to America. Sigmund and Anna's visas will arrive soon, so they too can escape and rejoin their sons. It is exciting news, but saddening at the same time as I will not be seeing my close friend ever again. I hope they get to America safely and never have to suffer this kind of hell again.

Note: Thanks to Johann-Baptist's (Schambes's) help, the Sigmund family safely immigrated to Missouri and now run a successful furniture business in St. Louis. (This journal entry is written on the back of old business papers because simple goods like paper were expensive.)

Johannes Denschlag

December 21, 1944

I do not know if times have ever been harder. I returned to Worms yesterday from Heppenheim, where I was visiting my dear wife Hiltrud and the three boys. They took shelter with Hiltrud's mother when the bombing started getting too extreme. Indeed, Worms is in terrible shape. Few of the buildings still have all their windows. The streets are littered with debris, and many of the buildings are totally destroyed. It is only a matter of time before the Allies launch a full-scale bombing of the city. I do not feel safe here, but I cannot just leave all my patients!

My position as the head doctor at my hospital, the Martinssift, has been both a gift and a curse. For one, I was fortunate enough to be exempted from conscription because of it. On the other hand, I am overworked. The responsibility weighs on me like a dark cloud that never lifts. The patients need me to be in Worms even if it means risking being arrested by the Gestapo or killed by a bomb and being away from my family. I even feel obliged to treat Jews! I despise the Nazis and their loathsome acts against humanity, so I do my best to help the Jews, but it is dangerous! Anyone who even so much as speaks to a Jew is labeled a "Judenfreund" or Jew Friend and is treated as badly as the Jews themselves. I am most definitely seen as a Judenfreund, but again thanks to my important job, the Nazis have not yet been able to arrest me.

That is until two days ago. Now that everything is falling apart, I see no point in keeping it a secret any longer: for the last six years I have been working secretly against the Nazis.

It all started back in November of 1938. Everyone was continuously told that Jews were a lesser species. Not only were they socially and politically undesirable, but they were a biological threat to our superior Aryan species. Of course not everyone fell for it, but many did. I could not understand how people were so easily fooled by this nonsense. Some of my closest friends were Jews, and they were honest,

hard-working, kind people. I stayed in contact with them and discreetly helped whenever nobody seemed to be watching.

On the 9th of November, however, this all changed. We call that night the Kristallnacht. That evening, while I was checking on good Herr Otto Hochheimer, a Jew on whom I had operated the day before, hordes of SS officers and brainwashed young men ran rampage through the streets of Worms, ransacking Jewish homes and businesses, throwing out and beating the inhabitants, and arresting many. One particular mob attacked my patient's home at Moltke-Anlage 11, close to the Martinssift. In the midst of the chaos, they threw Herr Hochheimer's 3-month-old baby out of the window. Otto's wife, Trude, escaped from the apartment and scooped up her child, running to the hospital. The horde followed close behind. When she reached the hospital, I ushered her in and ordered the nuns to hide the infant among the newborn babies. Frau Hochheimer went up to her husband while I stood guard in the doorway of the hospital. When the mob arrived, an SS officer ordered me to move aside and let them arrest the Hochheimers along with any other Jews in the hospital. I told them that they could enter over my dead body, and that otherwise I would not move a centimeter. Of course, the SS could not kill me, so they turned back with only some angry words. That night, I went home shaking and deathly pale. It was the start of my hatred towards the Nazis.

For the following years I saw many "patients" with whom I schemed and discussed the plans of the underground resistance against Hitler. Other than helping Jews on a small scale, however, the resistance was unable to do anything until 1944, when we hatched a plan to assassinate Hitler with the help of Claus von Stauffenberg. It was an ingenious idea that went far beyond the simple assassination of Hitler and ensured that his death would not be followed by chaos. When the plot had been carried out, I was to be immediately put in charge of the administration of Worms and the surrounding countryside as part of a network of leaders who would keep order in Germany. I thought it was a superb plan, and it must succeed. However, the secret message reporting success never arrived. I discovered that the bomb had failed to kill Hitler and all the main conspirators had been executed.

From that moment on, I have lived in great fear that the Gestapo might one day come to arrest and execute me. It took them over three months to figure out, but finally they came. On December 19, two days ago, they rounded up the remaining Jews in Worms. My neighbor came to me this morning to tell me about the arrests. He told me they had also knocked at my door, demanding that I come out to be arrested.

I am pretty shaken by this news; I missed a horrible fate by a matter of hours. I cannot believe my luck, and yet, at the same time, I wonder at what an evil world we live in. I mourn for the poor people who did not share my luck and have disappeared to who knows where. I wonder when I can return to my family in Heppenheim. It is all too much

for me. I am on the verge of breaking down from stress and grief. To make matters worse, I am also very ill with a recurrence of an infection I had as a student. How long can it all last?

Note: That night, December 21, 1944, Worms was almost completely destroyed by a large-scale bomb attack. The hospital, Martinssift, was heavily damaged and no longer useable. Johannes Denschlag, known as Hanno, therefore returned to his family in Heppenheim. The next year, American troops crossed the Rhine and liberated the area from Nazi rule. Soon after, in 1947, Hanno died of his illness, having committed his life to helping those in need, whether they be sick, injured or oppressed. (This journal entry is written on paper from the Martinssift Hospital)

Hiltrud Karla Denschlag

October 17, 1940

Last month I finally graduated medical school. After a great day of festivities, I woke up the next day and felt a bit of a hole. After months of being so busy that I could not even think, what do I do now? First, I decided to stop every now and then to think about what is happening to us. It is always almost overwhelming.

First, a few weeks ago, I met my former anatomy professor, Prof. Hoepke. I stopped to talk to him as he had always been one of my favorite professors. I was shocked to discover that he had been fired. His wife had Jewish relatives, so he was publically disgraced and fired from the university. It was unbelievable! They say life is not fair, but this is too much. I find the discrimination is so archaic and disgusting. Hitler is an evil tyrant, and I almost hope that we lose the war soon so that he can be kicked out. Imagine: I hope that my own country loses the war! What has the world come to?

I am happy that Hanno agrees with my perspective and is even taking action to fight against Hitler. I wish I could do more. The other day, I mailed all of the Gusdorf's papers to my aunt Wilhelmine, who lives in Berlin. The Gusdorfs applied to get visas to America back in 1935, and they still have not gotten them! Their papers were probably just thrown onto a pile along with all of the others. On the other hand, Wilhelmine was able to bring them to the embassy in person to get them approved. It was a great help for my Jewish friends, and I am so thankful that Wilhelmine was willing to do it. It is unfortunate that most other Jews do not have this kind of help.

Dr. Elizabeth Spies needed help too, but nobody gave it to her until it was too late. She is a wonderful woman and a great doctor who was forced out of practice only because she was a Jew. Her life recently has been so hard! On October 25, she and her old, sickly mother took poison

to end their misery. A former maid of hers just happened to be in the house at the time and saw that they needed help. She ran and got Dr. Julius Hochgesand immediately, and he rushed with her back to the house. Dr. Hochgesand was able to save Elizabeth, but her mother was a lost cause. When Julius talked to Hanno after, he seemed so distraught. Not only had he brought Dr. Spies back into the living hell of World War II, but he had failed to keep her mother alive too. Since that day, I bring Elizabeth groceries almost every day by sticking them through a hole under the wall of her garden. I could not imagine a harder life!

November 28, 1941

I heard in the news today that a group of men protested against Hitler outside the church. It is encouraging that someone has the courage and integrity to speak out. The poor, brave men were arrested and have not been heard of since, but it is a start! Maybe if the entire population revolts, then Hitler will not have any power.

Hitler has gone absolutely insane at this point. Earlier this year, we invaded Russia. How can this possibly go well? Brave Helmut is now in charge of the heavy machine gun company of his battalion in Russia. He wrote to us that they were advancing far into Russia. I just want it all to end. To make matters worse, on September 1st Hitler announced that all Jews have to wear a patch denouncing them as Jews! It is humiliating! Then, just over a month later he banned Jews from leaving Germany. It is so surprising because he has been bullying them into leaving all this time, and now he is not letting them leave. Good thing Sigmund and Anna are gone. The Gestapo have started taking large groups of Jews away on the train. We do not know where they are going, but it must be horrible. The Berlin Provost, Bernhard Lichtenberg, prayed for the Jews in mass and was also taken away. Only the Bishop of Münster can get away with his denunciations of the Nazi regime, but I wonder how long it can be until he too is taken.

March 20, 1942

The Gestapo came again today, this time taking many of the remaining Jews. They marched them down the Hintere Judengasse to the train station. I happened to be on the street at the time and quickly retreated into a doorway. The Gestapo are so evil, I do not think they can be humans. They scare me. As they were marching, they called out that they were “evacuating” the Jews to a safer place. Nobody knows exactly where the poor Jews are brought, but it is definitely not a safer place. Some rumors even say that they are brought to camps with horrible living conditions so some of them actually die. It is too awful to think about. I hope that is not true. I am just thankful that Dr. Spies was not taken and that the Gusdorfs are in America.

Now the Nazis are even taking Christian Jews, who were spared before, as revenge for the Catholic Church’s opposition to them. We no

longer receive any support from the Church because Pope Pius XII thinks he has caused more harm than help through his action. Society is tearing at the seams. Everything is falling apart.

Note: Dr. Elizabeth Spies was deported to Auschwitz on May 16, 1944 and killed. Many in Worms mourned her death as she was an honorable citizen and a very popular doctor. (This journal is written on paper brought home by Hiltrud's husband from the Martinssift Hospital. Paper just used for pleasure was not easy to come by during the war.)

Otto Schildhauer- Mein Tagebuch

September 1, 1939

We are at war! How exciting! For the last few months, ever since I was forced to join the Wehrmacht, we have been training hard. Many of my friends joined voluntarily before me. They thought it was a great honor and privilege to fight for our country. They got better seats in restaurants and were treated with the utmost respect by everyone else. They even thought war was exciting and fun. I was not so sure before, so I did not join the army. But then I was forced to, and I am actually very excited!

September 30, 1939

Wow our first battles were a huge success! Although I was not deployed, I constantly hear that we crushed the Polish and just took everything over! What an ugly place Poland is: no wonder we are always told that it is inferior. Hitler must be a military genius. He told us that the war would only last 2-3 weeks, and that is exactly what it took! From what I hear, he is an amazing man; we are told that he is an even better military leader than Napoleon. He has the best intentions of Germany at heart and wants to avenge the evils committed against us after the First World War.

November 22, 1939

I am shocked by the atrocities some of the SS men are committing against the poor Polish Jews! Having spent a month or two in Poland, my good friend tells me in his letters that they are actually very decent people. The SS, and some of my fellow soldiers, however, shoot them and torture them. I think it is disturbing and most disgraceful. I cannot say anything though. I heard that General Blaskowitz complained to higher-ups in the army and was immediately relieved of his duties. What is going on!?

May 10, 1940

Now we are invading France! This time, I am leading a tank regiment! The war has been going incredibly well. In a few months we have been able to conquer more land than from 1914-1918. They keep telling us that it is all because of Hitler's superb strategizing. Of course, invading France also makes a lot of sense. We have been told over and over that animosity against France is completely natural and we just want to take back what they stole in 1919. We also learned that in school, so it must be right.

June 14, 1940

We took Paris today! I cannot believe how quickly France capitulated. I wish I were there in Paris, but instead I have been given command of Cognac, a city about two hours north of Bordeaux. I think it is quite grand too. I just hope we stop soon. I think we have taken enough back now.

September 1, 1941

I have been transferred to the 1st Panzer Regiment, Königsburg, part of the Tank Corps. We are now invading Russia. This cannot go well. The front is simply too large, and we will be fighting on two fronts. I feel reluctant to continue, but it is impossible to stop.

July 29, 1943

My brother Helmut, fighting in a heavy machine gun regiment, has been gravely injured. At first I was very worried when I heard the news, but he is now in a military hospital in Weinheim. Sadly, he has lost his left forearm. He has received a German Cross in gold for his outstanding service and bravery and has been promoted to major. I am so proud of my brother, and extremely happy that he will be going home soon and no longer taking part in the war. The fighting here is so gruesome. It seems to drag on forever. So many of my friends and fellow soldiers are dying in the most awful ways imaginable. I fear I will be next. It is only lucky that I am very good at fixing tanks; otherwise I am sure mine would have been shot in the fighting near Moscow!

July 12, 1944

Here I am, still fighting, fighting a lost war. We have retreated far back now. The weather has been horrendous, and soon another one of those awful winters will hit. Almost everyone I liked in the army is dead. Everything is falling apart. We are done. Why am I even still here? It seemed grand at the beginning, but war is the worst thing in the world, and I no longer even support the government I fight for. I just cannot stop fighting for them. Otherwise I will die.

August 20, 1944

I saw it coming. We were losing ground fast, and there seemed like no end to the number of Russian soldiers. The generals called for one more offensive, a swift counterattack, so we took whatever tanks we had left and attacked. At first, we were pretty successful. After some advance, we cut off the Soviet troops and then continued on to our goal Schaulen, only to run into a strong Soviet defense. Most of our troops were slaughtered. We completely stalled and were caught out, not ready for this kind of battle. I was one of the few who managed to retreat, but on the way, my tank was hit by an enemy shell. My knee is seriously injured, and my eye is in great pain. After all the suffering of war, I thought I had seen it all, but this was unlike anything I had ever felt before. The agony was overwhelming. Now I am in a small truck on the way to the war hospital in Sagan, writing to try to distract myself from the pain. I can see an infection coming and the wound is starting to pus. I hope my family in Worms can come get me from Sagan.

March 14, 1945

The Red Army is coming very close to Sagan. It is ironic that at the beginning of the war I was not directly involved in taking this land, but now I am one of the last still involved in the fight to keep it from the Soviets. I am still lying in the hospital, and my infection is getting worse. I have lost a lot of weight. They tell me if my leg is not treated soon, it will have to be amputated. But they cannot treat it here. Luckily for me, my father-in-law, Hans Freudenberg, also arrived today and will be taking me to the hospital in Weinheim. I am so thankful to be escaping at last.

May 14, 1945

I have lost my leg, but at least I feel healthy again. In Weinheim my recovery has been rapid. It is still not the end for me, though. We have capitulated at last, and the Americans have taken me captive. Of course it should end like this. The roles have switched. Now I am living in terrible conditions under the supervision of the British. I have no food and no shelter in this camp. Hopefully they set me free. I would like nothing more than to see my family once more.

August 1, 1945

I have been released. Now I am on my way home. Thank God. It is all over!