



Flora Herz, 1946. Note the number on her forearm.

shovels, and forced to dig ditches for telephone cables. There were about 1,000 women. They began digging ditches in September 1944 and continued to dig until January 1945—into the middle of winter.

One bitterly cold day, they were called to stand in roll call. They got up, stood, and were told to start walking. When they were thirsty, they ate the snow that was on the side of the road.

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At one point in this march, they reached a farmhouse and were told to go inside. Both Flora and Edith were ill. Flora had eczema all over her body; Edith's feet were frozen, and she could not remove her shoes. Some of the women there told her to urinate on her feet because they had heard that urine had the ability to heal. At that point, nothing was too repulsive.

Exhausted and aching, they eventually collapsed and fell asleep.



Edith and Flora Herz, 1946.

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Flora and Edith Herz were awakened by voices—by cries of joy. The SS had gone. There were no more guards. The SS had herded them into the farmhouse and had left. Unbeknownst to the women, the Russian army had made steady headway into German territory and had liberated that region from the Germans. Flora and Edith were free.

It was January 1945.

For a few months after liberation, Flora and Edith struggled to survive. They were on their own in a strange land. Finally, by March, they made their way to Warsaw. From Warsaw, they went to Berlin. After living in Berlin as displaced persons for over six months, Edith and Flora were finally able to get on a transport back to Duisburg. It was November 1945.

In Duisburg, aside from survival, Flora and Edith had one major goal: to get in touch with Suse and see if she had survived the war.

Meanwhile, Suse was safely living in England.

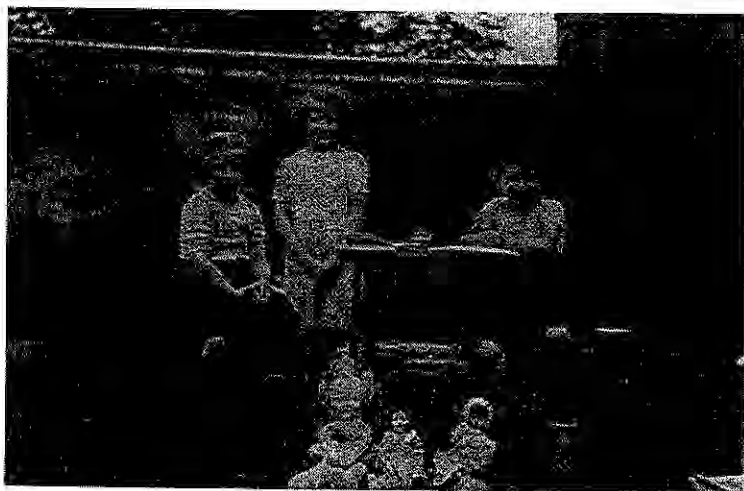
Arrival

Suse Herz arrived in England on July 26, 1939. When she disembarked from the boat, she was led to a huge room where she was told, in German, to get her luggage and wait for her name to be called. Children around her were crying so, following her mother's reminder to be a good and helpful girl, Suse told those children to sit on her own suitcase while she helped them find theirs.

Hours passed. Suse continued to wait. Finally, she, along with three others, were told that it was their turn.

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The four of them were met by two men, Mr. Laxon and Mr. Overton. All six of them boarded another train, which was bound for Kenilworth, a town near Coventry. On the train, Suse was the oldest, and she recalled, once again because she was supposed to behave, telling the younger children to settle down.



Suse Herz in the Laxon's garden, Kenilworth, 1939.



Once they arrived, they were all taken to the Laxons' house. Suse described that experience:

One of the gentlemen's name was Sydney Laxon, who was a member of the Christadelphian ecclesia in Coventry. Christadelphians are a sect of people, very fundamental, 'brothers in Christ.' It turns out that they established hostels for refugees, and they took us into their homes. Sydney Laxon was particularly benevolent. . . . He had a lovely estate in Kenilworth, and there was sort of the first glimmer that things were not going to be bad, that they were okay. He already had a refugee from Prague. She had been with him, a couple of months, spoke some English, translated for us, and said in essence, 'It's okay guys; you're now fine.'⁴³

The terror had been left behind in Germany. Now they were with friends. Now they were safe. Now they were with people who would treat them as their own family.

Suse and the three others stayed in Kenilworth for a few days and were then taken by Mr. Laxon to the respective Christadelphian homes that had agreed to house them. Suse was the first to be dropped off. Mr. Laxon drove to the house of George and Florrie Parry, a Christadelphian family in Coventry:

They were a young couple, about 28 years old; they had a little boy who was 13 months old. . . . They knew nothing about me. These people knew nothing about us. They volunteered to take us in. I was chosen purely by my name. Their little boy was named David; had [he] been a girl [he], would have been Susie. The other three were taken in by three other families. . . . The

Coventry ecclesia, or congregation, was about 100 families I think. Out of that 100, there were 6 of us that lived with Christadelphians in Coventry—a big percentage, when you think about it.⁴⁴

Apart from their beliefs, the Christadelphians had no connection with the Jews from Europe. But they volunteered to have them come to live with them because they believed in the promises made to Abraham.

Suse lived with the Parrys for the next five years. During that time, George and Florrie had another son, John, and a daughter—Suse.

The Christadelphians

As so many of these stories go, Suse became part of the family. One of Suse's daughters, Deborah Rosenstock, wrote about the time her mother spent with the Parrys: "My mother's stay with the Parrys was wonderful from what my mother shared with me. They took care of her, loved her like a daughter, provided the best they could and made her feel a part of the family."⁴⁵

As part of the family, Suse went to the meeting with George, Florrie, David, and eventually John. Nevertheless, this was not until the Parrys had received permission from Suse's parents to do so. As soon as Suse came to live with them, George and Florrie wrote a letter to Albert and Flora, letting them know where Suse was and asking how they felt about Suse attending Sunday school:

My foster father outlined to my father what would be taught to me as part of their religion—going through Sunday school, or going with them to their services. Of course my father demurred, you know, what was he

going to do? He wasn't going to agree; this wasn't anything Jewish.⁴⁶

Flora agreed, but Albert, being so religious, was not happy with the idea of his daughter attending a non-Jewish service. He raised objections, but the two families eventually decided that Suse would attend the meeting with the Parrys. Deborah Rosenstock explained why it was so important for her mother to attend:

They never attempted to change her religion, and Auntie Florrie even asked my grandparents in a letter if they would be ok if my mom attended Church with them so she could fit in and be family. . . .They treated her like family.⁴⁷

The Parrys all went to the meeting on Sundays. They did not want Suse to feel different or excluded. To this end, when Suse arrived in England, all of her clothes were German clothes—they were not the types of things that English schoolgirls wore. George and Florrie, though they were not people of great means, bought her English clothes so that she would fit in with all of the young girls around her.

But in a difficult balance, the Parrys wanted to make sure that Suse did not forget her heritage. She came with them to the Christadelphian functions, and she started to acclimate to English culture, but they always wanted her to remember that she was Jewish. Again, Deborah Rosenstock said:

They were concerned that she fit in . . . never trying to convert her in any way, but to maintain her Judaism. When they could get together with other Jewish children, they did get together with them. My Auntie Florrie was really quite remarkable.⁴⁸

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In fact, Suse explained further just how hard George and Florrie tried to keep her bonded with her heritage. George Parry sought out opportunities for her to connect with Judaism:

My foster father was the one who found out that the . . . liberal synagogue in London was doing correspondence courses in Jewish history and registered me for that. It had nothing to do with anybody else. They tried to get ahold of anybody . . . any Jewish people in Coventry—nobody came forward unfortunately. My foster parents had tried.⁴⁹

For the first few months of her stay with the Parrys, Suse was able to correspond with her parents. But when war broke out between Britain and Germany, on September 3, 1939, the letters stopped. Adding to that trauma, Suse was a German living in England:



A birthday party that the Parrys threw for Suse. Suse is the second from the right.

And that's also when the neighbors—and my foster parents had to deal with this—the neighbors came to them and said 'Get rid of what you've got there in your house, she's a Nazi and we don't want Nazis here.' And they had to explain that I was not a Nazi; they had rescued me from the Nazis. But of course when I heard all this, I retreated to the house and refused to go out until it was cleared up . . . it took a couple of weeks until they convinced me.⁵⁰

Not only did the Parrys open their house to a refugee—when they already had a small child!—but they also had to manage the stigma of having a German living with them. However, regardless of what people thought, Suse was family; even David and John's grandparents became "Gran" and "Gramps" to Suse.⁵¹

Around the time that the war began, the summer ended, and school started. Suse attended the local school and did quite well, although she remembered that she was much more serious than all of the other children. She had more to think about.

She picked up English easily, although words with multiple meanings were a bit tricky:

My first day in school, it was a new term, and the teacher is reviewing and asking about times tables. . . . I didn't know it was 'times tables' at the time; it was 'tables.' . . . after eight, I became completely perplexed and very upset . . . well to me a table was a table that you eat from, and I figured that a table could be extended eight times, two leaves from each end, but not to twelve.⁵²

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There were far more serious concerns, however, than mastering words with multiple meanings and times tables. Coventry was one of Germany's major bombing targets. Suse had to carry a gas mask to school and with her wherever she went. Some children were evacuated from their homes, and Suse was one of them. In November 1940, she was evacuated to the home of another Christadelphian couple in Cuddington, who became her second set of foster parents. They were older, and they had an older son, but they lived out in the country. Suse loved the country and from that point always hoped that she someday would have her own house in the countryside.

A few months after being evacuated, Suse returned to live with the Parrys. Life was difficult because it was wartime. Food was rationed:

We had severe rationing in England. Food was at a premium . . . there was very little of it; bread was a big mainstay. Other things were gone . . . there were no eggs, there was no fruit, except apples and pears in the summer time; vegetables in the winter were cabbage and carrots. . . . All the parks in England had no more flowers—they had vegetable beds.⁵³

Despite the hardships, the Parrys had a lovely house, and Suse was given her own bedroom. She helped take care of David and John, and one of her favorite activities was reading. *Anne of Green Gables* was one of her favorite books —because she could relate with Anne.

June 6, 1944, was D-Day, the day the Allies landed on the banks of Normandy. Suse became more anxious after this:

After June 6 . . . it became more poignant because of it reaching Europe. Now, what was going to happen? Was I going to see my parents again—was I going to

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The family portrait that was taken just before Suse left the Parry's house, 1944.

Alice was Flora's sister—the only one of Flora's three siblings who had escaped Europe before war had broken out. She had emigrated from Germany to New York.

Upon receiving this news, Suse was overjoyed. Her family was alive. But what did the telegram mean when it said “your mother”? What about her father?

The End of the War

At the end of 1944, Suse was contacted by a refugee committee at Bloomsbury House, a hotel in London that had become a central meeting place for refugee committees. She was told that she was going to be moved to a Jewish hostel.

She was not pleased about this; leaving the Parrys was not something that Suse wanted to do. The Parrys were also not pleased. Shortly before Suse left, they paid for a professional to

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*Top: The bank box that the Parrys kept when Suse left their home.
Bottom: The bottom of the bank box, etched with Suse's name and the date of her arrival.*



take a family photo—so that they could always remember their daughter. Deborah Rosenstock explained:

[A] family portrait was taken just before she left the Parry's. My mom was definitely considered a daughter as much as their biological sons. They loved her so much—which is why they went to take this formal photo before they had to say goodbye to her.⁵⁵

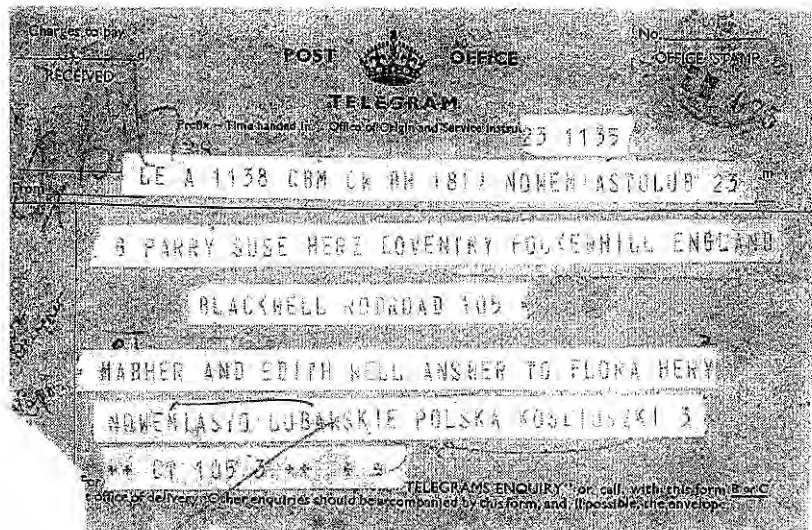
It was time to say goodbye to another set of parents.

When Suse was moved from the Parrys' house, the Parrys held onto two things that Suse had originally brought with her to England—a little bank box, etched on the bottom with the date of Suse's arrival, and the itemized list of what Suse had brought with her on her journey to England. These two items would help them remember the dear girl who had lived with them for so many years. For decades, until the day of her death, Florrie Parry kept the itemized list close to her, folded up in her purse.

Suse was moved to a Jewish hostel where she lived with a number of other refugees:

In November 1944, I was taken from my foster family and put into a Jewish hostel in Birmingham where there were 27 other Kindertransport kinder. We lived together; we had a house mother and father. I did finish school because you have to go to school until you're 14 in England. I did not sit for the secondary school exam because that costs money, and there wasn't any. And then I went to work for the social service department of Singer's Hill synagogue in Birmingham. It was a terrible experience. . . . The woman who was my boss was a mean person. The hostel . . . I was on my own. The hostel took some of

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The telegram that told Suse that her mother and her sister had survived.

the money that I made, and I kept very little. . . . I was supposed to take care of myself, but it was barely enough.⁵⁶

Suse did enjoy, however, appreciate being surrounded by other Jews. Though they all had diverse religious backgrounds, they celebrated the holidays together, and Suse began attending the synagogue again. She felt quite a camaraderie with a number of the young women who lived there—they were all in the same circumstances and all waiting for news about their families. When one of them received good news, everyone rejoiced together. When one of them received terrible news, everyone mourned together.

Then, Suse's day for news came:

By that time, lists were coming out of Europe of survivors and of those who did not survive. . . . Every day when we came home from work, we would pore

over these lists . . . one day it was my turn to rejoice. A telegram found me from Poland that my mother and my sister indeed had survived hell.⁵⁷

Suse wanted to respond to their telegram immediately, but she did not have the money to do so:

I went to the office of the hostel, the secretary, and she refused me money, which of course, needless to say, upset me terribly. But my foster father and mother followed up and telephoned me and said, 'Did you answer the telegram?' And I lied: 'Yes.' But my foster father saw through it, and they came running to Birmingham that Saturday afternoon. . . . They took me to the main post office to answer the telegram.⁵⁸

Though she had not lived with them for months, George and Florrie had not forgotten about their foster daughter. They knew that this telegram had been sent to her because it had originally arrived at their house: Edith had remembered the Parrys' address, through Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Stutthof, from that first letter that the Parrys wrote to Albert and Flora about Suse's whereabouts. The telegram arrived at George and Florrie's and was forwarded to the hostel in Birmingham. Because they knew about the telegram and its importance, they wanted to rejoice with Suse and make sure that she was able to respond.

Reconnecting with Family

With the Parrys' help, Suse was able to send a response to Flora and Edith. But it was too late. Her mother and her sister had already left Poland.

Eventually, Flora and Edith contacted Suse again with a letter from Berlin. The letter was from both Flora and Edith. In it,

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they sent their love to the Parrys—still not knowing that she no longer lived with them. Because of the debacle with the telegram, they still had not yet heard from her. The following is a translation from the German:

Berlin . . . October 45

My dear Suse-Child,

Most of all, I hope this letter reaches you in good health. After an absence of 3 years, Edith & I landed back in Germany. But with what disappointment. We cannot go to Duisburg and are waiting for an opportunity to go. Our health is good.

We anxiously await a sign of life from you, my dear, good child. We sent you a telegram . . . but did not receive a response. When and how will we get together? Do you have contact with dear Aunt Alice? We don't have her address.

How is the Parry family? We owe them a great debt of gratitude. Please give them our heartfelt regards.

Please, dear child, write as soon as possible, to this address and maybe to Duisburg.

My greatest wish is to be together with you again; that will be a joy. It is a great miracle that Edith and I are still alive after having been in the Auschwitz concentration camp. So write or telegraph right away.

You are greeted and kissed by your mommy.⁵⁹

Just below Flora's letter was a letter from Edith:

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My dear Suse,

You will certainly be very surprised to finally receive a sign of life from us. I hope you are doing well and that you are healthy. You have grown to be a big girl, and maybe we will barely recognize you . . . Please write to us right away about everything. We eagerly await news from you. It would be even more beautiful if we could all see each other again soon.

Many heartfelt regards and kisses

Yours, Edith

Special greetings to the Parry family!⁶⁰

Eventually, through the British Army, which was stationed in Duisburg, Suse was able to respond and then maintain contact with her mother and sister.

In 1946, before seeing her mother and her sister again, Suse was granted a visa to move to the United States to live with her Aunt Alice. Suse came to New York on May 14 of that year. Throughout all of those months, Aunt Alice spoke German to Suse, believing that Suse still somehow knew it, somewhere in the back of her mind. Each time, however, Suse could not understand, and she never spoke German back to her aunt. All of the conversations had to take place in English.

Nine months later, her mother and sister came to join her—permanently. The separation was over. After eight years apart, they were reunited on February 11, 1947, at the New York Harbor. Suse described the reunion:

It was an incredible moment. I jumped over a barrier on the pier . . . I have no idea how I did, and I ran down the pier to greet them . . . My sister and I are extremely close. My mother lived to see my grandson,

her great grandson before she died . . . She did what she could to save her family, and she deserves an awful lot of credit for that. It's not easy to send away a child. I've looked at each of my children as they've reached the age of eight. I have three . . . I looked at each one of them and wondered if I could have that strength to do what she did.⁶¹

Edith also described the thrill of that day:

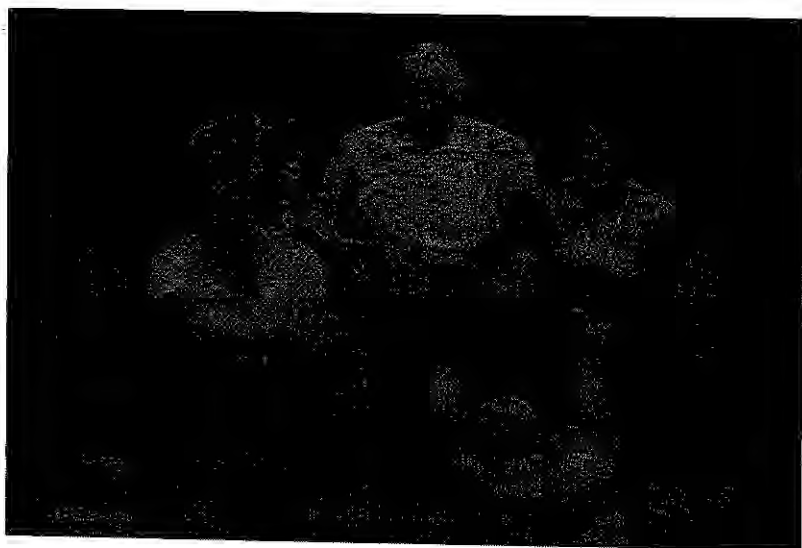
Naturally, a stack of paperwork had to be completed before they would allow the passengers to disembark. We were very anxious to see Suse and my aunt, who we assumed would be meeting us at the pier, but the minutes turned into hours. Impatiently, we stood on deck and looked at all the people waiting to greet the passengers, hoping to pick Suse out from the crowd . . . At one point, we noticed a ship steward getting ready to go ashore. My mother gave him her last dollar and a picture of Suse taken in 1946 after coming to America. She said, 'Maybe you'll see her and let me know.' And lo and behold, he came back aboard the ship and told us, 'I saw her in the luncheonette. I told her you are onboard waiting to disembark.' How lucky could one be? The miracles were continuing. All of a sudden, a booming voice on the ship's loudspeaker announced, 'There's a mother and a daughter who haven't seen each other in eight years.' My sister, now almost sixteen years old, but never an athlete, leaped over the barrier when she caught a glimpse of us. This was our sweet reunion.⁶²

When Suse was reunited with her sister and her mother, she immediately spoke with them—in German.

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*Top: Alan Rosenstock on a visit with the Parry family, 1970.
Bottom: Elaine and Deborah visiting with the Parrys on their way back from
Israel, 1973.*



Conclusion

After their reunion, Suse, Edith, and Flora lived in New York. There, Suse met Walter Rosenstock, whom she married in 1950. They were happily married, for over 50 years, until her death in 2002. They had three children: Elaine, Alan, and Deborah, and four grandchildren.

Suse Rosenstock never forgot her past. She also never considered herself a survivor, but eventually, decades after moving to the United States, she began to go to schools, churches, and synagogues telling her story. At a reunion of the Kindertransport refugees, Suse stood up and thanked the Christadelphians for "being so generous with us refugees."⁶³

For years, Suse stayed in contact with George and Florrie Parry. Suse's children grew up knowing them. Her kids called them "Uncle George" and "Auntie Florrie," and the Parrys were like grandparents to them. Every year, for every birthday, the Parrys sent a card, not just to Suse but to her children, too. John Parry, Suse's foster brother, described the contact that their families maintained:

In the early years after the war ended and when Suse was in the States we, from time to time, received what I can only describe as food parcels . . . The parcels were very welcome, not because we were in desperate need of food, we were well supplied, but more important, it showed the love and concern that Suse had for us.⁶⁴

Over the years, the Parrys and the Rosenstocks visited each other on a number of occasions. At one point, Suse actually flew George and Florrie out to New Jersey so that she could see them once again. Suse's eldest daughter, Elaine, visited the Parrys on her travels back from Israel, as did her youngest

daughter, Deborah, who also stayed with them and was able to sleep in the very bed in which her mother had slept. David and his wife visited Suse and her family twice—once when she was in New Jersey and once when she was in California. John and his wife also met up with Suse in the United States:

I . . . was able to go and meet with Suse. While there it happened to be the Bible class evening at the Echo Lake ecclesia and Suse thought we would like to go. She had previously found out the time and place and came with us to the Bible Class. The subject happened to be, 'The Passover.' After the brother had given his talk and at the end of the meeting, Suse asked whether she could say a few words. She narrated to the brothers and sisters there the experiences of her early life and how she came to know the Christadelphians in the UK and expressed her gratitude. She then went on to talk about the Passover, which as a practicing Jew I suspect she knew rather more than most of us!⁶⁵

When George and Florrie first welcomed Suse Herz to their family, they began a relationship that would stand the test of time. Suse would never forget their compassion and their kindness—their willingness to make her part of the family. Nor would the Parrys forget her.

Elaine believes it is a testament to the love and care her mother received from the Parrys that Suse was able to live her life with optimism in spite of all the hardships she endured as a child. Her generous spirit was evident in all she did for her family, friends, and community.⁶⁶

When Suse Rosenstock passed away, 400 people attended her funeral. She was certainly well-loved. Many remembered her as a "mother" who was always willing to help, and who gave

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whatever she had to offer. She never complained. Her life was the synagogue, and she devoted her time in service to others.

Such was the life saved when, on a day in 1939, a Christadelphian family in Coventry opened their home to a little eight-year-old girl, a girl who became their daughter for the next five years. Perhaps it could be said that it was in fact for the following 62 years, as she always thought of them as her foster parents, and they remembered her as one of their children.

¹ Brenda Lange, *The Stock Market Crash of 1929: The End of Prosperity* (New York: Chelsea House, 2007), 32.

² Thomas Hall and J. David Ferguson, *Great Depression: An International Disaster of Perverse Economic Policies* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 57.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Young Plan," *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, accessed April 22, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/event/Young-Plan>.

⁵ "Adolf Hitler Is Satisfied by German Troubles; Writes He has Never Been in Such High Spirits," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), July 31, 1931.

⁶ Roderick Stackelberg, *Hitler's Germany: Origins, Interpretations, Legacies* (London: Routledge, 1999), 82-83.

⁷ Caroline Fohlin, *Finance Capitalism and Germany's Rise to Industrial Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 295.

⁸ Thomas Hall and J. David Ferguson, *The Great Depression: An International Disaster of Perverse Economic Policies* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 95.

⁹ Marcus Nadler and Jules Bogen, *The Banking Crisis: The End of an Epoch* (New York: Dodd, Mead &, 1933), 66.

¹⁰ Youssef Cassis and Jacqueline Collier, *Capitals of Capital: The Rise and Fall of International Finance Centres 1780-2009* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 183.

¹¹ "Adolf Hitler Is Satisfied by German Troubles; Writes He has Never Been in Such High Spirits," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), July 31, 1931.