

trivial, but that's not the main thing. It was so brave of her to come; I wouldn't have dared to suggest it to her. It's so much more difficult for her than for me. I know where I am, but for her it is all unimaginable, mysterious, terrifying. Think how things will be when this nightmare is over! And now Maria's and mother's letters have just come, to make my joy complete and as an echo of this morning. How good things still are! Tell them that I say this to myself every day.

We shall probably be able to see each other next week. I'm looking forward to that very much. Maria so enjoys being with you, and speaks of the Schleichers so happily. I'm very grateful for that. Much love to all the family and friends. I'm always thinking of you.

Ever your grateful Dietrich /

From his mother

[Charlottenburg] 27 June 1943

Dear Dietrich,

We were very glad that you were able to see Maria again and to talk with her, though at the same time I was rather worried that there would not be enough time for us. But perhaps it will be a good thing if we get used to that a bit; and we were told by Captain Maetz⁵⁸ that we would have a chance to see you at the beginning of next week. Maria was quite thrilled by the reunion and of course she had to tell us all about it . . . I expect Maria has also told you about us, as she said.

At the moment we're wondering whether we should not have the best of our pictures rolled up and put in a less dangerous place. A man from the museum would help us. Our air-raid shelter is already so full anyway. And now its window is to be walled in. As father is over seventy, I expect that I shall remain upstairs with him, come what may. If the window is closed in, one cannot get out with the things. I'm also wondering about all your books in the attic; I would very much like to send away the most important of them, too, but I cannot decide about them by myself. Can you perhaps write a list with rough details of what is where?

Perhaps your absence will now really not last much longer. One finishes each week in disappointment with the thought 'and again not', and who knows at our time of life how many weeks one still has left? They say that war years count double. I have the feeling that they count 'fourfold' . . .

With much love.

Your Mother

To his parents

[Tegel] Sunday, 3 July 1943

Dear parents,

When the bells of the prison chapel start ringing at about six o'clock on a Saturday evening, that is the best time to write home. It's remarkable what power church bells have over human beings, and how deeply they can affect us. So many of our life's experiences gather round them. All discontent, ingratitude, and selfishness melt away, and in a moment we are left with only our pleasant memories hovering round us like gracious spirits. I always think first of those quiet summer evenings in Friedrichsbrunn, then of all the different parishes that I have worked in, then of all our family occasions, weddings, christenings, and confirmations – tomorrow my godchild⁵⁹ is being confirmed! – I really cannot count all the memories that come alive to me, and they all inspire peace, thankfulness, and confidence. If only one could help other people more!

During the past week I've done a good deal of quiet work, and have read some good books, as well as some letters from you and Maria; and now today there is your magnificent parcel. It makes me a bit uneasy that the windows of your air-raid shelter are to be walled in. I don't think you ought to have that done in any circumstances. It's the only way out, and this was surely not the intention. I've had a word with the captain here; he has successfully offered resistance. This is only the systematic carrying out of a regulation which does not fit your house at all. Rüdiger ought to be able to help you there. I can understand that you want to stay

up during the alerts, but it makes me uneasy and must be straightened out. A thick layer of sandbags could be built up in front of the window.

It's certainly sad to part with the good paintings, but perhaps it's the right thing to do, now that the attacks seem to be getting so brutal. I hope that I really will be able to see to my books myself, to spare you the trouble. Perhaps the large Rembrandt portfolios should be stored away now.

Maria has been writing to me about setting up house; it's made me tremendously happy. I find the sketches of the furniture in her room most attractive. I'm glad that she can be at home for a while, for everybody's sake . . .

Just to keep you up to date with things, and not because I think that it's really worth mentioning, I ought to report my lumbago. It's not bad, but it's already lasted more than three weeks; it's a bit of a nuisance. The stone floor is probably the cause. There is everything imaginable here, ray treatment and footbaths, but nothing is any use.

I've now been in prison three months. I remember hearing Schlatter say, in his lectures on ethics, that it was one of the duties of a Christian citizen to take it patiently if he were held for investigation. That meant nothing to me at the time, but in the past few weeks I have thought of it several times, and now we must wait calmly and patiently as long as we have to, just as we have done up to now. I am dreaming more than ever that I have been released and am back home with you.

The day lilies have been simply lovely; their cups open slowly in the morning and bloom only for a day; and the next morning there are fresh ones to take their place. The day after tomorrow they will all be over.

I've just come back from visiting time. Once again it was marvellous; I am so grateful for it. My thoughts are particularly with Renate . . . I'm so pleased. By the way, Goethe's mother was barely eighteen when he came into the world. Special greetings to her. Greetings, too, to all the family; I don't think that there is anyone of whom I don't think once a day. I was particularly pleased to hear that things are going so well with grandmother

again. If only you can soon get rid of the worry and travel. That's my constant wish. Once again, thank you for everything, and much love from
your Dietrich

From his father

Charlottenburg, 11 July 1943

Dear Dietrich,

. . . Have you found anything useful in Heidegger's *Phenomenology of Time-Consciousness*? It is difficult, almost too difficult reading for a clinical psychiatrist. You will find it less hard as you are up in the latest philosophy. I prefer Stifter's *Nachsommer* that you recommended. The chapter about the stay reminds me very much of *Great-grandfather's Portfolio*, where he also introduces a visit to a strange house with a charming garden scene. Maria wrote that she had asked for permission to visit. I hope her wish is granted. We hope for a letter from you soon. Mother sends her love. She will be writing very soon. Much love,
Father

From his mother

Charlottenburg, 14 July 1943

Dear Dietrich,

Your letter of the 5th only arrived today. They say that it is no longer being sent via Florastrasse, and yet it took so long. But it was good that we found you fit and well when we visited you in the meantime.

Don't worry yourself about the air-raid shelter. I have spoken with the NCO in charge of the matter and he will arrange a gas door and gas window that can be opened and shut. Of course there is still a lot of work, as we first have to clear everything out . . .

Father, the family and friends all send their love and continually wish you all the best. With much love.
Your Mother

With most loving wishes, dear, dear mother, for a happy
birthday.
Your grateful Dietrich

POWERS OF GOOD

With every power for good to stay and guide me,
comforted and inspired beyond all fear,
I'll live these days with you in thought beside me,
and pass, with you, into the coming year.

The old year still torments our hearts, unhastening;
the long days of our sorrow still endure;
Father, grant to the souls thou hast been chastening
that thou hast promised, the healing and the cure.

Should it be ours to drain the cup of grieving
even to the dregs of pain, at thy command,
we will not falter, thankfully receiving
all that is given by thy loving hand.

But should it be thy will once more to release us
to life's enjoyment and its good sunshine,
that which we've learned from sorrow shall increase us,
and all our life be dedicate as thine.

Today, let candles shed their radiant greeting;
lo, on our darkness are they not thy light
leading us, haply, to our longed-for meeting? –
Thou canst illumine even our darkest night.

When now the silence deepens for our hearkening,
grant we may hear thy children's voices raise
from all the unseen world around us darkening
their universal psalm, in thy praise.

While all the powers of good aid and attend us,
boldly we'll face the future, come what may.
At even and at morn God will befriend us,
and oh, most surely on each newborn day!

To his parents

[Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse]

17 January 1945

Dear parents,
I'm also writing today because of the People's Sacrifice.³³ I would like to ask you to take complete control of my things. I'm told that even a dinner jacket would be accepted; please give mine away; also a 'pepper and salt' suit which is too small for me and a pair of brown shoes; you, mother, now know better than I do what I still have. *In short, give away whatever anyone might need, and don't give it another thought.* If you have any doubts about anything, you might perhaps telephone Commissar Sonderegger! The last two years have taught me how little we can get along with . . . In the inactivity of a long imprisonment one has above all a great need to do whatever is possible for the general good within the narrow limits that are imposed. You'll be able to understand that. When one thinks how many people lose everything each day, one really has no claim on possessions of any kind. I know that you think the same way, and only want to play my part. Is Hans-Walter actually flying in the East now? And Renate's husband? Thank you very much for your letter, and thank Maria *very* much for her Christmas letter! I read my letters here till I know them by heart.

Now for a few more requests: unfortunately there were no books handed in here for me today; Commissar Sonderegger would be willing to accept them every now and then if Maria could bring them. I should be very grateful for them. There were no matches, face-cloths, or towel this time. Excuse my mentioning that; everything else was splendid. Could I please have some tooth-paste and a few coffee beans? Father, could you get me from the library *Lienhard* and *Abendstunden eines Einsiedlers* by

H. Pestalozzi, *Sozialpädagogik* by P. Natorp, and Plutarch's *Lives of Great Men*?

I'm getting on all right. Do keep well. Many thanks for everything.
With all my heart, your grateful Dietrich

Please leave some writing paper with the Commissar!

From his father

[Charlottenburg] 2 February 1945

Dear Dietrich,

To make things easier for the censor, I'm writing this birthday letter with the typewriter. I hope that you can receive it. Of course, it would be better if we could visit you. We don't need to tell you what we wish for you and for this new year of your life. Our thoughts are with you every day in any case, but the day after tomorrow they will be especially so. Maria will be thinking of you particularly. She has gone with her little sister to relatives, and therefore isn't here at present. Aunt Elisabeth has gone to Warmbrunn. Suse is here with her children and wants to stay if possible. Hans-Walter is in the West.

Unfortunately I've had no luck with the library. Pestalozzi was only issued for the reading room; why, I don't know, but I will ask a library assistant I know. Natorp is out. Karl-Friedrich had thought of the Plutarch for you for your birthday. Only the cakes come from us. Maria will certainly be very sorry that she can't bring anything herself. Whatever happens, we two old ones want to stay here. As a doctor, there is always a chance that I can help someone, and mother has to help me. I'm hoping that I shall be able to visit you soon. At my age one has an obligation to regulate one's concerns as far as possible . . .

Affectionate greetings. The memory of many good things that you have experienced and the hope of a near end to your time of trial will make your birthday tolerable for you. Your Father

From his father

[Charlottenburg] 7 February 1945³⁴

Dear Dietrich,

Because of the attack, our birthday letter for the 4th, which we wanted to bring on Saturday, didn't get into your hands. We sat in Anhalt station in the S-Bahn during the attack; it wasn't very attractive. Nothing happened, except that afterwards we looked like chimney-sweeps. Afterwards, however, when we tried to visit you, we were very disturbed because we weren't allowed in because of the blind shells. The next day we heard that nothing had happened to the prisoners. We hope that that is true.

Now about the family. Maria has gone with her sister from Pätzig to the West. Aunt Elisabeth is in Warmbrunn. Suse is here with the children and wants to remain here. Hans-Walter is in the West. Unfortunately I had no luck at the library. Pestalozzi is issued only for the reading room. Natorp is out. Karl-Friedrich had thought of the Plutarch for you for your birthday. I hope this letter reaches you. We hope that we shall be able to visit you soon. At our age some things have to be arranged which need discussion with our children. I'm writing this on a typewriter to make it more legible. Affectionate greetings.

Your Father

From Maria von Wedemeyer to her mother

Flossenbürg, 19 February 1945

Dear mother,

Unfortunately my whole journey to Bundorf and Flossenbürg has been completely unsuccessful. Dietrich just isn't there. Who knows where he is? In Berlin they wouldn't tell me anything, and in Flossenbürg they don't know. Quite a hopeless business. But what am I to do now? If I remain in Berlin, our Pätzig³⁵ friends will come and that's no help to Dietrich! If I arrive too early, I shall be called up into the anti-aircraft force or who knows what? If I stay in Bundorf, I'm so awfully far from you all and I don't know how I shall be able to get back to you. I really think that there's relatively little sense in going back to Berlin now. If I can't even do