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CHAPTER 38.

EPILOGUE.

I have come now to the end of my narration, which took more than 3 years out of my life. That was how I used the first 3 years of my retirement. I enjoyed this work very much. It was like re-living my life. I worried all the time that something bad would happen to me and that I would not be able to finish the work. There were sicknesses, also serious ones, and there were interruptions, but I recuperated, miraculously, and could continue where I had left off. It gives me much satisfaction to have done that work for my family and I feel that they - most of them - will appreciate it.

The insertion of great many pictures added, I think, to better understanding, where words and descriptions alone would be insufficient to give a clear picture.

My thoughts come all the time back to my inlaws through all the years. They died in 1942, 36 years ago, and I am thinking all the time that they could have been saved, in spite of their resistance, as they wanted first to see that Lisa and Francis were safe. That is where they were wrong. These were two separate undertakings and considering the speed with which the Germans proceeded in their plans to eliminate all the Jews, both undertakings should have been started simultaneously and not, as they wanted it, one after the other.

The biggest mistake we made was to send Francis to Lisa. I was not present, when this was planned by Hedy and her mother, perhaps also her father. They came with the plan, when we had already the passage on that boat "Flandre" for me and Francis. They had called Lisa, who was in Paris, by phone and she had

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agreed to take care of Francis. Hedy had the affidavit for herself and the two children and it could be expected that she would get the American visas within a few months. Since I had to go to Cuba they had planned that I take Francis along, but leave him in Paris with Lisa, so that Hedy could pick him up in Paris on her way to the U.S.

It was the idea that the climate of Cuba was very bad and that Francis should not go there, as a child of 7. That was, as we know now, very wrong. He could have come along with me, I could have taken care of him very well. There were single people there with a child, one woman, as I remember, with a girl of Francis' age, and they could have played together. There was the refugee committee, which would have taken care of us, with financial support and school for Francis. It was not so good either that Lisa was burdened, being herself a guest in the home of aunt Louise and Suzanne on the Plateau d'Avron. As it turned out, there developed quite soon a jealousy on the side of aunt Louise, who felt bad when she saw her grandchild Nicole, mentally gravely retarded, exposed to the highly intelligent and gifted child Francis, and it was very soon decided that Lisa would have to move out with Francis. That could not have been foreseen by Hedy and her mother, when they planned to leave Francis with Lisa. I was not aware of that during the 14 days I spent there, although I was told that Lisa would move out with Francis, but not what the reason was, and that she had already a place where to go, in Robinson, a suburb of Paris, where she would live with a Mrs. Zimmermann, who is the sister of Lisl Ziegler. Mrs. Zimmermann was pregnant, and later gave birth to a child, born dead, and she did not stay in the apartment and Lisa had to move out later too with Francis to an

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apartment in the rue d'Atlas, and things began to get very difficult for her then, especially after the start of World War II.

So, the plan to leave Francis with Lisa was not good, rather very bad, although it could not have been foreseen, considering the situation in Vienna, in which we were, under severe pressure by the Germans. We were all out of our minds and could not think straight, and any way out was considered good. We were in a state of panic.

Another bad thing was that it was planned not to tell Francis anything about our plan to leave him with Lisa in Paris, and it was my job to tell him that in the last minute. It was very difficult for me to do that and the scene that followed burdened my conscience terribly for years. It was quite a shock for Francis when I went to his room late in the evening, when he was already in bed to tell him that I will leave the next day early in the morning for St. Nazaire to go on the boat. He cried bitterly and begged me not to do it. "Papa, don't do it, Papa, don't do it," and I could not stay there with him anymore and ran out to send Lisa to him to calm him down. It was the hardest "Good-bye" for me and the worst way I ever treated Francis. I should not have consented to that while I was still in Vienna, and many things would have turned out differently. But, as I said, we acted in panic and could not have foreseen ~~all~~ that.

I often speculate how differently things would have turned out if I would have taken Francis with me to Cuba. I would have brought Lisa over to Cuba also, unless she would have gotten an immigration visa for the U.S. and then there would have been only the parents left and I would have gotten them out to Cuba also, perhaps with the help of that same Mr. Agramonte, who was so helpful in the case of Francis and Lisa. Everybody would have been safe.

Towards the end of 1976 my eyesight got bad on account of a cataract in my right eye. I had to get used to the idea that I will have to undergo an eye operation. Marvin recommended an eye specialist and the operation was planned for the 10th of July and ^{of 1977} I entered the Lenox Hill hospital the day before. I did not like the idea that the operation would be done in general anesthesia. I always considered it as dangerous for older people, and I discussed the problem with the anesthetist, who had come to see me. He told me that the eye doctor, Dr. Coles, operates ¹ almost all his patients in general anesthesia, and he warned me that the operation may turn out unsuccessful, if I would make the slightest movement during the operation. I finally told him that I would agree to general anesthesia, and that was when I was already in the operating room. I asked him to give me very little of the injection, as I was very sensitive to even small doses of medicines for sleep. He promised to give me very little and started immediately with the intravenous injection. Very soon I felt very dizzy and fell asleep. I woke up when the operation was finished and I was taken to my room. I felt fine and slept afterwards all the time. The next day, I felt fine and in the afternoon I was told that I can go home. I had not expected that but it was O.K. with me. At home I was sitting all the time in an armchair and watching television. There were great many telephone calls and Hedy took care of them. But then somebody wanted to talk to me, and I had to get up. It was somehow difficult and I could not raise myself from the chair. Hedy got scared when she saw that and said that it was a stroke. At the phone, I could not speak well, as I had something in my mouth, a cookie, and the words did not come out right. So, Hedy took the receiver out of my hand and finished the conversation.

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I then tried again to raise myself out of the chair, but I slid down to the carpet and could not get up anymore. Hedy could not help me and got down to the doorman. He came and got me up and into a chair. Hedy tried then to get in touch with Marvin and could not reach him nor Johanna. It was at midnight, when Marvin finally called and he told Hedy that he will come right away over. It took quite a while till he came. He had been in the hospital, and Johanna was with him. He examined me, took the blood pressure and even an electrocardiogram with my machine and decided to take me back to the hospital in his car. To bring me down to the car, I was put into a chair and Marvin and the doorman carried me to the elevator and downstairs to the car, and off we went to the hospital. There were no definitive symptoms of a stroke, I could talk normally, but I was not very alert, slightly somnolent and I answered questions in a somewhat sleepy way and I slept all the time. There came a neurologist and he ordered a brain scan, asked me whether I would agree to it and I agreed. I should not have done it, as it was absolutely unnecessary. It is not very good for the brain to be exposed to x-ray radiation 20 or more times. I remember now that I had noticed a slight numbness of my face when I came into the bed in the hospital that night at about 2 A.M. and Marvin had said that he had noticed a slight drooping of my mouth on one side. So, there is no doubt that it was a mild stroke, probably due to an ischemia (diminished blood flow) in a small branch of an artery in the brain, perhaps caused by a very small blood clot. I ascribe it to the intravenous injection of the anesthetic at the operation. Anyway, the symptoms disappeared rapidly and there were no serious aftereffects. I noticed certain aftereffects soon afterwards, a certain difficulty to talk, to express myself and a tendency to speak German, as I could ex-

press myself better in German than in English. Furthermore there was an increased forgetfulness of names, though it had existed already before to a minor degree, also the difficulty to find the right words when speaking English, a shrinking of my vocabulary, which was very bothersome. This was the reason that I did not work on my biography for many months now; but I feel now greatly improved and I will try to bring it to an end. There is still a lot to do on it, like the insertion of certain words and sentences, which would require rewriting of certain pages.

The following was mentioned in the introduction and I repeat it here:
The purpose of my voluminous description of my experiences

and those of many members of my family, who lived in Europe among millions of criminals, who persecuted them and finally killed them was to show my descendents, where they came from.

It is a heroic story and I wanted my progeny to know their roots, to be proud of their ancestors. I had to go far into the past to show that there were great, noble, high taught, high minded persons in our families, of whom they can be proud, so that they should never feel or think cheaply of themselves. The roots are strong and good and my grandchildren will find satisfaction and inspiration from my story.

They will read the story again when they will be grown-up and understand better what is described. Then they will perhaps continue by adding their own story and that of their progeny. Vivant sequentes - may others follow.
