

PART THREE

THE BRITISH YEARS

1944–1948

LABOR OMNIA VINCIT

1944-1947

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Army No: 13302065

APRIL 5/1944/MAISON CARREE/ALGIERS

LABOR OMNIA VINCIT is the motto of the British Pioneer Corp in which Tibor and myself enlisted from the internation camp of Colomb-Bechar/Djedid in the Sahara where The Management in his great wisdom sent us, with many others in our situation. This was their gratitude the French considered our just reward for having served in the LEGION ETRANGERE with "Honneur et Fidelité, Valeur et Discipline" and for having been Honorably discharged as Sergeant after our five years contract was over.

We arrived yesterday here in the garrison of THE ROYAL ALIEN PIONEER CORP which is located in MAISON CARREE near ALGER (Algiers). As it was sunday the Administration was not "on". We partook in our first tea time consisting of jam, butter, cheese and tea. A nice change after the internation camp fare. Today's b'fast was porridge, sausage, jam, butter and of course tea. Supper was porkchops with hashed brown potatoes, fruit salad and of course tea. One can live on this kind of stuff quite well.

The Lt. asked Tibor what our plans are and he said we want to get transferred to a fighting unit as soon as possible. The Lt said it can be arranged. As we found out later this was baloney. The English did not accept bloody aliens in a fighting unit. Every time we brought up the subject we were given another cock and bull story.

APRIL 8/MC

Sofar everything looks and feels fine except for having the pleasure of being subjected to the vicarious thrills of learning the

Close Order Drills of a THIRD army. Right turn, left turn, about turn etc including the basic rifle drill of course. In the Legion we had to un-learn the Hungarian close order drill, now we have to un-learn the French one. As close order drills have to be of course executed instantly sometimes it can get a bit hairy, specially with the rifle drill. And of course we had to learn to SALUTE the bloody English way. In all fairness to the Brits, they have a very sharplooking close order drill and their saluting is perhaps the most "dramatic", if that is the word, with their oscillating hand with the palm turned outside coming to a stop at the cap, the fingers just touching the edge. It lacks the robotic quality of the Hungarian and the sloppy looking non-chalence of the French. I think it fits the image of the British Army, a solid, professional fighting force of a democratic country.

Needless to say being identical twins resulted in the usual circus and being noticed. The fact that we were former sergeants of the Foreign Legion, in a non-fighting unit didnt hurt either. The most important fact however was that almost all the NCO's were Jewish refugees, mostly from Vienna so we felt instantly at home, sort of. There were also a lot of the Spanish guys from the Legion who served in the same units with us. All in all it was a very "gemütlich" (cosy) setup. Our platoon commander ~~was~~ a Sgt. from Checkoslovakia who is a 57 year old jew speaks fluent Hungarian having served in Hungary. He told us we can count on being L/Cpl soon which wouldnt be bad as the pay is much better. There is no "peloton" to attend here as in the Legion. They just eyeball you

and if you seem to be capable they give you one stripe and you're Lance Caporal which is a sort of "probationary caporal" for three months. If you can cut it, you get your second stripe and you are Caporal. If you cant, they just take away your stripe and you become "other ranks" again. Easier then falling off a cake. I assume in a fighting unit there is more to it than this.

Our problem is that our English is very weak to put it mildly. This is no problem as far as communication is concerned, as almost everybody speaks French or German - or both - but when giving commands for close order drill all we can do is parrot phonetically the words which can come out sometimes pretty funny. For the simpler stuff like righth turn, left turn, about turn it works OK but some of the commands for close order drill are more "instructions" than commands: "move to the righth in threes....righth WHEEEEEEL!" (I hope I got this righth after some 45 years). Even most of the English NCO's picked up a few words of French and German. The classic expression which became a household word was originated by our Scottish Sergeant Major, by the name of Newlands, more about him later. He listened to one of the Spanish guys haranguing him on and on untill he couldnt stand it any longer and throwing up his arms in a gesture of ^{helpless} despair exclaimed: NIX FUCKING COMPREE!

We passed our physical and only god knows how many we did by now starting with the Hungarian army, continuing in the Legion at Marseilles, repeating them in Sidi-bel-Abbès and going on to more in the bootcamp of Saida. To nobody's surprise we were classified as A1, the highest grade, which was important for being accepted for a fighting unit. Little did we know how much it will help us.

We couldnt go out to town sofar as we didnt get our Army Book yet, called AB64 in the British Army. Come to think of it the THIRD army book too. Diamant Laci our old friend from the Legion is married to a Hungarian girl in Algiers and they have a nice beauty saloon at the Rue D'Isly which is the main Street here. He doesnt even know yet that we are here. This will surely be a very emotional reunion for the three of us.

APRIL/10/MC.

We're hanging around camp listening to good jazz courtesy of The Management which rigged up a PA system to keep the crowd from getting bored after "working hours". The whole ambiance here is impossible to compare with the Legion to say nothing of the Hungarian army. Nobody is screaming or shouting at anybody and as for "bad words" it is restricted to an occasional "bloody" or "fucking" but even that is not addressed to people just for general emphasis. It is the old story of the CO setting the tone for the other officers and noncoms. Our CO Major Carter, is a sweet little old guy about sixty, a perfect gentleman full of the milk of human kindness who thinks the world of his people in this outfit which did a terriffic job during the war - which is over now-loading and unloading ammo ships in the harbour always in pitch dark due to full blackout of course and very often during enemy bombardment to boot. Our jewish NCO friends told us about those days in some details. It was dangerous work which they called hocus-pocus parties, walking up and down gangplanks loaded down with ammo boxes and sometimes ending up in the drinks or breaking a leg. With all this there were always more then enough volunteers

because they all felt that they are helping the war effort against the hated Nazis perhaps as much as some of the fighting units. And for once their work was not forgotten or overlooked due mainly to the efforts of Major Carter's intervention with the War Office. This was the only Pioneer Corp unit which was awarded the use of the prefix of ROYAL, making it the Royal Alien Pioneer Corp(BNA) British North Africa. Major Carter handpicked his NCO's with great care. There was nothing of the "bloody Alien bastard" ever heard in this outfit which became daily fare once I was posted to the regular Pioneer Corp in England which was the depository of the dregs of the British Army, compared to which the Foreign Legion was The Jockey Club. - Our Sergeant Major was a terrific bloke too reminding me of Adjutant Chef Litkowsky who ran the boot camp in Saida.

He was a Scotchman from Glasgow all six foot four of him and built like a door. His name was Newlands but the Viennese NCO's called him only Schielauge, crosseye in English, because that what he was on one eye. Bless his heart he took immediately a great shine to Tibor and myself, being impressed with our army background and "military bearing". As almost nobody else served in any other army beside the Spanish who were never very strong on discipline and spit and polish, we two stuck out like the proverbial sore thumb. The more so as it didnt take us long to realize that this is a REAL army, even if not a fighting unit, where being smartly turned out and spit and polished is noticed and appreciated.

We could have gotten our L/Cpl stripe even sooner if Tibor wouldnt have made a spectacle of himself when Sgt. Major Newlands asked one of us to drill a squad. Needless to say Tibor volunteered

to go first. He planted himself smartly in front of the squad and puffing himself up like a bloody turkey he started bellowing like if he would be in charge of the whole Reservæ Officer's School back in Hungary. There was a lot of giggling from the Viennese NCO's and Mr. Newlands looking at him amused, patted him on the shoulder said, relax Fuchs this is only a bloody squad in the bloody Pioneer Corp and you're drilling only ten blokes. I was so embarrassed I would have gladly strangled my little brother or even better, wished the earth would swallow me. After a few weeks we had another trial and this time I took my turn and we got our L/Cpl stripe shortly afterwards. A few days later Mr. Newlands caught me in the court and asked me to call my brother. He didnt know of course who is who. When Tibor arrived, he said considering our army background he wants to put both of us in the Regimental Police! This is ^{of} course the cushiest job in the outfit and we damn near kissed him. Tibor was beaming like a loon at the prospect of walking up and down at the entrance swinging our rubber truncheon we were supplied and throwing snappy salutes to the officers spit and polished to the ninth with our webb belts and gaiters bleached white - strictly forbidden for the lower species - with the brass buckles and keepers gleaming like gold. Mr. Newlands was happy too not having to worry about us bolloxng up the job and getting ^{him} in trouble.

According to the grapewine Sgt Major Newlands had a lady-friend in Algiers, according to best available intelligence a sexy barmaid and he visited her often after working hours.

According to King's Regulations (the British Army Regs) Sgt.Majors have to be back in barracks at midnigth but this was of course not enforced in our unit. Even for "other ranks" these kinds of regs were very lax. Mr. Newlands made it perfectly clear that as long as you blokes are here "On Parade" in the morning and able to go to work I dont care a goddamn when are you coming back to barracks as long as you are not brought in by the bloody MP's for being drunk or disorderly. So one nighth I was sitting in my sentry box when somebody was rapping on it. I look out and Mr. Newlands sticks his neck in obviously feeling no pain, saying: Fuchs I'm back but you didnt see me. Very well Sgt. Major. It was about 0300 hrs.

Another time Newlands called us again and said, I want to make a deal with you two. As you know according to King's Regulations you're not supposed to pull sentry duty more than two hours at a stretch. However tomorrow the bloody General is coming to inspect this bloody outfit. I dont want some bloody fool bollix up the works and get me in trouble. I want you two pulling guard duty untill the bloody General arrives and leaves. The rest you can work out any way you want. Give him a smart salute and after the bloody General fucked off you two take the rest of the day off and tomorrow both of you have a full day off too and can go to the beach or whatever. Is that a deal? YessssIRR! The General came and the General fucked off without hitch we had the rest of the day off and all the next day too. Tibor made a beeline to his girlfriend who happened to be the wife of a French Intelligence Officer and I went off to the beach.

As most identical twins we had our share of "circuses" due to this "looking like two eggs" some of them amusing, some of them more embarrassing, but the most embarrassing of my experience involved this French girlfriend of Tibor in Algiers who was the wife of an Intelligence Officer. Tibor told me that she is trying to end the affair but as Tibor put it she is very talented and she will try to hang on as long as possible.

One beautiful sunny Sunday morning I was walking up and down the Rue d'Isly, Algiers Promenade where everybody was oggling the opposite sex Sunday mornings, including me, when this sexy looking brunette ambushed me and started to berate me loud and clear that unless I'll leave her alone in the future she will report me to my OC whose name she knows etc etc. First I was just standing there with my mouth open and flustered having not the vaguest idea what she is talking about even less who she is but then I realized that she must be Tibor's "petite amie" as they say in French and I tried to explain her that I'm not Tibor but his twin brother! First this got her even angrier accusing me to try to pull this old gimmick on her but slowly as I kept talking she realized that after all I DO look a little different and my hands are smaller too - all women look at a man's hand which are the penultimate tools of making love - and at long last she says, Bon, adieu tell your brother to stay away from me, ca va? You can bet your highstrung little butt ca va! Tibor got a big laugh out of it needless to say.

Never during the year we were in this outfit in Algiers did Sgt. Major Newlands put a single bloke in the brig. Some extra kitchen duty or such stuff was the maximum he would stick anybody with. And considering that we had our screwballs and goldbricks this ^{share of} was bloody amazing. If somebody was in trouble for something he sent us for the bloke. When we arrived with him he lined us up in front of the Major's office, one of us in front, the bloke in the middle and the other in the back of him. "Escort and accused Atten.... CHUN! Quick... MARCHE! Mark...TIME! HALT! CO: Mr. Newlands, what kind of man is the accused? Newlands: Very good worker, very good soldier, SIR! CO:charges dismissed but behave yourself next time. Newlands: Escort and accused, atten...CHUN! About...TURN! Quick... MARCH! When we got outside Newlands told the bloke: The next time you get in trouble I break your fucken neck, you understand? Yes SIR!-FUCK OFF! - Next time same drill.

Although we were called Pioneer Corp we didnt pioneer anything. AS I said before, the dangerous work was over after 1943 when the war was over in North Africa. what we did now was working in ammo dumps and did all the work details for the other British units in Algiers. Before I got my L/Cpl stripe I was sent out once with a work detail to the Officers Mess, where we were taken to the chicken coop to kill the chicken and PLUCK them! We had to get into the chicken coops, floors covered of course with chickenshit, wring the necks of the chicken and pluck them. As it was summer it was hot as hell and we worked stripped to the waist. Chicken have their own species of fleas - or lice? - and they migrated to us after we deprived them of their natural habitat. They did not bite us but their

crawling on our skin was Chinese torture. Fortunately these critters are "species specific" and they dont survive long on humans so at least we didnt have to worry to take them home and breed them, but I made up my so-called mind that I did THIS work detail now TWICE: the first and last time! After we returned to camp I made a beeline to Newlands office and told the clerck I want to see him. He called me in righth away and asked what the problem is? Sgt. Major Newlands, the next time I'm sent out to pluck bloody chicken you can put me in the brig but I refuse to obey this order. Pluck WHAT Fuchs? Explain the story, I dont get it. So I explained. I dont know of course whom he called but he started to BELLOW in the phone in his best Sgt. Major voice telling somebody very clearly NEVER again to call this outfit for ANY kind of work detail EVER, and banged the phone down. Fuchs, what I cant understand why these bloody fools of noncoms ^{didnt} tell me about this before? Sgt. Major this is very simple. The noncoms dont have to pluck chicken. As you know these blokes never served in an army before. As you also know, generally speaking we have a pretty good life here. If occasionally we have to do some shitty work they are willing to put up with it. Nevertheless I KNOW from the Viennese NONCOMS that he called them together and chewed their ass out with great flàir. As one of the Viennese noncoms told me jokingly, all we needed was a bloody ForeignLegionnaire to get in here and start complaining about a little chickenplucking!

The fact is that we did have a pretty good life in this unit. Generally speaking the work was not hard and the food was good too. AS we all know English cuisine has a well deserved rep

for being lousy and as I found out later when I was posted to England army food is even lousier with the exception of the Legion in peace time. Yehbut our cook was not English but Viennese thank gawd and he lived up to the rep of Viennese cuisine. Even the English officers and noncoms learned to love it. Soon after we arrived one of the Viennese noncoms, Erich Nissels, introduced me to the cook, another Viennese Jew of course, who told us whenever we feel we could do with a little extra just let him know. From what we heard they didnt feed you so well in the bloody Legion or in the internation camp either.

It must be obvious that after the five years in the Legion and the following séjour in the internation camp I should have been pretty happy even if I was in the third army of my short life.

However as the old saw goes there is always a snake in the soup and a fly in the grass. In my case both surfaced in the person of that little bow and arrow hunting twerp known as Cupid who emptied his quiver with great alacrity and speed in my unsuspecting heart, the first and mercifully the last time. At least I can give myself credit for having been a quick study. I fell in love with a Viennese girl I barely knew, by correspondance if you please.

The first time I've met my future wife was when my Dad got transfered from Sopron to Szombathely to the same brewery in 1934. Adjecant to the brewery where we lived there were apartments also rented for people not employed by the brewery. One of those were an older jewish couple who were the relatives of my future wife, whose name was Trude K. - Trude came to visit them during summer. She was what we call now a headturner with an hourglass

figure and a sparkling, vivacious personality to match. As we were the same age, about eighteen, that meant of course that I was too young for her. We never did more than exchange pleasantries as they are called, but she certainly made a lasting impression on me and on my Mom too who was crazy about her. "Trudikám why dont you go out with one of my sons?" she kept asking her in vain.

All the young jewish - and some of the not jewish - Lotharios of the town kept ringing her doorbell all day. She went out with some of them dancing - which she was great at - but was all ^{that}. As I found out later, she was madly in love with a guy in Vienna.

As Trude became my wife some fifteen years later I just as well tell you now a few things I found out only from her after we got married. Although in those days IQ testing was unknown I'm convinced that she must have had an IQ bordering on the genius. From the first years in school she earned her pocket money by tutoring the less capable kids. Everybody in her family from her father's side at least, were either scholars or in the performing arts. One of her uncles was THE matinee idol in Hamburg for years. All of them were tall handsome people although Trude was only about five ft. five. Her mother was a reporter at one of ^{the} largest papers in Vienna and we're talking about the twenties here. Trude graduated from every school she attended with honours - without really trying. She was invited to every better party in town where she played great Jazz piano and sang beautifully too. She had perfect pitch and although she could read music at first glance she hardly ever played from a score. As she told me once laughing she never

had to pay for going to see a musical revue or film because some of her friends dragged her there to listen to all the new hits. From there they went home and Trude played and sang all the songs by ear. - She collaborated with a guy by the name of Peter Wehle who was a composer but couldn't play the piano. He whistled the tunes for Trude, who played them, they cut a record and split the profit.

Some years ago I was poking around in a record shop in Passaic where I lived at that time looking for some French songs and other foreign stuff when I noticed a name which sounded familiar on a Viennese record: Peter Wehle Director of Wiener Rundfunk which was the biggest Radio Station in Vienna at that time. -

Trude was also a well-known what we call here Off Broadway actress. I have seen her scrapbook full of great reviews.

She decided to become a graphic artist in advertising. Whenever there was a competition for the best poster or whatever it was a foregone conclusion in her artschool that Trude will win the first prize and only the others are up for grab. When she was about twenty years old she signed a contract with UFA, the largest German film outfit, as art director no less. Two weeks later Hitler walked in, that was the end of that - and a lot of other things.

So if I fell in love with Trude years later at least I don't have to be ashamed of it.

As I'm writing these lines the cover story of TIME Magazine is The Chemistry of Love. Perhaps I'll put in my two cents worth, may I? I often wondered years later when it was already obvious that my marriage was a mistake and for all practical purposes kaput, whether it is actually possible to fall in love by

correspondance? or to ask the age old question: "What is this mystery called love?" The researchers in the TIME article say that they are finding solid indications that Love is biochemical and hormonal changes and other measurable manifestations in the human body. I think they are putting the donkey in front of the buggy because these "measurable changes" are the RESULT of falling in/ being in love, not the REASON for it. Their findings... does not even start to answer the question of WHAT is triggering/ kicking in these changes? As all these pointy heads dont seem to know about it more than I do, perhaps my own hypothesis is not worse than theirs. I became convinced long ago that "falling in/being in love" is basically and mostly autosuggestion in other words selfhypnosis. WHY one "falls in love" just at THAT specific time with THAT specific person? I'm convinced that what is happening is that when one is "in the market" for a partner the search radar is being switched on. When the person appears on the screen who comes closest to the DREAM of the person as the IDEAL partner, one talks himself/herself into "falling in love", hoping that the DREAM person will react similarly. Sometimes it works out, sometimes it doesnt.

To look for a DEFINITION of "What is this mystery called Love" is THE Mission IMPOSSIBLE par excellence. How could it be possible to put a strictly SUBJECTIVE emotion between definiable parameters when asking ten persons what they understand by LOVE you get ten different answers? And if this would not be bad enough even the SAME person will change the definition at different stages and ages of his/her life. Love will mean something different for the same person at the age of sixteen than at

the age of thirty and again at the age of sixty. As one of my neighbor said about his teenage son, everytime he has a hard on he is in love. That sex is an important part of love is an accepted fact, to different degrees of importance and intensity. At sixteen the hormones are in overdrive specially for the male. At thirty sex is still important but the STURM UND DRANG is mostly over. At sixty sex becomes something like icecream on the pie à la mode, it is nice to have it but it is not a neccessity.

Another interesting aspect of this story is why some people are falling in and falling out of love with something approaching monotony, while others are "hit" only once or twice in their lifetime? As far as I'm concerned this is a much simpler question to answer. Some people are driven/dominated by EMOTIONS, while others by REASON. Those dominated by EMOTIONS are the "frequent flyers".

The next obvious question is: how can one ascertain who is who to avoid the "frequent flyers" and therefore getting hurt?

Easy. Look in the person's hand. "The hand is a visible part of the brain." (Dr. Charlotte Wolf) Everything we DO, everything we MAKE is done by our hands. Ask any doctor which is the most delicate and difficult speciality in surgery and I'm sure s/he will say the surgery of the brain and the surgery of the hand.

But I digressed.

This whole story with Trude started when I was still in the Legion. Like all of us I was pretty lonely and so I switched on my search radar and the only likely subject I could come up with was that terrific Viennese girl I met back home years ago. I asked my Mom to try to get her address from here relatives which she did.

Trude was living by that time, with her sister Georgie, In England, as a refugee where she was admitted with the conditions that she will be allowed to work only as domestic help. As beggars cannot be choosers she had no alternative. As I found out from her later she had answered my letter I wrote to her from the Legion but she misread Cpl. for Cpt. As there was no Capitaine Fuchs in the Legion her letter came back and I lost contact with her till I joined the Pioneer Corp. We started corresponding, which became more and more intense and to make a long story shorter we fell in love by correspondence and ^{became} engaged with the understanding that if and when I can come to England we'll get married. What could be more simple? I kept pestering her to write me every day which she did. As she was also a poet, she wrote me the only poems a woman ever did. If I didnt have a letter from her, my day was ruined. I was to apply for a "Compassionate Posting" as it is called in the British Army and come to England to get married. As it turned out this was easier said then done.

Supporting evidence that being in love is like being under hypnosis when one is able to concentrate only on ONE subject and "task", suppressing every other extraneous happenings as of no importance and no consquence, is the fact that my entries in my Diary are practically useless during this era. Not only there is nothing in those pages what does not concerns Trude, but I remember almost nothing about these years, unlike those in the Legion. Regardless how I try to trigger the memory banks I'm unable to come up even with such important event of HOW my unit got from Algiers to Italy in 1945 and what exactly we did there and why?

Unlike all "the gruesome details" of embarkation in the Legion from Sénégal to the front in Tunisia this time everything or almost everything is a blank page, literally and figuratively.

I remember that we landed in Calabria sometimes in April 1945, but HOW we got there and exactly WHEN : NIENTE (nothing) as they say in our new country, accompanied by the required gesture of a quick stroke with your right hand sort of flipping your chin.

In every country there is one specific region which is the poorest, most backward, grungiest, least educated, whose unfortunate inhabitants are the butts of zillions of jokes since human memory. In Italy this region is Calabria whose inhabitants are called Calabrese always uttered with a mixture of great contempt and condescending pity. In a region like this which was always the poorest even in normal conditions, what the ravages of war did to the population is barely imaginable if you didn't see it with your own eyes. The little urchins fighting for the smallest scraps of food around our camps ^{was} heartbreaking. The only people who seemed to be well fed were the priests. And they were the only ones these little urchins never panhandled. They found out long ago that the only handout they will get are some murmured words and the sign of the cross, which might be good for the soul but will do little for their empty bellies.

My main interest , having landed in Italy was that we were on the Continent at last, not in Africa anymore after six years, and that presumably it will be easier to get to England and get married.

Our unit was put to work building roads and Tibor had a

lot of hassles with ^{the} blokes, specially with the jewish refugees from Poland who never before had to work with pick and shovel, although most of the work was done by bulldozers which we saw the first time. We got a good laugh out of it when we overheard two of them talking and calling Tibor a dirty antisemite in Yiddish. As we didnt speak the lingo they didnt believe that we're Jewish although we told them of course any number of times. No Hungarian jew would have been caught ^{dead} talking Yiddish, beside the usual few words even gentiles were using. We were great patriots all of us and a whole lot it helped when Hitler came and the Hungarian equivalent, the Arrow Cross, took up his cause with great enthusiasm.

As I've mentioned previously we had a lot of the Spanish guys from the Legion with us also and their complaints and bitching concerned their wish to figth the Nazis with arms not by building roads in Calabria, which they called slave labour. Our discontent were aggravated by the fact that soon after we landed the food became worse and worse both in quantity and quality. Rumours started to circulate that our mess Sgt, who was Italian, was selling our food on the black market. For us oldtimers from the Legion this started to get a quality of DEJA VU and we didnt look at it benevolently at all. As usual in the army there was a lot of bitching but no action. According to King's Regulations an officer is supposed to be present at every meal but this is more of a formality then anything else. So once again most of our pay was spent on food which consisted, in this miserable little town, of PASTA SHUTTA, if I spell it correctly. It was some kind of macaroni

with something impersonating meat sauce, but meat was certainly not in visible quantities. After this disgrace was going on longer than it should have in an unit of the British Army, way back from the front and fighting, with no problem of logistic, Tibor and myself decided that if nobody else is going to DO something about it, reminding us of the chicken plucking detail, I mentioned while in Algiers, we will have to cook something up ourselves. We called together our squad during the roadbuilding work in the morning and told them that when we go back for lunch we will join what is called here in the American army the chow line, but when we get to the cook distributing it we will all turn our messtins upside down and keep walking. They were of course highly amused and fully in agreement realizing that they are risking nothing. And thats what we did. Tibor and I figured that we're risking not much more, first because we knew the Lt. is benevolently disposed toward us due to our background, second we're not going against any Regs. When the Lt. saw what is going on he came over of course asking what the bloody story is? We told him, and he said he wants to see us in his office after lunch. Once in his office he wanted to hear the whole story and we told him there are rumours that the mess Sgt is selling our food on the black market. He seemed to be genuinely surprised and wanted to know if we have the impression that these stories are well founded? We told him that we have no proof of course but taking into consideration that the mess Sgt. is Italian who would have certainly little difficulty to make contact with the locals, and that people are literally starving around us and that there is definetely a black market we're inclined to believe that the stories

are plausible to say the least. He said he will look into it but meanwhile did we realize that he could Court Martial us for "inciting to mutiny in war time" making ominous gestures around his neck being suspended from above. His tone made it clear that he is not serious but we told him anyway that as far as we're aware of it there is nothing in the King's Regulations about soldiers being obligated to EAT! As he well know our squads went out in the morning for our roadbuilding details and did at least as much as any of the other squads or more, all we did was refuse to eat!. You are both bloody bastards he said laughing and told us to fuck off and again promised to look into the story. To make a long story shorter our mess Sgt. went to prison in short order and we started to eat better likewise. Our rep with the blokes didnt exactly suffer either..

One of the other amusing incident I manage to recall concerns the sunday worship. The Brits are very correct about this toward all religious faith, including jewish, and every sunday they made to "fall in" all the blokes who wanted to go to church. This sunday about a dozen guys weremarching off to church, the rest of us just hanging around including a bunch of the Spanish refugees. Suddenly one of them recognised a few others of their colleagues marching off to church too. Sticking his finger out motioning at them hollered at the top of his voice: MIRA HOMBRE! COMMUNISTAS CATHOLICAS! Big laugh from both sides.

One thing even I didnt neglect to note in my Diary was MAY 7th 1945: PEACE at long last after years of slaughter and carnage resulting in the death of some fifty million people including

civilians, all the result of a megalomaniac madman who succeeded to play the role of a Svengali and Machiavelli all rolled into one, to one of the most cultured and well educated nation not only in Europe but the world.

The special significance of PEACE having broken out was not lost on us political refugees serving in the British Army. As we all signed up for "The Duration of War" we assumed we will be "demobbed" in not more than a couple of months at most. Little did we realize what Perfidious Albion is going to cook up for us! Ernest Bevin, that bloody card carrying antisemite bastard, who was Foreign Secretary from 1945 to 1951 must have been instrumental in persuading the War Office that all we alien bastards should be kept in the Alien Pioneer Corps as long there is need for us to work in ammo dumps, guard Prisoners of Wars and any other dirty unpleasant work "our own boys are too good for". I cant prove this of course but I dont have to be paranoid to assume that it was not lost on Bevin "an old working class antisemite" as Paul Johnson says in MODREN TIMES, that a large percentage of the Alien Pioneer Corps are Jews and other anti-Nazis and by keeping them on as what some of us called "slave labourers" he is able to kill the proverbial two birds with the same stone. Bevin also earned my gratitude by inventing the Bevin scheme, a system for demobbing soldiers by computing their age, length of service, where served etc. This might have been fair enough for the Brits but it was anything but for ME whose five years service in the Legion of course counted for a big zero! When my Demob Number was computed it turned out

that I'll have the pleasure and the honour to serve in the British Bloody Army another TWO YEARS; after the war.

I realize that there is perhaps nothing more difficult than to put yourself into the state of mind of another person - but try. Here I was, already thirty years old, serving in the THIRD army and two more years to look forward to, after which I'll still have no home and no country to call my own, having to start to build a life from SCRATCH unlike the other soldiers who can just pick it up where they left off, assuming that they were lucky enough to survive the carnage. I dont know what made me more frantic the injustice of being kept on in this bloody army in spite of my contract, the feeling of helplessness of being trapped AGAIN as in the Legion or the fact that I was in love and being kept apart from my future wife for who knows how long? What I do know is that never in my life before or after was I in such a state of frantic rage as in those two years.

Trude and I agreed and decided that the first thing we have to do is try everything possible to get myself posted to England from Italy. I made a real nuisance of myself with my CO bugging him to apply for Compassionate Posting and telling him that I'm NOT supposed to be in this bloody army anymore in the first place according to my contract. Trude on her part did the same starting to write letters to the War Office in her Mandarin English harping on the same point. Trude was speaking impeccable English already in Vienna tutoring all the Jews who wanted to immigrate of course. Long before I was able to come to England she passed an exam for an announcer of the BBC no less, but nothing came of it as there

was a high backlash because there ^{were} too many bloody aliens at the BBC already! By aliens they meant of course JEWISH refugees but to say THAT would have been bad form Old Chap, except in private.

Having kept bending the ears and making a nuisance of myself as never before or after in my life anywhere, my CO got tired of listening to the same old song, he got me a Compassionate Posting to England at last. I can see the names of Crotone, Taranto, Catanzaro and Caserta in my Diary but I think none of these were the scene of my taking off in an old decommissioned LANCASTER bomber from Italy to England, but Milano on August 11, 1945 at 1015hrs. I was flying high in more than one way! At long last I'm leaving this poor ruined country on my way to my enamorata! I remember the flight on this old Lancaster very vividly. All of us blokes on Compassionate Posting were sitting on cushions on the floor in this noisy as hell bomber but happy as happy can be! The pilot was a really swell bloke who let us take our turns in the top turret - without guns of course - explaining us all the gear and asking us who we were and where are we going, all thru the squawk box from which I didn't understand a word of course with my piss poor English at that stage. I don't know what he must have thought about this bloke either not answering or talking gibberish in a bloody foreign accent, so he gave up. I found an emergency shell dressing in a corner which I liberated as souvenir of this epochal flight of my life which I still have to this day somewhere. -

We landed at a town I can't decipher the name looking like TWITSHALL but I can't find such place on my map. From there I was sent to Liverpool and from there to Prestatyn in North Wales.

If I remember correctly I called Trude from Prestatyn but keeping my arrival secret wanting to surprise her. I dont think I'll ever forget climbing the stairs to her furnished room in the attick at 72 York Rd. in Woking Surrey, wearing my battledress of course with my kitbag on my shoulder. The old spinster who was her landlady intercepted me in the hall but I signalled her to keep her mouth shut which she did.

We got married shortly afterwards by a Justice of the Peace as they are called, with Trude's two girlfriends from Austria as witnesses still wearing my battledress having no civilian clothes yet. Trude used to heckle me afterwards that I must have had some "foreknowledge" because instead of repeating after the bloke, "I take you for my LAWFUL wife" I said " I take you for my AWFUL wife". By no stretch of the imagination or exageration could Trude be called an "awful" person. Whether she could be called an "awful wife" is also open to argument depending what one's definition and expectations of a not "awful" wife is. Keeping in mind the saw that "Of those who are absent, say something good or nothing" and that I'll absolutely not discuss our marital problems in any detail here, I'll just mention the more or less accepted facts and observations GENERALLY relevant to our specific case.

I think it can be safely stated that to marry somebody you barely knew and havent seen since years is asking for trouble. Correspondance, regardless how intense, can in no way make up or replace "the personal touch" literally or figuratively. Even our Living National Treasure, Dear Abby changed her mind recently and

became in favour of what is popularly known as "shacking up" before getting married. AS I mentioned Trude must have had a genius IQ or very close to it. I believe the concept of "mad or genius" has a lot of truth in it. Or if not actually mad, certainly neurotic at least. Trude told me that her grandma, from her mother's side if I remember correctly, died in the nuthouse. Her mother was able "to read people" which was far above normal, closer to psychic, which Trude inherited too. Not only that she was able to recognize instantly who is who between us two when we were together but she greeted me by my name after knowing us only a few days and also recognized us from the back. She told me after we got married that she took an instant dislike to Tibor, she couldnt or wouldnt explain in more detail, beside saying "etwas ist nicht im ordnung" something is not in order in him.

Trude was not only close to being a genius but also an abnormally gifted and multitalented artist.

Ab-normally intelligent and abnormally talented, "gifted" people dont think "normally", dont react normally, dont have normally reacting senses, in one word does not BEHAVE normally. Trude had "micrometer" eyes who saw the most minimally "out of line" changes other people wouldnt even notice much less being "bothered" by. She had extra sensitive hearing which made her literally grimace with pain if a musician hit a clinker on a record she was listening to. Same with her sense of smell. The result of all this abnormal "pluses"^{is} that to "interface" with such people is full of day to day problems and difficulties making "living" with them very complicated to say the least unless they can have their own "space"

and preferably their own quarters. None of which we were ever able to acquire due to financial problems.

As all these little daily aggravations tend to be ACCUMULATIVE, and as the ab-normal person is unable to change them as they are "coming with the territory", sooner or later living with such a person becomes something of an ordeal for BOTH parties.

Perhaps all this could have been overcome or at least ameliorated if our sex life would have been adequate, which never was. We were both ~~thirty~~two when we got married and Trude was a 100% virgin. In a swinging town like Vienna was in those days, this was anything but normal. Trude told me that her sister, who looked like butter wouldn't melt in her mouth, was having sex with her future husband for years before they got married. Again I'll generalize only. I don't know if the "experts" agree with me or not "and frankly dear I don't give a damn"; I'm convinced that ^{if} a woman who suppressed her sex drive for some twenty years after nature intended it to be awakened, there are two possibilities: either she never had a "normal" sex drive in the first place - which I doubt in Trude's case - or she suppressed it so successfully that it was impossible to awaken. That this was the case was born out by the fact that although we were only fortythree years old when we got divorced in 1958, my son told me later when he was a teenager and started to date himself, Mom NEVER had a date since you moved out. If she went out it was always with one of the neighbors - This was the more surprising as a fortythree year old woman is at the age what is called in Vienna "im besten Manner alter". This has double meaning in German. It can mean "a man's best age" or "a woman's best age FOR man."

As I started to keep a Diary again after being posted to England I'm going to use it as roadmarks where possible, however it is no way the kind of detailed and regularly kept journal I kept in the Legion. I was still "in love" and most of the Diary entries concerns our marriage which delicate subjects is not going to be part of this story.

If I remember correctly Prestatyn in North Wales was something of a "holding companie" for personnel arriving from o'seas untill they were assigned to their own units. I was granted several leaves to go home, being on Compassionate Posting and being newly wed also.

NOVEMBER/7/1945/PRESTATYN/NORTH WALES/ENGLAND.

I'm posted to England's famous/infamous military garrison since 1854, ALDERSHOT in Hamshire, only some 30kms Southwest from Woking, Surrey as the crow flies and not a whole lot more by road either. I'm posted to No. 504 British Pioneer Companie. Next day I'm called to the Companie Sergeant Major's (CSM) office, and would you believe it another 6'4" Scotchman, but this time, unlike CSM Newlands in Algiers, he is slim and trim and as I found out righth away, another great bloke who took me righth away under his benevolent wings. His name was Brown but happens to be a redhead, about my age, I'd guess thirtyish.

Looking thru my file in front him he says, Well laaaaad, tell me first of all how did you ever end up with your kind of background in this unit of the bloody Pioneer Corp? Reserve Officer in the Hungariän army, Sgt. in the French Foreign Legion for five years, wounded in action in Tunisia, decorated with the bloody Croix de Guerre and all that? So I told him adding that if my contract

would have been honored I wouldnt be in the bloody army anymore at all as I enlisted for the Duration of War which is over.

Shaking his head in disbelief CSM Brown said, as you know lad, there is not a bloody thing I can do about your bloody demob but what I can do is make your life here in my companie as easy as I can. The way it looks to me you already did your share or more for this bloody war. First of all I'll get you an SOP(sleeping out pass) so that you can go home every evening to your bride. As I see you live in Woking which is easy enough to get to from here. I'll also get you a weekend pass every week except when you're on duty, which wont be often I'll see to that too. As for the blokes in this bloody unit, I just as well tell you about them now as you will find out soon enough anyway. I heard the Alien Pioneer Corp in North Africa where you enlisted is a different cuppa tea consisting mostly of political refugees like you. The British Pioneer Corps are the repository of the dregs of the British Army. The blokes who cant handle any other unit land in the Pioneer Corp. Also, the habitual trouble makers who are in and out of Field Punishment Camps and the Glasshouse, end up here. I would guess you wont have an easy time of it specially with your foreign accent and not being a British subject. Try to get the work done as well as you can and try to get along with this blokes the best you can. If you have a problem come and see me. Any questions? No Sir, thank you very much for your help. Okey-dokey and good luck lad.

CSM Brown was as good as his word, bless him if he is still around or may he rest in peace if he isnt. When I told Trude about him and that he is another Scotchman and another great bloke

she was not surprised. I'm here since 1938 and I found out soon enough that the best people in the British Isles are the Scotch. They are straight as they come, always tell you what they think, unlike the English who would never tell you a lie but never tell you the truth either. This coming from Trude who was almost psychic about people, inherited from her mother she said, is a big compliment for the Scotch indeed. She must have been right because when I worked later in a hospital here, it was always a little blond Scottish lassie who helped me whenever I needed help. She got mad at me only once, when meeting her the first time I asked her from what part of England she is? Her eyes shooting arrows she snarled at me, I'm NOT from bloody England!! I'm from Glaaaasgoooooh! Oh, I'm terribly sorry, you see I'm not familiar with accents yet. I realize that, so THIS time you'r forgiven.

As CSM Brown said I soon realized what a filthy rabble I'm dealing with here and made up my mind that I'll do everything possible to "signal" that I'm not cut from the same cloth and that I didn't learn "sojering" in the bloody Pioneer Corp. For a start I made a point of it to be always smartly turned out. And while in the Legion I had the decency not to wear the bar of the Croix de Guerre I knew I got by default, I decided that I'm going to wear it here! We went down to London and I bought two sets of the Croix de Guerre bar with Silver Star and two Wound Stripes what is the equivalent of Purple Star in the American Army. It is a $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " long "gold" bar worn on the left forearm parallel with the arm. As I said I bought two sets one for my working uniform one for my town uniform. Truth to be told I'd no idea whether it

it is according to King's Regs to wear foreign decorations but in the mood I was I didnt care . a fuck. If somebody doesnt like it he will tell me soon enough. Nobody ever said a word. Not long-time after I was posted to this companie a funny incident happened which proved not only how consistently mad and in desperate mood I was but that the Croix de Guèrre was not only recognised by the Brits but respected as well.

As CSM Brown promised I was the grateful recipient of a constant stream of weekend passes which were to be picked up at the guardhouse at 1300hrs, if I remember correctly, fridays. This meant of course that the happy bunch who were due for a pass was gravitating toward the guardhouse around 1230hrs or even earlier hanging around and slouching around killing time. This specific weekend was the same story and some twnty blokes were around the guardhouse when a Second Loui(Lt) came passing by with his bloody swagger stick smartly tucked in his left armpit. AS soon as he noticed our mob he started shouting from far off, back to your barracks you bloody bastards, it is only 1230hres, taking his bloody swagger stick from his armpit and sweeping it in front of himself from left to righth, while ^{all} this rabble scattered like cockroaches when you turn the lighth on in the kitchen. All that is, except ME. Suddennly all the rage and frustration of the past years welled up in my throat, thinking come on hit me you bloody bastard! I knew of course that it is strictely forbidden even to touch a soldier with a finger, but I also knew that most of this rabble were guests at one time or the other at the notorious military

prison called Glasshouse, the roof being made of glass, where more than just "touching" was not unusual as sporadic stories about brutalities there hit the papers. I made up my mind then and there that I'll show this bloody Second Louie that I'm a SOLDIER, cut from a different cloth even if I wear the same bloody Regimental Badge as this filthy rabble. When he was about thirty feet from me I took up the Regulation "stand at ease" stomping hard on the ground with my righth heel, spreading my legs and clasping my hands behind my back, sticking out whatever I had for chest, eyes front, trying to impersonate a bloody Coldstream Guard and giving him my best "drop dead" look. He noticed me righth away of course and came toward me, looking a bit flustered. When he was about ten feet from me I snapped at attention with that little halfstep on the righth foot the Brits call "check", giving a smart salute while still giving him my "drop dead" look. He stopped in front of me, snapped his bloody swagger stick in his left armpit and returned smartly my salute! Looking at my chest with a surprised look, WHERE did you get the Croix de Guèrre Copl? In the French Foreign Legion SSSSIRRRR! Where in the Foreign Legion Copl? In Tunisia SSSSIRRRR! And the Wound Stripe also Copl? YESSSIRRRR! And what is your name Copl? Copl Fuchs SIR! Stand at ease Copl. The Louie goes in the guardroom comes out with my weekend pass. Here is your pass Copl, enjoy your week end. Thank you SIR! Smart salute, smartly returned and I was off while the rabble was standing there with their mouth open. I felt a whole lot better but to tell you the truth I dont think I would have done anything like this without being in the constant rage and fury I was in this bloody outfit.

NOVEMBER 16th/45/ALDERSHOT

It is another weekend and another weekendpass to celebrate, if that is the word, my thirtyeth birthday tomorrow, while still in this bloody army, with the end nowhere in sight.

JANUARY/6/1946/A'T

Trude got a letter from her relatives in Szombathely that my parents are dead. No further details.

FEBRUARY/18/46/A'T

Graffity on the wall in the shithouse of the barracks: FUCK THE JEWS!
THE MENACE OF CIVILIZATION!

Are we jews ever stop being the PRÜGELKNABEN of the world?! Not in my own lifetime I think,if ever.

Trude heard from one of her well connected acquaintances, Bunzl, that my father and mother committed suicide in 1944 before they were deported to Auschwitz. My father died but my mother survived and was taken to Auschwitz were she was murdered. This is all I needed to brighten up my mood.

MARCH/1/46/A'T.

I made an application to the War Office for Compassionate Release, harping on it again that I shouldnt be in the army anymore at all. Ye gads am I getting tired of it to get down on my fucken knees and kiss asses for something it was my legal righth to get long ago.

MARCH/8/46/A'T

I'm being sticked with all the dirtiest and lousiest details. (CSM Brown is not involved inthis and I cant bother him with everything.) I asked one of the noncoms what is the reason for

this honours and he tells me that because I've a sleeping out pass they feel it is only fair that I get all the shit jobs. That I'm an alien jew bastard doesnt hurt either of course but he doesnt tell me that, in all fairness to him.

MARCH/28/46/A'T.

I saw my OC about my Compassionate Release but he said sofar he couldnt do anything about it. Indoubt it that he is breaking his back or loses any sleep over it.

Our landlord who is an old antisemite bastard is dying of cancer and guess who is nursing him? Trude thats who. She is cut out for nursing as I'm cut out for being a flamenco dancer, but she says it is her "humanitarian duty". The best part of it ^{is} that both his daughter and son in law are living here but they visit him for five minutes a week.

APRIL/2/46/A'T

Another letter from Trude's relatives in Szombathely. This time about the death of her mother from cancer. I can never fathom how supposedly intelligent, well educated people can do the dumbest most insensitive things? She goes into all the details how her mother suffered in her last days and on and on before she died! This is just what Trude needed. She is completely wiped out for days crying her eyes out. In the same letter the same imbecile also repeats what I already heard about my parents death. That my mother committed suicide means that her parents, and my grandparents, were also dead by then otherwise my mother would have never left them alone in their old age. AS I found out later from Tibor who went back to Hungary after the war, my grandparents died in a cattle car

in 1944 during the way to Auschwitz. Grampa was eighty two years at that time. The sweetest, kindest gentlest human being I ever met in my life had to die not even a dog should die.

APRIL/11/46/A'T.

One of the blokes working with me asking ME the bloody alien bastard to write him an application for Compassionate Release. I ask him why isnt he asking an English bloke and he says the English are silly. It turns out he is from Scotland, so I help him of course.

APRIL/112/46/A'T

Today it was read on Daily Orders that the Medical Officer was complaining that the blokes are reporting to medical inspection filthy. Hear, hear! I didnt need the Medical Officer to know this. The personal hygiene of this rabble is just appalling and unbelievable for any western army. One of my biggest problem is to get them to the weekly shower. When it is shower time they disappear like rats down a rathole. Never saw anything like it..

In the Legion we were bitching about not having enough showers, here this filthy rabble consider going to take a shower a punishment. To get them to give up their dirty laundry for clean one is like pulling teeth of a croc. All they have to do is make a bundle of their dirty laundry at the end of the week, put their nametag on it and they get a fresh, clean, neatly pressed bundle. In the Legion we would have given our front teeth for service like this.

The barracks are of course similarly sparkling - with the staircases liberally sprinkled with days old spittle, rubbish and all imaginable kind of refuse and junk. Trying to get them to clean it up is like trying to get a pig brush its teeth after meals.

I never saw here a noncom to inspect the shirts or underwear of other ranks. As long as they are shaved and their hair Bryillcreamed on parade they are adequately turned out. And their boots shined of course. - Verily this IS the dregs of the British Army no doubt about it. -

APRIL/19/46/A'T.

All of Trude's friends are ostracizing her for marrying ME instead of " a nice English Boy". This might well be a compliment for Trude being accepted as "almost English" due to her Mandarin English, but it sure as hell no compliment to me. They can all kiss me in my secret places!

APRIL/19/46/A'T.

Four days Easter leave thank gawd. I dont have to see this filthy rabble and filthy place to match it, for four days. CSM Brown has his work cut out with these creeps. When he looks them over, from his 6'4" observation post on Parade, he has an appropriate remark for most of them. "Did you clean yorrrr boots this morrrrning lad?" YesSIR.With bloody WHITEWASH?" (laughs). And you laaaad, did you shave this morrrrning?! No Sir. And why NOT?! I'd no razor blades Sir. CSM Brown fishing around in his pocket coming up with half a crown piece: go to the bloody NAAFI laaad and buy yorrrself some bloody rrrrazor blades! And you laaad, you've yorrrr hat on like a bloody Higlaaaander! This gets a big laugh of course as he is a a Highlander himself. CSM Brown was the only one I ever saw taking the trouble posting the blokes were they wanted to be posted instead of just picking them at random. Whenever he was posting some of the blokes he asked on Parade, any of you blokes have family,

friends or sweethearts up North, step forward. I'm posting ten of you next week. There were always some who wanted to go somewhere.

Every weekend the MP's in town wrote up a bunch of this rabble for not wearing their Regimental Badge on their caps. One weekend when it was way over the standard quota CMS Brown got brownd off and chewed them out properly. If you bloody blokes would behave yorrself a bit better you wouldnt have to be ashamed of yorr badge and get picked up every bloody weekend by the bloody MP's and bring disgrace on your unit you bloody bastards! -

Whatever the Legion might have lacked Esprit de Corp was not it. No Foreign Légionnaire would take off the Seven Flamed Grenade from his képi anymore than he would take off his own balls.

MAY/5/46/A'T.

We've some German POW's working in this camp and yesterday one of these creeps working with me was pushing a wheelbarrow when one of the POW's came from the other direction. This moron of a creep steps deferentially to the side to let the Jerry pass by! When I tell him it should be the Jerry who should have stepped aside and let HIM pass by he says: Oh they are good men! It turned my stomach.

JULY/2/46/A'T.

We've applied weeks ago for our visa to the USA. Today we got news from them that as soon as we're able to secure passage we can go. This was unexpected good news indeed as we didnt expect it to be so fast and easy. In those days every immigrant had to have an Affidavit from somebody who guaranteed that the new immigrant is not going to be dependent on Public Support. Some of Trude's friends who had a tree nursery in Parkridge, New Jersey sent such an Affidavit

for us weeks ago and now it seems we we'll be able to immigrate to the US as soon as we can secure passage and IF I can get out of this accursed army in time, before our Affidavit validity expires.

Another stroke of luck was that both of us having born in Vienna we were both on the Austrian quota which was not oversubscribed at this time soon after the war because most of the Austrian Jews died in the concentration camps or who was able to get out while it was still possible before the war, left already as Trude's brother in law did going to Ecuador, one of the very few countries which accepted jews. What we have to do now is look around how we can obtain cheap affordable passage, suitable ^{for} our very modest financial situation to put it delicately. And most importantly, how can I get out of this bloody army before we lose our visa?

JULY/12/46/A'T.

This morning I was told to pack my kit because I'm posted to Buckingham. First I was supposed to go to ASCOT and from there to Buckingham. So I went home for my kit and to tell TRude the "good" news about my posting to Buckingham which is way off from Woking where we live. When I got to Ascot I ran into CSM Brown from my old outfit, who fixed it in no time that I can stay in Aldershot. (My Diary doesnt say anything whether he was posted to another Co. or I was. As I mentioned this Diary is not much use for details).

Now that I know we have a chance to immigrate to the US I'm more anxious then ever to get out of this accursed army and FINISH this chapter of my life at last and none too soon.

JULY/22/46/A'T.

My application for Compassionate Release was refused by the Major.

I'm getting a bit frantic to put it mildly and now I'm going to try the Welfare Officer. There is nothing much left untried as far as I know.

JULY 25/46/A'T.

The companie is going to ASCOT. It is not far from Woking but I doubt it that I can get sleeping out pass from there to go home.

JULY 29/46/ASCOT.

I can go home but it is very tricky because I've to rely on hitching rides part of the way. I'd an interesting incident with hitchhiking soon after I got to Ascot. In those days radiators and car bumpers were not looking like if they were cut out with cookie cutters, but every car had it's distinctive design which was easy to recognise even from far away. One day I was standing at the side of the road with my thumb up when I noticed a car far off driving like a bat out of hell approaching very fast and I couldnt believe my eyes, it was the characteristic oval radiator of one of the most famous, fastest and beautiful car ever designed a BUGATTI! In it's heydays it won every race it entered for years. It was the FERRARI of the day. The driver stopped at my side asking me where are you going Copl? To Woking Sir. Well, hopp in I'm going righth there. I still could not believe my luck. I never got home so fast before or after. When he stopped to drop me off I thanked him profusely and told him, now that I've ridden in a Bugatti I can die happy! He got a good laugh out of it.

This bastard of a Major in my new companie refused to give me my sleeping out pass unless I bring him a doctors certificate that Trude is sick. What Trude did instead was writing in her

Mandarin English a "very rude letter" explaining that if my contract would have been honored I wouldnt need his SOP in the first place because I wouldnt be in the army anymore. The bastard backed down and gave me my sleeping out pass after all. Even so it is a very unpleasant situation for more than one reason. In this bloody outfit having lost the benevolent help of CSM Brown I'm on duty very often and three times a week I'm on "stand by". What are we "standing by" in this shit outfit for I dont know. I already made up my mind that I'll "stand by" at home and see what happens? Furthermore the train transportation is very expensive in proportion to my grandiose pay as Cpl.

I was unoficially told that I'll be demobbed in October. To say that it would be high time is putting it mildly.

SEPTEMBER/19/46/Ascot

I asked for an interview with the Major because I want to tell him that I'm here on Cmpassionate Posting and I dont want to stay in this bloody camp 4-5 times a week. So I'm taken to his office but even before I've a chance to open my mouth this dirty bastard says dont you have Regulation Issue glasses Copl? Yes SIR. Go back to your barrack then, put them on and come back! I was already pissed off enough when I came in his fucken office but now I was just seeing with rage. I make a sharp "about turn" stomping my righth heel on the flor putting all my 135lbs on it and the fucken floor rattles. Outside I'm asking myself, am I in the bloody Coldstream Guard or the fucken Pioneer Corp for being told to wear regulation issue glasses for the OC? When I come back in his office I give him another floor rattling "halt" when I salute and tell him I'm

on Compassionate Posting here and that I should not be in the army anymore if my contract would have been honored and that I dont want to stay in camp 4-5 times a week. The bastard agreed to let me go home evry nighth. Thank you SIR! Another floor rattling "about turn" and I fuck off. -

SEPTEMBER/25/46/ASCOT

It turns out that my group will not be demobbed before February or March 1947, which means of course another 7-8 months in this accursed army. I'm at the end of my rope. Pissed off, even disgusted I was plenty of time in the Legion as you might remember, but NEVER in my life before or after was I in such a constant, consistent impotent rage, frustration and fury as in this accursed Pioneer Corp where I had to be part and parcel of this depository of the dregs of the British bloody Army, wear the same Regimental Badge and live day after day with these filthy little creeps who are calling me a bloody alien jew bastard not only behind my back but in my face, without being able to do anything about it. It would be the word of an alien bastard against the word of ten English blokes and it would never ^{get} further then the OC's office at best. I would be lucky if these rabble wouldnt waylay me somewhere and beat the shit out of me or worse.

NOVEMBER /18/46/ASCOT

Yesterday was my thirtyfirst birthday but there was not much to celebrate. Now that our old bastard of a landlord died at last, his grateful relatives gave us notice to get out of the apartment because they want to sell the building. This is the thank you for **Trude** having nursed the old bastard for six weeks. Now I can nurse

Trude for six weeks as she is a wreck physically and emotionally too. There are some people who are unable or unwilling to face their limitations and it looks like she is one of them.

NOVEMBER/26/46/ASCOT.

We were visited yesterday by a policeman regarding my Compassionate Release. I dont ^{know} whether this is a good or bad omen.

When I got back to camp yesterday I found my kitbag empty. Everything stolen. This filthy rabble hates my guts. If I come in and say Good Morning - silence. If I dont say Good Morning they all shout in chorus: Good MOOOOrning COOOPL!

DECEMBER/14/46/ASCOT

We moved to Guildford, Sy.

DECEMBER/19/46/ASCOT.

Xmas leave till January 2nd, 1947.

FEBRUARY/19/1947/ASCOT

We were advised by the American Embassy that our Affidavit expired. NOW we're truly and properly FUCKED!

MARCH/13/47/ASCOT

My bloody CSM said to me: Why dont you ask the Refugee Committee to sponsor your trip? Another bastard Sgt chimes in: or your Synagogue, they have plenty of money! - Kiss my my ass bastard and drop dead afterwards!

MARCH/20/47/ASCOT

My demob postponed AGAIN!

APRIL/2/47/ASCOT

The Welfare Officer tells me he cant understand what the problem is.

APRIL/22/47/ASCOT

DEMOB procedures starts for my group #49!

APRIL/25/47/ASCOT

Came back from ten days leave. If all goes well I should be demobbed on the 29th! By now I wont believe it till I feel it as the little blond said. - Medical exam for demob: Any complaints Copl?

APRIL/26/47/ASCOT

Kitting out for demob! I snare a nice rust coloured Harris Tweed topcoat! If I ever deserved a goddamn coat it is surely THIS one!

APRIL 29th/. 947/ASCOT

DEMOBBED AT LAST!

APRIL/30/1947/GUILDFORD, Sy.

I buy a nice pigskin wallet for CSM Brown and mail it to his company thanking him for all the kindness toward me. He will be the ONLY pleasant memory of this sad sack Pioneer Corp.

To sum up these years I've spent in The British Pioneer Corp, unlike the time I served in the Royal Alien Pioneer Corp, I can honestly say that by any yardstick they were the most humiliating, degrading and emotionally painful years of my life.

To serve in the army of a country as a volunteer to help the war effort only to be rewarded by being despised and harassed and called bloody alien bastard and sometimes enriched to become bloody alien jew bastard, not only by the "other ranks" but by the other noncoms also, is not the kind of behaviour the oh so correct English could be proud of. And to unilaterally change a contract which was unequivocal and clear about the fact that I - and many others in my situation - "Enlisted for The Duration of War" only because we were helpless to do anything about it and because it served their purpose of having cheap labour available to

Erwin Fuchs

40.)

do the dirty work of cleaning up ammo dumps, guarding them untill
work
the work is done, guarding POW camps and other "our own boys are
too good for" and in the same time hating our guts for being
Alien Jew Bastards is bordering on perversity.

Well, having worn the uniforms of two armies for eighth years, I am a CIVILIAN again! This could be called a watershed event in my life calling for the description of my feelings and emotions. The problem is that kind of situations separate ^{this} the professional writers from the wannabes like me, trying to impersonate at the advanced youth of seventy seven years plus, a writer the first time in my life.

Perhaps the best way would be to try to draw up a sort of balance sheet and look at the pluses and minuses at this momentous point in my ^{new} career as a civilian.

The most obvious plus is that I SURVIVED. And taking into consideration that not only fifty million people died including civilians, but as a jew I had also escaped the fate of six millions of my clan, including all my family, who were slaughtered during the most barbarous Holocaust in recorded history ever conducted against a specific race or religion. Perhaps another aspect of these past eighth years which could be considered another plus although not so easily quantifiable by "facts" is, that I realized I'm able to cope with unusual and difficult situations and that I can handle poeple from drastically various backgrounds and ages. It added enourmously to my selfrespect and selfconfidance which I badly needed during all the following years when I was again and again A Stranger in a Strange Land.

Looking at the negative pole starting with the immediate present, having served in the bloody British Army for three years

ERWIN FUCHS

ENEMY ALIEN

No. 884869

(Alien Order 1920

ACI 1459/44)

GUILDFORD, Sy.

ENGLAND, 1947

I find myself as civilian AGAIN an Enemy Alien and I've to report to the police every time I want to live in a different town, according to : Alien Order 1920 ACI 145944. In all fairness to the Brits at least they didnt put me in an internation camp as the Legion did, hoping that I'll re-enlist. Then again, the war being over, this would have been a wee bit awkward I guess. -

It must also be remembered, that unlike the soldiers of all the Allied Forces who survived the carnage and can return to their own countries and families to pick up their life where they left off, I'm still "stateless", homelss, familyless, to say nothing about jobless. A rather daunting challenge, but if I coped sofar, I'll damn well have to cope with ^{this} latest challenge also. As the old saw goes: if it wont kill you it will make you stronger.

The first priority is to find a job and make enough money untill we can find out when can we get another visa for the USA, or if not, where else could we go because I definetely had my fill being an alien bastard in Jolly Old England. Trude had it somewhat easier as she could "pass" for British, if not English, although she was also ostracized by all her old friends ^{of} for marrying me.

This is incidentally a perfect proof and example how prejudices can be based on the most incongruous, superficial, illogical, in one word DUMB basis. They all knew well enough that we're both jewish refugees from Mitteleuropa. Most of them also knew that we were both born in Vienna and lived some 50Mls from each other all our lives till Hitler came. While Trude could buy me and sell me when it came to brains - or talent - I was no ignoramus myself, nor was I a bumpkin or a boor. Not once did I embarrass Trude in front of her English friends with a faux pas of any kind. Trude told me later that one of ^{the} things what impressed her about us in Szombat-hely how neat we always looked and how well brought up we were. This coming from Trude who was a fanatic on manners was a big compliment indeed. As they always saw me in the uniform of their own bloody army I was sharply turned out of course. So what was the reason for Trude being acceptable while I was the bloody alien bastard Trude should not have married? The reason and difference was that Trude spoke the King's English while I did not. Not able to speak correct English was in their eyes a sin which made me an outcast in their eyes and which they were unable or unwilling to forgive me.

If so called well educated and sophisticated people are basing their prejudices on nothing more then the inability of speaking their language fluently what can we expect from the yahoos, bumpkins and other Neanderthals?

MAY/30/1947/GUILDFORD, Sy.

After looking for a job since my demob a month ago and finding absolutely nothing including the lowest paid factory jobs, one of Trude's friends pulled some strings and got me a job as "garage hand" at COOMBS & SON here in Guildford. I was not exactly greeted with open arms, being an alien bastard, but I made up my mind to work hard and not give them a reason to fire me. Unfortunately it turned out where there is a will-there is a way. Needless to say I got the worst and dirtiest jobs, scrubbing down the engine blocks of American surplus Dodges with gasoline. I'd contract dermatitis up to my elbow and stunk of gasoline when I came home, making Trude with her oversensitive nose stagger. Wearing gloves was impossible as gasoline dissolves rubber. One day when at tea time ^{we} were sitting along the wall drinking our bloody ten o'clock tea, a sacred ritual in England as you know, the Foreman came by and told me full of sarcasm, looks like you are learning our customs fast, already keeping tea time! Some of the other guys laughed but the few who took a liking to me for working hard and doing the lousiest jobs otherwise they would have to do, were embarrassed looking sheepish.

When this bastard of a foreman realized that he wont be able to fire me for being lazy he took another tack, telling the guys not to give me anything to do, as I found out later from one of them. My first paycheck was £5/6/0. ^{wk ***} I dont know what that is worth in todays American money but it cant be much because we could barely make ends meet. Slowly I realized that nobody has anything to do for me, so I asked one of the guys who seemed to like ^{me} what

***According to info received From Ms. Janet Westin of SEAFIRST BANK
£1.00 in 1950=\$4.50 and in 1993 \$1.52

could I do? He was embarrassed and told me to try to scrub the floor with the longhanded broom and liquid soap. I was scrubbing the floor when this bastard foreman came along asking me if this is all I could find to do? (As if the swine wouldnt have well known it!) When I told him yes, he said: You are fired! Having been hired on May 22nd I was fired on August 10th.

We found out from the American Embassy that as our first Visa was lost due to our Affidavit having been expired because I couldnt get myself demobbed from their accursed army, we will have at least another year to wait untill we become again eligible if we can get a new affidavit.

I've just read ⁱⁿ the papers today that fifty German POW's were invited for lunch at the House of Commons. As there is no immediate danger that any of us refugees will likewise be honored in our lifetime, we decided that we will enquire at Trude's in laws who live in Ecuador since years what is the situation there and would it be a good idea for us to immigrate there?

Latest cheerful news in the papers reinforcing our decision to get out of here: Anti Jewish riots in Glasgow and Liverpool, windows of the synagogues and show windows of jewish shops smashed. Another KRISTALLNACHT already? Hitler must be laughing himself crazy in his grave. Graffity on the walls: JEWS ARE SIN! accompanied by swastikas. Le plus ça change le plus c'est la même?+ My foreman in the garage before I was fired: What England needs is a Führer! He would liquidate the jews and this country would be in six months the finest in the world!

Having been fired from COOMBS & SON, from October first I'm at the tender mercies of the DIRECTION OF LABOUR which means that I've to accept any and all jobs I'm physically able to do or no Unemployment Benefits.

I undertake a frantic jobsearch and after being turned down in nine different places from box factories to the American Embassy no less, I got a job as orderly at the Surrey County Council Hospital's JARVIS WARD on the 29th of August. It reminded me of one of those tear jerkers "we Hungarians" do so well, by the title Four Black Horses. This little boy keeps asking his Daddy for a black stallion - Hungarians were "hoss people" going back to Atilla remember? - Daddy dies and four black horses are pulling his hearse. Says the little boy to his Mom, this is not the kind of black horse I wanted Mommy. - what I wanted to say is that when I dreamed becoming a surgeon, hustling bedpans and piss bottles was not what I had in mind. Actually the job turned out not half bad. I worked hard, I was on time every morning, I was never sick or absent and was never in any kind of trouble whatsoever. The supervisor of Jarvis ward was Miss Bennett, a very nice and very pleasant lady about forty five I guess and the Chief Nurse, called Staff Nurse, Staff for short, was a very attractive, tall Canadian gal, Miss Diamond, with a wicked sense of humour and a crackerjack nurse. She was the only person who ever gave me a nickname. She started to call me Horace shortly after I was hired. I've no idea why and how did she settle on Horace. I looked him ^{up} and as I couldn't find anything but good said of the bloke I didn't mind.

Miss Bennett and The Staff ran a tight ship. Aseptic rules and safety rules were much stricter than what I saw here in America later when I was working as orderly on the floors first and later as operating room technician. To carry syringes and needles "naked" was strictly forbidden. . . . Needles were covered with an alcohol sponge and the syringe placed between two emesis (kidney) basins thus making it impossible to stab somebody with it as it happens here often. Ask the man who owned one. Fortunately this was in the pre-AIDS days and the patient didn't have hepatitis either. This above mentioned board certified dummy added insult to injury by holding her syringe as a fencing foil, with the syringe in the palm of her hand the needle sticking out between her index and middle finger!

My first paycheck was \$4/18/0 but I could eat at the dining room for free which was a big help. Everybody was very nice to me as I said, except one student nurse, who happened to be Jewish, and never missed a chance to give me a hard time. I kept my mouth shut until one day she overdid it. While I had my lunch break she stuck up in the workroom next to the ward four fully "garnished" bedpans and some half a dozen of piss bottles likewise, which was of course her job to empty and clean while I was on my lunch break. I knew this, as no other nurse, student or other ever pulled this stunt on me. I went

to see The Staff right away and told her the story. After checking the bedpants for "contents" she called this little shrew in her room from where she emerged with very red face - and disappeared never to be seen again. I asked the Staff what happened and she said, being Canadian, I fired the little bitch! It is much easier to find another student nurse than an orderly who is reliable and works hard. One day Miss Bennett came to me saying, Horace, Miss Diamond told me we've a young girl of fourteen to prep for surgery and our nurse's aid is sick. Miss Diamond said you wouldn't mind to shave her would you? It was obvious that it was The Staff who put Miss Diamond up to this because they had other nurse's aids on the floor too. So I said, if Miss Diamond said I wouldn't mind, HOW can I mind? So I get the shaving gear together and knock on the door of the patient who turned out to be a great looking blond who must have been closer to eighteen than fourteen. I came to shave you Miss for the surgery. You?! Yes. Giggle, giggle, well if you say so.... - I barely finished when The Staff ambushed me and asked with a wicked grin, how did it go Horace! I managed. I told Miss Bennett you WOULD Horace.

At Xmas morning The Staff stopped me right when I came in and said, as you know we're going to have a little Xmas party for the patients and we always have a jolly time here. So you know what we are going to do? We're going to change uniforms! You're going to wear my Staff uniform and I'm going to wear your slax and jacket. You're going to push my dressing cart with the presents and we're going to distribute the presents and serve the Xmas dinner

and have a lot of fun! I was just speechless, are you saying that I'm going to have to wear your SKIRT and blouse and cap? Yeah. Staff you cant do this to me, I'll never hear the end of it! Oh come on Horace it is just good clean fun, you wont chicken out on me are you? Well, needless to say I didnt. Luckily nobody made pictures otherwise they could have blackmailed me with it. And we did have a lot of fun. I was pushing The Staff's dressing cart with the presents and she kept pinching my ass! I thought I die laughing! I said, Staff I didnt pinch YOUR bottom! And you better not try either! Miss Bennett gave me a little calendar as Xmas present I still have because I used it to make entries for my Dairy in it. The Staff told me, Horace we kept a piece of Xmas pudding and a little sherry for you in the dressing room,, enjoy it. The Xmas pudding turned out to be almost a half pudding with almost a half bottle of sherry which I took home. We really had a great time.

As I mentioned we sent inquiries to Trude's sister Georgie and her husband Hans to Guayaquil about the situation there, and whether they would consider it a good move for us, knowing Trude's qualifications as graphic artist and having told them that I'm a Jacquard designer, which is a very specialized branch of textile design. Their answer was positive although they warned us that it is a very primitive country, which we knew anyway. What we wanted to know first and foremost whether there is a chance there for us to make a living as we certainly have no intention to sponge on them. They have been comfortably off, Hans being the exclusive representative for the SCHLAGE locks for doors etc. They were convinced that we wont have a problem to make a living. We told them

that we have no intention to stay in Ecuador longer than necessary to obtain our second visa to the USA which is supposed to take about a year ^{which} we dont want to spend in England.

This is the first time that I found out that there are not many undertakings fraught with more danger and resulting in bad feelings than to ask somebody's opinion about an important step for the future. But more about this in the chapter: The Ecuadorian fiasco.

So we got the show on the road, as we say it here in America.

The following entries in Miss Bennett's diary tells the story.

SEPTEMBER/25/1947/GUILDFORD,Sy.

Went to London to the Ecuadorian Consulate- for our visa.

DECEMBER/17/47/G'FORD

We were in London to book passage. Good possibility for passage early in New Year.

In London for transit visa to Colombia.

JANUARY/16/1948/G'FORD

Leaving GUILDFORD,Sy.England, for Waterloo Station @ 1420 hrs.

Leaving for Southhampton port 1730hrs. Arrive at dockside 2000hrs.

Board former hospital ship equipped with bunks only. Pull up anchor at 2130hrs.

And thus end the British Years. As my favourite DJ Ted Brown, used sign off in the good old times when I was still watching the boobtube: no cheers, no tears, I want to remember ^{you} just as you are!