

Hamburg, 20./VIII. 1945.

My Nazi-affairs in Germany.

I am no German but Austro-slavian by birth, educated in Vienna. When I came to Hamburg 1930 I knew little about Germany and its politic. I did not like Germans very much, but I was also not hating them.

Having been "privat-docent" at the university of Vienna on Hamitic languages I was introduced in Hamburg by Prof. Meinhof in a solemn way, who was hoping to help me further abroad. I should stay in Hamburg for two or three years and he proposed to look for a better chance. I was interested in antiquarian research (Egyptian and Old-Ethiopian civilization), but also in the development of Old-Sudanic languages. So I began my work here and all seemed to go well until January 1933.

In the year before I had made the acquaintance of a family here. It was Mr. William Nathanson, who was married with a Russian lady from Sibiria. I intended to marry his sister-in-law, named Miss Nadyezhda Innokentyewna, a well educated Sibirian lady being a good sovyet-citizen too, who has come from Russia for visiting her family. Near every day I was guest at Mr. Nathanson's, whose business was sometimes disturbed by political fears. By all indifference for politic we felt, that there was something in the wind. Mostly we sneered at the holdless "after-war-people" in Germany and their dependence on vain phrases like "freedom and bread" or "blood and ground" or "Yooda fall dead!" a.s. Such know-nothings criticized every scientific knowledge of history etc. and seemed to believe, that scientific researches are made only by walking in the streets or by the trust in the words of a crazy expert on theater-tapissery like Mr. Hitler. Only by one work of these days I was a little touched and this was the famous book of Mr. Hermann Wirth, and I settled it in the Books reviewed of the "Journal for native languages."

In February 1933 the syndicus of the university gave me a cordial warn, that there will come a bad time for Austrians at the university and that I should do better to change my Austrian nationality for the German. But even this I disliked at all and so I could not decide so quickly what to do. Other people said, that there were no need to change the nationality, but the "party" would be enough. Till that time I had no acquaintance with a member of the Nazi-party and what I was seeing in the streets seemed me to be a little genant. Therefor I did firstly nothing in this case and made my trip to Austria for visiting my mother there.

When I came back in the middle of April 1933 I found all got the worst. Poor Mr. Nathanson was ruined, he was excluded from the bourse etc. because he was clearly noted for being "full-jew". Him and his family I found abandoned by all friends. A few days before my coming back Miss Nadyezhda had been attacked by Nazis in the streets and no German policeman dared to assist her against the political rowdies. The whole family was anxious to leave the house during the day. Now I made up my mind and without asking any person I stated the accident at the General-Consulat of the Sovyet-Union. The consul promised Miss Nadyezhda, that he would protect her against such affronts. My own consul warned us by reason of the danger, that we could likely be emitted from Germany in a case of intervention of the sovyet-consul. People said, that only the "party" had might now to protect or not. There I remembered some precedent cases in the beginning of the revolution in Russia, that f.i. any "bourgeois", who had a friend in the communistic party, had nothing to fear. So it was arranged that I should go in the "party". There was no time to lose, because the "party" was to be closed in a few days. But we were thinking, that Hitler will not reign very long. **[Ende Seite 1]**

When I was in, I found, that there was only little hope for Mr. Nathanson. The newcoming "members" were treated roughly by the leaders just like a crew of arrested

gentlemen o' fortune. They had no right at all but "duties", i.e. to pay and to obey. Right was a thing for "old fighters" only, but not for newcoming "may-caters". They warned us, never to change our minds, for "to go out of the party is worse than to have never entered" as thy said. But fortunately the first leader of my "section", a formerly member of the K.P.D. named Hasselbrink, was a good man, who liked to protect "half-jews" and freemazons from hurt by the party. He was ready to warn us, if there should come a breeze for Jews. Mr. Nathanson went to Yugoslavia in hope to find a new condition. His family rested in Hamburg with us. My being "member of the party" was their only political hold in Nazi-Germany. (1934/35). But we looked for a way out of Naziland.

At that time (1934) Prof. Meinhof together with his friends, Prof. Thilenius, rect. magn. van Melle, Prof. van Wrochem and Prof. Schmidt-Ott in Berlin, began to materialize my field-trip to Darfur. The lastnamed was freemazon and leader of the "Deutsche Notgemeinschaft". In the last moment he was deposed by the Nazis in Berlin and Prof. Meinhofs petition for me was refused. So I came not abroad. – In the meanwhile there happened the Nazi-putch in Austria, when our "Bundeskanzler" Dr. Dollfuss was killed. Now we felt the great danger of the Nazi-regime in Germany, not only for the little Austria, but for the whole world. The might of the "militant harlekins with their puberty-foolness in permanence", as I often had characterisized them, seemed to grow up day by day and I began to hate Germany at all.¹

Miss Nadyezhda had from the beginning of my membership sometimes told me, to give informations for Russia with regard to party-propaganda. Sometimes I brought to her some literature, ordinances, notices etc. without taking care, what she was doing with it. But now I took it for a kind of revenge with regard to poor Austria to help actively, for Russia was the great enemy of all nazilike adventures. The above mentioned Mr. Hasselbrink presented me for the service as "Schriftleiter" and so it was easely done to look for material myself. Soon after Mr. H had differences with the party, for which he was deposed and exclosed from the party. But I remained in my function and sent secret informations to the consul of the Sovyet-Union. (Till 1938.)

Mr. Nathanson had no luck in Yugoslavia also, for he lost his last money there and this again by German politic regarding Jews. He often came to Hamburg secretly to meet his family staying here unknown to policy. When he heard about our connexion with the Russian consulat he was exceedingly anxious for us, for he was not only afraid of the Gestapo, but of the sovyets also. There is no denying the fact, that it was running a great risk at these times, but we were hating the "brown pest" more than the black one. At last Mr. Nathanson found help by an old friend in Svitzerland, who financed his emigration to U.S.A. together with the family. Only Miss Nadyezhda was remaining with me in Hamburg. It was proposed, that we should follow them later, when we had received permit to marry; in the meanwhile they would look for a chance in U.S.A. Few weeks befor their going abroad all sovyet-citizens were emitted from Germany and Miss Nadyezhda was ordered by the Gestapo to leave Germany immediately. I went with her to the president of the policy and garanted for her. So she received a permit for one year till we were married. At last there came the permit of the party that I was allowed to marry a Russian, on the basis of a "proof of aryan offspring", which had the sovyet-consul given to me in regard to Miss Nadyezhda. So we married 12. Sept. 1939, but the beginning of the new war made an end with all hopes to escape lastly from Naziland. (Mrs Muza had found a chance for me at the university in Philadelphia.)

There are still resting some points with regard to my service in the party. 1936, when the sections fell into disuse I should have served as a "block-leader". But this was a very disturbing thing in respect of my studies and scientical researches. Therefor I took first a leave of absence for one year. Soon later a blockleader had overseen us (me and my engaged), that

¹ Im Original mit rotem Buntstift handschriftlich unterstrichen.

there was a "jewish" appartement, where we were going in. This "accident" brought a new danger for us, because the party had now an eye on me. Although the fact was easily cleared, they found always new points against our way to live and our no-interest for German "belongs": I refused to make service in the party with excuses affirmed by attests of physicians etc., we had no flag, we never came to meetings of the party, we had only "foreign" acquaintances (Orientals, Russians etc.) a.s.l. Especially after February 1938, when Austria was annexed by Germany and I became a "German" citizen unwillingly, the leaders showed a turn of their behaviour in every respect.

With the beginning of the war, when we were already married, our situation began to get a desperate one. We had always to calm here and to pay there, to say yes and to do no, only by reasons of our own security. At last, when the influence of the party got weaker, the "high-school-magistrat" began to treach us with "belongs" etc. never minding, that a scholar of Austria is no warrior like a German, that Germany was not our country, that the German war was not our war, that their heart was not like our heart. And even these points we could not explicate to them, excepted if we would have been ready to be socially ruined, we and our little children. We had no thought of revenge any more, for we could see every day, that the heavens might was smashing the might of the tyranns, that the Lords own hand was against them! And so we were waiting for the end of all.

It would be interesting to know, what there was happened, if Mr. Hitler had had more of our kind amidst his members of the "party".

Prof. Dr. Zyhlarz Ernst

[handschriftliche Anmerkung von Nadeschda Zyhlarz]

[Maschinenschriftliche Anmerkung im unteren Drittel der Seite:]

Ich Endesunterfertigte, Margarete Gruner, Hamburg 20, Eppendorfer Landstrasse 42, erkläre hiermit eidesstattlich wie folgt:

Als langjähriger Vertrauten und Freundin der Familie William Nathanson war mir die antinazistische Gesinnung von Herrn Prof. Zyhlarz und Frau wohlbekannt. Desgleichen weiss ich, dass Beide in diesem Sinne Beziehungen zum Sowjetkonsulat in Hamburg unterhielten. Für nähere Details dieser Betätigung kann ich heute mangels persönlicher Beteiligung nicht mehr einstehen.

Hamburg, 25.8.45.

Margarete Gruner [mit Bleistift handschriftlich]