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Israel and Fanny Temianka correspondence

Israel Temianka

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Israel and Fanny Temianka correspondence

I. Temianka
Hotel Newton
251 Broadway
New York (25)

August 8, 1943

Dear friends,

Please excuse our delay for not writing sooner, but since we have heard that Thea has given birth to a child and that you have become grand parents, we can not wait until you will have grand grand children, we grasp the opportunity now, congratulating you both with this important event and wishing you a speedy acquaintance with the first addition to the family.

From your short letter that your brother in law Wellner overhanded us and from your relatives and other sources we have been informed that you have easily adapted yourselves to the new conditions of life and that you are quite happy there and we were glad to hear about this.

Now something about ourselves.

The invasion of the German hordes in Belgium on the 10th of May 1940, came down upon us all like a gale of unprecedented violence that blew and scattered our relatives and friends to all parts of the world. Those who had the good fortune to reach some place of refuge in the western hemisphere or in the United Kingdom will survive, but those who had no chance to flee from the murderous nazis, only God knows what may happened to them. We have gone through a lot, and if I was to write down our Via Dolorosa, it would constitute a thick book but which would lose its interest when compared with the millions of untold tragedies, our tzores had at least a happy ending. We are of the privileged to be able to look back on our sufferings as a passing episode and forget about it. Omar Khayyam the Persian poet says in his Rubaiyat;-

"The Moving Finger Writes and having writ
Moves on; nor all thy piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."

The moral of it is; Dont concentrate your mind on unpleasant happenings in the past but look hopeful to the brighter side of life in the future.

However to satisfy your friendly eagerness as expressed in your short note, I will sketch our story in telegraphic style just to give you an idea and leave the rest to your own imagination.

You know that Fanny was in La Panne while I was stranded in the Hague, some one told her that I got a free ticket to Paradise in the Rotterdam bombardement, but this letter gives you sure prove that the information was inexact. Fanny managed to get back to Antwerp and took out all the goods which I happened to have placed in the safe before leaving for Holland, returned with same to La Panne where she met the Levins from the Vesting Str. together with Paul Moed joining them in crossing the French frontier. All our best luggage which we had previous to the invasion was put on Levins car while our goods and all other valuables in a small suitcase which Fanny would not give out of her hands, finally gave way to Levins argument, that it will be more secure in his hands. In crossing the frontier they were separated not to see each other till the present day. Levins and Moeds succeeded in -

getting to London and Fanny was left behind without anything, all earthly possession gone, poor little husband in heaven, hardly any money to get back to Antwerp, the 7500, Bel. francs that she^{had} in cash she also had placed in the suitcase and so in a condition of utter despair somehow got back to Antwerp.

I remained in the Hague waiting to hear from Fanny either direct or through the children till I actually got a message from her that she was home again, that was about seven weeks after the invasion. Not waiting for the needed consent of the Gestapo and without a medium my corpse and my spirit joined partnership and in a blitz I stood before Fanny, somewhat bewildered, but when I embraced her, every doubt as to whether I was dead or alive completely vanished.

We got in touch with Henry who did everything possible to get us here and with all the visas on our passport we did not leave before the end of July 1941. Since it was impossible to get the necessary passierschein from the Gestapo, we took the risk and were caught on the French demarcation line and brought to the Concentration camp in Gurs where we remained for six weeks before we were allowed to proceed to Spain.

Once in Bilbau everything was OK, We had our first class passage to New York, the Count Superunda President of the Bilbau Philharmony who is a great friend of Henry did everything possible to make us feel comfortable, we were in continuous telephonic communication with Henry who was then in Pittsburgh and after a few days we got our immigration visa to the U.S. On the 15th of December 1941 we finally reached the blessed soil of America, and we are very happy about it.

Henry and Rosy are both in San Francisco. Henry is married and very happy, he has been here several times when he made his concert tours he also played in New York where he had great success and will play here on the first of February 1944 again. Rosy teaches and accompanies concert artists and is quite pleased with her work and profession.

With regards to our goods that happened to get to London under the above explained circumstances; I have since our arrival in New York been in continuous communication about it and finally got a cable last week that the Board of Trade has granted the release of it, so that I expect to get it here shortly.

Our long story which I have been trying to give you in the most condensed form has become too long and I think it is about high time to drop the curtain and finish the performance as I fear you may get tired reading.

Needless to tell you that we shall be glad to hear also from you telling us how you are both getting on in Rio.

Meanwhile I remain with best regards and good wishes

Very sincerely yours