

# I Am Damned Well My Own

The memories of a first generation immigrant

1926 – 2005

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Translated from Danish aided by Dick Schmitt



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*Little cat, little cat, walking so alone,*

*Tell me, whose cat are you?*

*-I am damned well my own.*

*(Piet Hein)*

## **Introduction**

Looking back on a life full of experiences both good and bad, I began these memoirs in 2002 when I was 75 and finished them 4 years later.

I feel the happiness in my life results, perhaps, because as my old friend George Andrup said while very ill, "I have decided to be happy. "

My children and my wife Inga have long urged me to write my memoirs. After having gone through old letters and documents -- partly my own, and some left by my father and mother -- only now have I grasped enough of my past to dare tackle this job. Still, much has been forgotten or remembered only very weakly; much will perhaps get a little more adventurous glow than harsh reality warrants. My sister Ruth, who is 2 years younger than I, has in many ways helped me to remember events from our shared childhood as well as other information about our family.

I want to express my gratitude to my friend Dick Schmitt, who took the initiative to prepare this English version of my memoirs and who has assisted me in preparing it. While the original Danish version ends in 2005, the present English version is updated until 2014.

## My family



*From left: My father, Grandfather, Elieser, Marem*

My father, Wolf Somer, was born on 15 september, 1891 in Sadagora in Bukovina, which was then an Austrian province; after the First World War it became Romanian and after the Second World War and the dissolution of the Soviet Empire it now belongs to the Ukraine. My grandfather was Mendel Somer, a pharmacist in Sadagora. Sadagora is

almost a suburb of that area's main city, which during the Austrian period was called Chernowitz, under Romania Cernauti and today is called Chernovtsy. While I have met my grandfather, I have never met my grandmother. Her first name was Chaja Hinda and her maiden name was Königsberg. My grandfather, whom we called Opapa Mendel as children, died in 1933 and is buried in Chernowitz.



*From the left: My grandmother. Elieser, Marem and Wolf*

My father had two brothers. During my childhood, one of them called Marem also lived in Vienna. A lawyer, Marem was married to Isa and had two children Ruth Hilde and Arthur. We will hear more about them later. They died before this writing began.

I have never met my father's other brother, Elieser, who took over my grandfather's pharmacy. However, I have met his son Marcel (or Moshe) in Israel in 1961 where he was then a police officer, married to Lily and had two children,

Eli and Yossi. Later on they had one more son. Eli is now a professor in psychology at Haifa University and Yossi is one of Israel's leading film directors. He is married to the Norwegian ballet dancer Ingeborg and has two children, Danielle (born 1992) and Yuval (born 1999).



*Moshe's family: In the center: Moshe, to his left his wife Lily, further left: Eli. Top row left: Ingeborg, then Yossi. Bottom row right: Eli's wife Liora. The others are Moshe's third son, grandchildren and their spouses.*

I have tried to find about the origin of the Jewish population of Bukovina where my father was born. There seem to be three groups. The earliest arriving Jews came with the Romans around the beginning of our era, when the Romans conquered the area and named it the province of Dacia.

A second Jewish group descended from a Turkish tribe, the Khazars, who in the second century immigrated from the east. In the eighth century the rulers and then the people converted to Judaism. At this time Khazaria was a flourishing kingdom in close contact with Byzantium. Around year 1000 they were defeated by the princes of Kiev. Some of the Eastern European Jews are descended from them.

The name SOMER could indicate a Turkish background, since it is a relatively common Turkish family name meaning a "noble man" (som = noble, er = man). The German-British-Jewish writer



Arthur Koestler has written a book on the Khazars and their descendants called "The Thirteenth Tribe."

On the other hand, my mother often claimed that my family formerly was known as Sommer, but that one "m" was forgotten when my grandfather's birth was recorded in Austria where a double "m" was written as a single "m" with a stroke above which has been forgotten in his birth certificate. However, it is also possible that spelling was simply not so carefully respected in the past. There are examples from Bukovina that the same family name changed freely between Sommer, Somer, Zomer and the like. These families have often come from Galicia in the 18th and 19th century. They are known as Sudeten Jews.

The third group of Jews immigrated to the area during the Middle Ages from Germany, fleeing serious persecution of Jews. It is this group which has Yiddish as their language, since Yiddish is old German, mixed with words of Hebrew or Slavic origins. This group may have arrived directly or via Galicia (Poland) and are then identical to the second group just discussed. Their language is written with the Hebrew alphabet. The different spelling of their names may be due to the conversion of their names from Hebrew to Latin letters.

My father died on 27 August, 1952 in Tel Aviv, Israel.



My mother Hanna (Chana) Erteschik was born in Krakow on 5 October, 1895. Krakow was then in the Austrian province of Galicia, but became Polish after World War I. Her father's name was Joseph and her mother's Gusta or Gitel, née Turner. My mother never told me anything about her mother, only that her parents were divorced and that her mother died young.

My mother had a half sister Lola, who also was named Gusta after her mother, but had a different father. Lola lived in Vienna, where her husband was director of the Austrian Danube Steamship Company.

A few years ago I showed my Mother's birth certificate (a copy written when she was 18 years old) to Florek, our Polish friend.

He found out that my mother was born out of wedlock, and Gusta was a sales woman at markets. Ruth has told me she knew from our mother that she had grown up with her mother who farmed geese. It was perhaps those Gitel sold at the market. It appears from my mother's birth certificate that my grandfather, Joseph, had declared that he was the father of my mother. However, it is

unlikely that my religious grandfather had an adulterous affair. The likely fact seems to be that he was married to my grandmother according to Jewish custom, but that he never had the marriage confirmed by the Austrian authorities.

My grandfather Joseph was married four times. With his first wife Gitel, (née Landau) he had 3 children: Mario, born 1886, Arno born 1888, and Abraham, born 1893.

I have never had any contact with Abraham, the last mentioned. As far as I know he was graphologist. He was considered to be the family's black sheep



Mario was married to his secretary Trudi, (née Nathan.) They had three children: Miriam, Dan and Nomi. Miriam lives in Denmark and is married to Sally Vainer. They are both physicians. Dan has been married to Debra and had four children with her: David, Dorit, Doubby and Dean. He got divorced and also has children with his second wife, Lilian. Dan is a businessman. He has taken the surname Arbel. He has been affiliated to Mozad, the Israeli intelligence service and has been involved in a series of daring operations. He has been jailed in Norway for having helped to liquidate an Arab, who was thought to be one of the terrorists killing a

number of Israeli participants in the Munich Olympiad, but unfortunately it was a case of mistaken identity.

Nomi was married to Jay Birdsong Shir but they are now divorced. She has two daughters: Tamar and Dafna. She is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Beersheba.

Arno was married to Lola and had two children: Vera, now called Varda and Pauli, now called Joseph. They both live in the U.S.. Varda has been a dance educator and has, among other things, taught juvenile delinquents to give them a more positive attitude to life.

My grandfather's next child was my mother who, as mentioned before, with Gusta (née Turner) as her mother.

Grandfather's third wife was Rachel (née Fischer.) The children from this marriage were Monek, (born 1902), Lea (1905) and Sala (1907).

Joseph's fourth and last wife was Cecilia (née Lubasch). With her, he had three children: Paula, born in 1916 and died 1936, Schischo, (1918), and Benno, (1921). Cecilia and Shisho died in German

concentration camps. Their family lived in Wiesbaden, where I visited them as a boy. I remember playing with a kite on the street in front of the family house with Benno and Schischo.

The lineage of my grandfather Joseph can be traced far back in time. A distant relative, Naomi Shubin Greenberg, has written a book about this branch of the family genealogy.

It is typical of Jewish families that they keep records of their families far back in time. This is particularly true for the group called Cohanim (the name is often Cohen or Kohn). The Cohanims trace their ancestry back to the time of Moses, as the males of this family were the only ones who could become priests since they were the offspring of Moses's brother, the high priest Aaron. Both of my grandfathers were Cohanim.

Since the Jewish people were not held together by common land, they relied on family history to give them their common identity. My maternal grandfather could trace his lineage back to the Jewish sage Rashi who lived in Troyes and Worms (1040-1105). It was through my great-grandmother Redel Landau, who married a son of Alter Erteschik who descended in a direct line from Rashi. Rashi who, in turn, wrote in his works that he was of David's lineage. Thus we are, like our remote relative Jesus, of the House of David.

There are many in the family who have wondered what the name Erteschik means. One believes that it means the first-born (Erster becomes Erte ...). We are also related to the Horowitz family (e.g., the first Danish Ombudsman). This relationship also goes through Redel. One of the most famous Jewish synagogues in Prague -- the Pinkas Synagogue -- was established by a member of this family. All this and much more one can be found in Naomi Greenberg's book.

Let us now continue with the story of my parents.



As a child my father had polio, which resulted in one leg being somewhat shorter than the other, causing him to limp slightly all his life.

My father went to the German-language secondary school in Chernowitz and afterwards to Vienna to study medicine. After his studies, he became assistant to the neurologist Professor Julius Wagner-Jauregg, who in 1927 got the Nobel Prize for having developed fever therapy, ie. healing through artificially produced fever. Specifically, he found out that advanced syphilis could be alleviated through fever produced with malaria by vaccination.

Only after the discovery of Penicillin did antibiotic therapy replace fever therapy.

During the First World War my father was doctor at a hospital at the Austrian Eastern front in Galicia (southern Poland.)



*My father (left under the wall clock) at a military hospital during WW one.*

After specializing as neurologist, my father opened a clinic where patients could be treated primarily as outpatients for a variety of diseases. In 1924/5 he went to Denmark to study the treatment at Skodsborg Sanatorium where he met my mother who was a patient there.



I know only little about my mother's childhood and youth. According to my sister, Ruth, my mother grew up with her grandmother, who raised geese.

As a teenager, she contacted her older brothers Mario and Arno, who at that time lived in Vienna and became a kind of housekeeper for the two brothers. She was 18 years old when she moved with them in 1913 to Denmark, where the brothers started a textile production company named Scandinavian Hosiery A / S. They also opened a chain of women's clothing stores called DIVA.

Mother was still housekeeper for the two brothers and also helped in the shops, when she met my father while recovering at Skodsborg Sanatorium, presumably for a bile problem that bothered her her whole life. Their relationship developed despite the wishes of her brothers, Arno and Mario,



who did not want to lose their housekeeper through marriage. Consequently, there was never much love lost between my father and the two brothers. In spite of this, Mario loaned my father funds to help him establish the ambulatory clinic THERMIA, which was located in Vienna's most exclusive quarter, Franz Joseph Kai, a portion of the circular Ring surrounding the historic city center. (Franz Josefs Kai is located on the Danube Canal, a sidearm to the Danube.)



*Franz Josefs Kai  
no.1 (left) and  
Danube Canal.  
Around 1900.*

This would start of a pattern for me of living with a view of water all my life: First at Franz Josefs Kai No.1. Then, in Copenhagen in Vendersgade 33 overlooking the lakes, next in Sweden in Härryda, where we lived in a small house, directly by a river, and today here in Bagsvaerd by lake Nydam.

My parents were married on 17 November, 1925 in a Vienna synagogue with my mother's brother Mario and my father's brother Marem as official witnesses.



*Ruth and I in 1932*

My sister Ruth Malinowski, a weaver and tapestry maker, was born on 30 September, 1928. She has exhibited in many countries and received many awards for her work. Her husband was the late poet Ivan Malinowski and they have a daughter Nina Malinowski (born 1951), herself an author. Nina has 3 children Milan, Pejk and Marike.



## My Austrian childhood

I was born on 21 August 1926 at a maternity clinic at Allgemeines Krankenhaus, Pelikan Gasse 15, Vienna IX, and was circumcised some days later.

On 1 January 1926, my father had opened his clinic THERMIA, next to our apartment on Franz Josefs Kai 1. I lived there until we fled to Denmark in 1938. Our apartment was on the mezzanine in the corner building at Aspernplatz. We had the entire mezzanine, but just over half of it was my father's clinic. Farthest from the entrance was the children's room, where I and later Ruth lived with our nanny. Next came the kitchen, dining room, study, my parents bedroom, with a door to the bathroom and toilet. In addition to our nanny we also had a cook. I also went daily in the clinic where I was especially good friends with Karl, the stoker who took care of the hot mud baths, (one of my father's specialties.) Furthermore, I was very good friends with the nurse Selma, a large and good tempered woman, and with the secretary and cashier, whose name I no longer remember.

The ground floor of our building held a typical Viennese café, a place where one enjoyed the Einspänner (Coffee with whipped cream), the Gespritzter (white wine with appolinaris), possibly an Obstler (fruit brandy) and a piece of apple strudel or Sachertorte. There one could read the daily newspapers which were fixed to a rattan reading rack, and/or visit with friends. During summer one could sit outside the cafe in the shade of large chestnut trees. My father had his own table there with a telephone linking him directly with the clinic secretary, so that he could be summoned if necessary, or respond to a call. There he would spend a considerable part of his day. But he returned to our apartment for meals.

My early childhood memories are quite sketchy: I can remember I had a piece of furniture, which consisted of a combined chair and table, which could fold up into a high chair. What else happened in my very first years of life, I have heard from others.

We frequently visited Denmark, usually staying at Uncle Marios apartment at Vendersgade 33, the last house on Sørtorvet with two towers. Mario had an office on ground floor and lived on the second floor. Viewed from the street, it was the flat towards the lakes with two balconies. During summer visits we spent most of the time in Hornbæk, often with my mother's

best friend Leonie Rosenfeld Plaut, called Lonemor, and Lonemor's mother, whom we either called "Mamá" (with a long vowel at the end) or else "Grandma." Uncle Mario was similarly never called anything but "Uncle Grandpa," as he was several years older than my mother. During a visit to



Hornbæk as a 1-year-old, I learned my first words. I have been told that when I saw a ship at sea, I shouted "Fisch, Fisch" instead for "Schiff."



*My mother, I and Lonemor in Hornbæk, Denmark 1927*

Much ado was made of my birthdays. For my one year celebration, my cousin Arthur (Marem's son) and his sister Ruth Hilde wrote a birthday poem. Arthur was then a teenager. Ruth Hilde was some years older



than I. She was a child prodigy as a pianist and recorded her first gramophone record at age 7 (Chopin's Etude no.10, 4 in E flat major). Later before the war, she had countless tours around Europe, where she either played

*My grandfather, Arthur, I, and Ruth Hilde.*

solo or performed concerts with major orchestras. For my first birthday, my parents gave me a silver napkin ring designed by the goldsmith Griegst, father of the famous silversmith and designer Arje Griegst. It has an inscription: "Dem Vater zur Freude, der Mutter zum Glück, legt unser Liebling

heute, bereits ein Jahr zurück ".As previously mentioned, we always had a nanny. The first, I do not remember. My first vague recollection of a nanny was that of a tough young lady who would not accept my food idiosyncrasies. Since I could not stand green peas but loved scrambled eggs, she would serve peas and tell me that it was scrambled eggs from green hens, just as tomato sauce was scrambled eggs from red hens. When the nanny fed me scrambled eggs from the green hens, it upset my stomach and I threw up. Resolutely the nurse fed me my own vomit. When my mother noticed it, the nanny was promptly fired. I have more fond recollections of a nanny we called "Paukowitsch," a tough middle-aged lady who went to walk with me and my younger sister Ruth, who was two years younger and still in the pram. We walked in the Stadtpark, a five minutes walk from where we lived. I remember

those walks which often took us to a stone bench on the banks of the Wien, a river which wended through the park. We called her "Die Paukowitsch," as we had no pet name for this harsh lady. It



was much different with our next nanny -- Miss Stefanie Janik – whom we called “Fräuli” (i.e. the little miss) from day one. Fräuli was member of our family

*Fräuli with my daughter Lone and Ruth’s daughter Nina.*

for approximately 60 years until her death in on 16 August 1991 at almost 90 years of age. Presumably she started with us around 1930 when I was age 4. She was born in Olmütz in the present Czech Republic, which before WW one was in the Austrian province of Moravia, in the city now called Olomouc. Most likely from childhood she was bilingual in German and Czech (a Slavic language similar to Polish.) One of her first jobs as a nanny was in Poland where she spent a few years. Her mastery of Polish must have been good as she

and my mother spoke Polish whenever they spoke of something which they didn't want Ruth or me to know. Later she worked for the Karczag family, originally from Hungary but then living in Vienna. She cared for the two Karczag girls until they were teenagers. She visited them a few times with us. Fräuli had a sister Franzl Förlbacher, a widow who ran a cafe in one of Vienna's suburbs. When visiting there, I would help serve.



Often we would travel, mostly to Denmark. I remember from my boyhood ferry trips across the Storstrømmen, after arriving by train via Rostock-Gedser. While that trip would last only about fifteen minutes, one could go down to a small dining room where coffee was served from silver pots. I thought it was quite fancy.

*The Storstrømferry 1935*

In Copenhagen I spent some time in the Montessori Kindergarten, which gave me a chance to improve my Danish.

I also remember a trip to Prague, to good friends of my mother and her brothers, the Adler family. I had to sleep in a room with a giant polar bear skins and with a head with wide open jaws on the floor. I was scared of the monster and yelled and screamed until someone took the animal and threw it out the window, probably to a balcony outside.

Often in summer, we would go to Austrian resorts. The first such holiday that I recall was when we went to Semmering, where we stayed in a hotel when I was probably 4 years old. In the morning we breakfasted on rolls (Semmeln) smothered under thick layers of butter. One day I went to the table before the others came and began to lick the butter from the rolls. When my father came in and saw it, I got an incredible beating. My mother arrived and was afraid that my father would hurt me seriously.

I may have had other naughty inclinations, but my Dad was intractable. My parents agreed to send me to a child-care institution in a small town in Wienerwald called Hinterbrühl. I was most unhappy there. At one end of the house was a semi-circular stone basin with a lion's head that spewed water into a basin which contained some vegetation in the water. I climbed up on the basin and threw myself into the water, presumably to drown myself. Today I still remember that feeling of having my head under the surface while swallowing a lot of water. Fortunately, I was however found alive. My parents were called and I was returned to the their hotel at Semmering.

A year later, we rented some rooms in a guest-house in the upper part of Bad Gastein. Besides my mother, Ruth, and Fräuli, with us we had our cousin Vera, the daughter of uncle Arno and a year older than me. This would make Vera six, me five, and Ruth three. We three children shared a room. After being put to bed, we used to do some tricks. One evening we pulled off our pajamas and naked we started a "Tickle fight" by tickling each other. In all innocence, it must have seemed erotic to me, because I got an erection. Ruth and Vera had never seen such a thing. Ruth, who used to have a red bow in her hair, took the band, which Vera tied around my erect member. Then we continued the fight until the two girls urinated on the floor. Our wild screams summoned Fräuli who was deeply offended, probably more about my red bow than over the wet spot on the floor. We got a couple of smacks on our behind and were put to bed once again.

It must have been about this time that I was slightly injured. Ruth would bath her smaller dolls in a doll bathtub made of of tin including tin tubes legs, one of which had broken off. One morning as we dressed, I stood behind Ruth and used the tin tube to blow air on her neck. Ruth became irritated and threw her head back. The result was that the tin tube cut into my uvula. Yell and scream! I was promptly taken to a throat specialist, who lived a few houses from us. With a special tong he kept my mouth open so he could get to the uvula and cut it off. My missing uvula challenges me when I try to say something with rolling R's, which require a vibrating uvula. Throughout life, doctors examining my throat have wondered in astonishment why I did not have a uvula. Then I would tell them the story of the tin doll bathtub leg.

Once Fräuli took me to a military parade on a green square in front of Votivkirche. We came to stand close to a company of soldiers who suddenly began to fire a rifle salute. There was a

tremendous bang which resulted in a sharp pain in my ears. I think that my hardness-of-hearing stemmed from this incident. Even as a child, I would often say "What?" when someone said something to me, for just a few seconds after to show that I had understood what had been said. Frequently I would be criticized for this. I now realize that my hearing was so bad that I did not immediately understand what was being said; instead, my brain would require a fraction of a



*Votivkirche with the green square.*

second to process sounds which I had heard as fragments into understandable patterns. This slowed the immediate understanding of speech.

A year later we were on holiday in Carinthia in Pörschach am Wörthersee where we would go for long walks in the forests east of Pörschach. My mother was afraid of wolves, which, Fräuli would assure her, did not exist in those forests. Totally worn out when we returned home, we went to bed early. In the middle of the night my mother fell out of her bed while still sleeping. She tried to climb into bed in vain. She woke us up by shouting: "Help me, I can not climb higher. "



*A family picture from Pörschach  
From the left: I, my aunt Sala, Rita, my uncle Monek, my aunt Leah, Ruth, my Mother, Fräuli*



I started school at the age of six. The school was called Pädagogikum and was situated in Hegel Gasse, about 10 minutes walk from where we lived. It was a teachers college which had a primary school to give the future teachers practice. The class teacher was not an ordinary teacher but was probably equivalent to a college lecturer and , was called “professor.” In the beginning Fräuli took me to school and picked me up, but soon I would go there by myself.



*Pädagogikum*

In winter we would go skating in one of the two ice rinks near where we lived. The nearest was called Gartenbau, but mostly we went to the large track, which belonged to the Vienna skating club. I became quite adept at it.



*Eislauferverein  
The Vienna Skating Club*



My father had an additional job as a physician at Vienna's major soccer stadium which gave us free seats in the first row. I spent many Sundays with him there. I can not remember if I was particularly interested in the game; but I remember clearly that I was always happy to get hot dogs during the intermission.

*My father and I at the soccer stadium*

Vienna had a chain of food stores called Julius Meinl. Julius Meinl was Danish consul who after World War I, when there was famine in Austria, organized a large-scale transportation of Viennese children to Denmark where they then resided with families for a year while recovering. Here in Denmark these children were called Vienna Children. During their recovery, many learned to speak Danish. Even after their return to Vienna, Julius Meinl took good care of these children with many of them getting jobs in his stores. As a result, I often could speak Danish when shopping at Meinl. I was often asked to do some shopping for my mother. Occasionally, I would go there with a friend who would be very surprised that I could talk to the staff in a language he did not understand. I had also learned Danish during our many stays in Denmark.

At home we had a Danish Monopoly game which had yet to be introduced into Austria. We played it often with our friends, delighting in their buying land in Valby Langgade and on Raadhuspladsen. Gradually, they came to understand what was written on the chance cards.



As I've mentioned before, my mother had a half-sister who also lived in Vienna. Aunt Lola, as we called her, was married to the director of the Austrian Donau-dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft (Danube Steamship Company), one of the longest words found in Austrian.

Some of the ships made longer trips on the Danube, for example to Bratislava and to Budapest. But there were also smaller excursion ships that sailed up and down the Danube near Vienna. These

were often chartered for children entertainment trips with magicians, clowns etc.. We would get free rides on these trips. On one such trip appeared the world's tallest man. He was from Iceland and was probably about 2.5 meters tall. He could speak Danish and so we could talk together.

Besides Aunt Lola, we, of course, would often meet with other members of our extended family: Mother's half-sister Leah lived not far from us with her husband and their daughter Rita. Leah's husband, Julia Gruberg, had a small lingerie wholesale business at which he was not very successful. But Leah would help by sewing dresses for another company. Rita was a little younger than my sister Ruth, and we played often with her either at our place or theirs. They went to Israel after the Anschluss when Nazi Germany annexed Austria. Rita is still alive and married.

I have already mentioned Vera, the daughter of my mother's brother Arno. She was probably the one Ruth and I were closest to. She had a younger brother, Paul, who was a little too young to be a good playmate for Ruth or me. Arno's wife was called Lola, but in order to distinguish her from my mother's half sister Lola, she was called Great Lola, while the half sister was called Little Lola.

Then there was my father's brother Marem with his wife Isa and their children Ruth Hilde and Arthur. Ruth Hilde was busy with her piano training and was not really a playmate for us, even though she was only a year older than I. Arthur was several years older. He was very intelligent, had a lot of books and gave me some of them. He had psychological difficulties, which were not discussed openly. Aunt Isa was a little snobbish on account of her daughter, the wunderkind. I remember that when she hosted us, she usually served chicken which was always very tough. Before we went to them, I was admonished by Fräuli not to comment on the chicken before we had come down the street, since I had once complained about it before the door was closed behind us.

Every Wednesday, we had standing dinner guests for our hot meal at midday: Two of my father's fellow war doctors would dine with us. Their names were Dr. Balakan and Dr. Krämer. Both a bit shabby, Balakan was a squat, round man while Krämer was tall and strong. They used to amuse themselves with my father recalling memories from the first world war. An often repeated story was about the famine on the Austrian front. The soldiers then told stories about food so disgusting that it should give them loathing for food, so they did not feel hungry. One of the more moderate stories was about how Parisians during the German siege in 1870 would be forced to eat rats. Even at the finest restaurants rats were served, prepared according to all the French culinary rules. All this was told while we ate. Oddly enough, the gentlemen at the table did not feel loathing for food thereby. Only my mother did. No wonder she hated the Wednesday dinners.

Quite early in life, I became a boy scout. I liked the scouting life and was involved in many tours. It was a rule that scouts throughout the year must wear their uniform with short pants and stockings. When it was really cold in the winter, I would have trouble with such dress, but I would not stand to

be thought a sissy, and my Father made sure I went on these trips. But, oh, how I would shiver when I returned home.

## **Jewish holidays.**

The celebration of Jewish feasts is a part of my childhood. Our home was not a religious Jewish home, but we celebrated anyway all major Jewish holidays, just as most people in Denmark are celebrating Christmas, Easter and New Year.

On the Day of Atonement - **Yom Kippur** - in autumn, we fasted. We neither ate or drank from the night before until the next day evening. Mostly we went to the synagogue, where a very beautiful prayer - Kol Nidre is sung on this day.

**Pessach**, passover corresponding to Easter was also celebrated in a traditional manner. No ordinary bread or anything made of flour except Matzot. It is a flat unleavened bread something like cream crackers. Pessach is celebrated to commemorate the Jews departure from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. The Jews had such a hurry to get out of the country, that they had no time to let bread rise. The dough was slapped on some hot, solar-



heated stones and eaten. It is in memory of these breads that Matze is eaten.. Pessach lasts a week. The meal on the first evening is called Seder and it is rather cerimonious. After drinking a glass of red wine - the first of four during the evening, a number of smal dishes are served: A hard-boiled egg dipped in salt water to recall the tears the Jews shed during the Egyptian slavery. A mixture of grated apples and nuts (Charotzet) to remind of the mortar the Jews used when they were building pyramids, bitter herbs to remind of the Jews sufferings, chunks from a lams leg to commemorate the sacrificial lamb slaughtered by the Jews, when they were freed after God's ten punishments had come upon the Egyptians. On the table in front of the father are three Matze covered by a cloth. The small dishes are eaten with bits of this matze. A piece of matze is wrapped by the father and at a time when the children are not aware hidden somewhere in the room. It is called the Afikomen. After the end of the meal the children go searching for it. The one who finds the Afikomen gets a small gift.



At the table there is an empty chair. It is intended for the prophet Elijah, who might come as an unexpected guest. All the traditional ceremonies to be performed, prayers to be said and songs to be



sung are found in a book "Hagada", located in front of each seat at the table. The youngest son asks some questions in Hebrew to his Father: They begin: Manishtane halejla hase? Why is this night different from all other nights. These questions are answered by the father who tells about the Jews departure from Egypt. In the course of the meal a number of songs are sung. For Example: "Echad mi jodea ", which is a cumulative numbersong about Egypt's ten plagues and another cumulative song "Chad Gadjja" about a little lamb that will be eaten by a predating animal, which in turn is killed by someone, who in turn gets hurt, etc. This song demonstrates how the stronger always tries to kill the weaker until God corrects everything.

New Year - **Rosh Hashana** - is later in autumn. At this festival one eats a piece of an apple dipped in honey hoping that the new year will be a good and sweet year. We wish each other a Happy New Year in Hebrew "Shana Towa".



**Chanukah** is celebrated at Christmas time. It is a celebration of light. It lasts eight days. Each day one more candle is lit on a Chanukah candelabrum with eight arms (plus an extra small arm, which can be removed and which has a candle that is used to lit the others. This one called "the servant" - Shames. This festival is celebrated to commemorate the Jewish freedom fighters, who in the year 164 BC freed the country from the Syrians. The Jewish Temple had been desecrated by the Syrians and used as a Zeustemple. The temple was consecrated again and the eternally burning lamp should be lit, but there was only a tiny amount of oil for the lamp. But a miracle happened. The lamp would burn for eight days until

more oil could be found. This miracle we are reminded of by lighting the Chanukahcandles.

Chanukah gifts are distributed – probably copying the distribution of Christmas gifts. Later in the evening one plays a game with a small spinning top - a "Dreidel". It has four sides. On each side there is a Hebrew letter with the meanings "n" for no, "g" for all goodies, "h" for half and "s" for stacking. Each player gets to begin with a number of nuts or peanuts and also a number are placed on the table. Everybody lets the top spin in turn. Depending on the letter that is on top when the spinning top comes to rest, that person must pass for "n", receive the whole inventory from the table for "g", the half holding the "h" or stacking an agreed number of nuts from the players stock unto the table for "s".



**Purim** is a spring festival, celebrated similar to a carnival, where especially the children dress up. It is celebrated to commemorate an event about 475 BC, where the Jews at



that time were in captivity in Babylon. Israel had been conquered by the Persian king Xerxes, whom Jews call Ahasveros and who had married a Jewish girl Esther. She reveals to the King that his evil prime minister Haman wanted to kill all the Jews due to of a false accusation. At the last minute the Jews are saved.

There are also a number of other Jewish festivals, for example, **Sukkot** – the Feast of Booths where Jews are moving to huts of branches established in the garden or just on a balcony. It is celebrated in remembrance of the primitive cabins, Jews lived in during the departure from Egypt. We only celebrated this feast by not having to go to school.

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We now return to my every day life.

When I began in the 3rd grade at school, Ruth, who is two years younger than I, should also start school in Pädagogikum. According to the rules one had to be at least 6 years old before getting access. Ruth's birthday is on 30 September, and then the school already had started. She was only allowed to come to school after her birthday. She was shy and had difficulty getting in contact with the other children, who already knew each other. In the beginning I was asked to join her class, so that she should not feel so alone. The professor tried to get in touch with her and asked her if she could sing a song. Our songs originated mostly from our contact with nurses and other staff in the clinic, and it were just not common children's songs, we were taught.

Ruth's first song, sung in Viennese dialect, went as follows:

*Da drobn am Bergerl da steht a Krawat,  
der traut si' net runter,  
weil er d' Hosen voll hat.*

(Upon the hill a Croat stands,  
He dares not come down,  
because he has shit in his pants.)

The song caused joy among the other children. The Professor tried to calm them and asked Ruth if she not could other songs. Now Ruth was cheerful due to the success of her first song. So she sang:

*Mariandl hat a Woartzen am Knie,  
hat sie abibissen,  
hat in d' Hosen gschissen,  
aber kann net dafür.*

(Marian has a wart on her knee,  
gives it a bite,  
shits in her pants,  
but can not help it).

Now the professor did not want any more songs from Ruth.



*Liebknechthof, Vienna 1927*

In February 1934 there was a brief civil war in Austria. The last Austrian emperor Karl I abdicated when World War One ended with Austria as a loser. Austria became a republic with the Socialists in power. Vienna was also reigned by Socialists. In the post-war years a large municipal housing construction activity took place, mainly with workers' houses in large blocks. Several of these blocks were constructed so that they could be used as fortresses if the Social Democrats felt their power threatened, especially after Mussolini's fascists came to power in neighboring Italy. In 1933 the very right-wing Eberhard Dollfuss went into power. He dissolved the parliament and imposed a dictatorship.

In February 1934 the Social Democrats rebelled against this regime using the worker housing blocks as fortresses. The government used the army and national guard against the rebels. The workers blocks were bombarded with canons and after a few days the Socialists were defeated.

I remember these events. We were not allowed to leave the apartment for several days. We were not even allowed to stand close to the windows because we risked that there would be shot at us. We could peek behind the curtains, and noticed the chaotic appearance of groups of workers and soldiers marching along on the street. We heard a lot of shooting. My Aunt Lola, the wife of the ship director ship lived in one of the municipal blocks in Floritzdorf, the only district of Vienna, north of the Danube. Her apartment was partly destroyed during the fighting.

Dollfuss did not last long. In July 34 he was assassinated in a failed Nazi coup. He was followed by Schuschnigg as prime minister, or chancellor as it was called in Austria. He was rather weak and had constantly to give in to German demands. The Nazis acted more and more openly in Vienna.

Several of my schoolmates and even teachers paraded openly with Nazi emblems. An uncertain future awaited us.

In June 1934 my father went to Israel, or rather Palestine as it was called then. He wanted to examine the feasibility of establishing a medical practice there, as he had a premonition that the situation of Jews in Austria could become difficult. He had obtained an entry visa for the whole family. In any case, he had to go there himself to apply for a permission to open a medical practice. The British who ruled the country as mandate territory, intended to stop the influx of doctors from abroad by September 34, and therefore it was important that my Dad had all formalities in order before then. He had also an expectation that he would work as doctor at a sanitarium in Tiberias for 3 to 4 months of the year and made contact with a group that was about to invest in a large spa and sanitarium there. I do not know what my Dad got out of the trip. After few months he came back via Istanbul. I remember that he brought us Halva from there. It is a kind of marzipan made of ground sesame and sugar. I had never tasted it before, but have loved it ever since. He also brought us some Baklava, a middle eastern kind of very sweet millefeuille biscuits. He told me that they were baked with sheep fat, so I did not touch them. Since then I have learned to love them.

In 1936, at the end of fourth grade I finished at the Pädagogicum. In August I started at the secondary school Real Gymnasium 1 on Stubenbastei, only some minutes walk from where we lived. There I would have had to spend 8 years before getting the entrance exam to university. Matura, as it was called. Already in the first high school class (which thus corresponds to the 5th grade in Denmark), we had a foreign language - Latin. Other foreign languages, I did not get in school.

My parents had arranged for teachers who taught us at home in Hebrew and English, doubtless in the expectation that we might want to emigrate to Palestine. I do not know if it was my poor motivation or poor teachers, but I got nothing out of my Hebrew lessons. At the secondary school I took part in Jewish religion classes. There were three types of religion classes. One for the largest group the Catholics, one for the Jews and finally there was one for the small group of Protestants. Again, we learned some Hebrew just in order to be able to read from prayer books. This I learned with some difficulty but with the exception of a few words, I did not understand what I read.

## **Anschluss.**

On 12 March 1938 German troops marched into Austria, greeted welcome by large crowds. I will here give an account of the circumstances which led to the Anschluss (Annexation of Austria by Germany).

At the peace treatment of St. Germain-de-Pré (the palace, where I later came to stay one night) after World War I it was decided that Austria should be an independent republic, which should keep its

independence from Germany and other countries. Austria became a strange state. A head without a body. In the capital, Vienna, lived one third of the country's 6 million inhabitants. At the Austro-Hungarian double monarchy's dissolution Austria was cut off from the areas where the population used to obtain its food. The industry lost its raw material suppliers and its traditional markets. The new states, above all Czechoslovakia, surrounded themselves with high tariff walls to foster a new national industry, so Austria was unable to maintain adequate industrial exports.

As a closer connection to Germany (which many in Austria wanted) was banned by the Allies tried Austria in its distress to get a coin and customs union with Italy (1922), but this also was forbidden by the Allies. During the world economic crisis around 1930 Austria was trying to make an agreement with Germany on a customs union, so that the highly troubled Austrian industry should be able to sell its industrial products to Germany. Also this plan foundered on France's determined resistance. It was therefore no wonder that the reaction thrived in Austria. The country was already under a semi-fascist regime, when Hitler in 1938 with violence annexed Austria to Germany. The beginning of Germany's conquests.

This semi-fascist regime began with Dollfuss coup in 1933, but it was not nazistic, but closer to Mussolini's regime. The Austrian Nazis, supported by their German brothers, attempted a coup (Putsch) in July 34, Dollfuss was murdered. Mussolini intervened and said that he would come to the assistance of Austria, if Germany attempted to annex the country.

The following government under Schuschnigg prohibited the Austrian Nazi party. The day after the murder of Dollfuss Hitler appointed von Papen as Germany's ambassador to Austria. Von Papen had been chancellor of Germany in a short period in 1932 and helped Hitler to power in January 1933. Hitler, the new German chancellor, made him vice chancellor again for a shorter period. However, he was opposed to Hitler's brutal exercise of power and was even imprisoned for some days and two of his associates were murdered in June 1934.

In the letter of appointment Hitler asked von Papen to bring the relationship between the two countries back to normal and friendly relations. Never the less he quickly acted in seeking to strengthen the illegal Austrian Nazi party. Although Berlin in 1935 officially stated that it was its policy to avoid anything that might look as if Germany intervened in Austria's internal affairs, von Papen secured a monthly payment of 200,000 Mark to "the poor persecuted National Socialists in Austria."

His Nazi friendly policy led to an agreement dated 11 July 1936, which on the one side brought relations with Germany to a "normal and friendly condition", but which nevertheless had secret sections arranging for an amnesty for Austrian Nazis, cessation of censorship of Nazi magazines. It allowed resumption of the Nazis' political activities and worked for the appointment of ministers in

Schuschnigg's Cabinet, who were Nazis. The Party Vaterländische Front was still the only legal party in Austria, but von Papen tried to get Nazis into significant positions in the party.

He pressed Schuschnigg to a conference with Hitler at Berchtesgaden on 12 February 1938. Here, Hitler threatened to invade Austria. Schuschnigg agreed to appoint the Nazi Seyss-Inquart as Interior Minister with responsibility amongst others for the police.

On 9 March Schuschnigg decided that there should be a referendum about Austria's independence. It was to take place on 13 March. On 11 March Hitler sent an ultimatum to Schuschnigg to cancel the referendum. Goering came with a series of threatening claims to the Austrian government. In particular, Schuschnigg should resign as chancellor, and leave this post to Seyss-Inquart.

Schuschnigg agreed, and President Miklas, who first refused to approve Schuschnigg's resignation, gave up and appointed Seyss-Inquart.

In the mean time Hitler had given final orders to German troops to march into Austria in the early morning of 12 March. He instructed Seyss-Inquart to use formations of Austrian Nazis to take hold of President Miklas and to take over full control of the Austrian Government.

While the German troops began their march, Goering telephoned the German Embassy in Vienna and dictated a telegram which Seyss-Inquart should send to Hitler to justify the military action that had already begun. In this telegram Seyss-Inquart should ask Germany to intervene by sending troops to prevent the violent unrest in Austria. Keppler, the German embassy official, who received the call, answered: "Well, there is no unrest." Goering was angry and asked Keppler to show the telegram to Seyss-Inquart. He did not even have to send it, but just respond "accepted".

Seyss-Inquart never sent the telegram. He telegraphed not even "Accepted".

Actually, it seems that Seyss-Inquart, after having been appointed chancellor at about 10 am called Keppler and urged him to call Hitler and convey to him a protest against the invasion. Goering was furious. "It would disturb the Führer's rest. The Führer wants to come to Austria the next day ". At 11.15 am a German official in the Propaganda Ministry called the German Embassy in Vienna, where Keppler said to him: "Tell Göring that Seyss-Inquart agrees". The German troops marched into Austria and met no resistance. The German press announced that Seyss-Inquart had been appointed to succeed Schuschnigg, and the telegram which Goering had suggested, was quoted to show that Seyss-Inquart had requested the German invasion in order to prevent unrest





*German troops enter Vienna cheered by the crowd.*

The next day, on 13 March Seyss-Inquart issued an act which established Austria's reunion with Germany. He demanded that President Miklas should sign the law. Miklas refused and resigned.

He was succeeded by Seyss-Inquart, who signed the law on behalf of Austria.

The law was issued the same day as it also was introduced in Germany by a Cabinet decree signed by Hitler, Goering and others. Hitler himself went to Austria and gave a speech in Linz, which he regarded as his hometown. On this occasion he read the law.

Seyss-Inquart later on became Germany's governor in the Netherlands, where he was responsible for the extermination of the Dutch Jews. He was sentenced to death by war crime tribunal at Nuremberg and hanged. Von Papen was acquitted in Nuremberg.

*The source for the above description of the Anschluss is mainly: Talks from the Tribunal at Nuremberg cited in "The Avalon Project of the Yale Law School, Judgement: The Invasion of Austria. [www.yale.edu / lawweb / avalon / imt / proc / judaus.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/proc/judaus.htm)*

### **In Austria after the Anschluss.**



Immediately after the Anschluss the Jews got it in the neck. Jewish shops had windows smashed by stones. "Jude" was written on Jewish stores. Often the Nazis forced the owner or his children to write it. It was mainly the brown-clad SA-milizia who led the way. However, ordinary citizens stood and looked on and laughed. All Jewish men and boys were awarded the first name "Israel", whatever they were called in

advance. Girls and women were given the first name "Sarah". A Jewish star had to be sewn on clothes belonging to Jews.

I had to leave school because the Nazi would not have Jewish children to come together with non-Jews. A short while we went to a pure Jewish school, but soon our parents took Ruth and me out of

school. Instead we got a private tutor. It was a young Jewish student Hans Kant, who studied with us and in the afternoon took a walk with us.

Near where we lived, there was a small park close to the Danube Canal. It was below street level close to the water surface. To get to the park one had to walk down a long ramp.

One day, while Ruth, Hans and I sat on a bench in the park, arrived a bunch of SA-people and shouted to us that Jews were not allowed to sit on the benches and soil them. Now we should be taught a lesson, so that we remembered it. In

total there were four male Jews in the park. We were lined up in a row, while many stood and stared at us. The four were: Hans, I, a disabled veteran from world war one and a convalescent after a recently completed hernia surgery. SA men who were equipped with whips, forced us to do 100 deep knee bends. The invalid and the convalescent broke down after a few bends. Hans managed 100 bends. I maybe 50.



*At theBottom:The park where I was mistreated by the SA.  
The ramp is far left.*

Then we all four had to jump like frogs up the ramp and exit the park. Only Hans and I made it. I however, almost crawling on all fours. Ruth was crying. All other spectators laughed.

Also at home there were big changes. My parents were divorced. I knew nearly nothing about what was happening. Only that my Father did not sleep at home any more, and that my Mother often wept bitterly. During the day we saw our father in the clinic. It had actually started before the Anschluss. Much later, after we had come to Denmark my Mother and Fräuli told us that my Father had been unfaithful to my mother.

It was probably due to my parents' divorce that Ruth and I that summer were sent alone on summer vacation. As Jews, we could not get to the normal summer resorts, but Fräuli had some remote family, "Ria-Tant" and her husband. They had a smallholding with orchard in Amstetten, a village near Skt.Pölten not far from Vienna. We lived there, almost hidden. The neighbors should not know that Ria-Tant had jewish children as guests. I remember that I helped to make apple juice in a huge fruit press.

It also became evident that my father could not keep his clinic. Institutions of this kind had to be "aryanized", ie. taken over by non-Jews whom the Nazis called "Aryans". After my fathers dead I

found in my Father's papers a description of how it happened. It is written 2 August 1945.

I quote: *"On 9 September 1938 a commissioner was appointed to be in charge of the "aryanization" of the clinic. On 13 September, he introduced me to a colleague who should take over the clinic. A Nazi valuer put the clinic's value to 60,000 Reichsmark. The colleague should, however, take over the clinic for only 20,000 Reichsmark, to be repayable in 5000 Reichsmark annually. The money should be deposited in a blocked account. I could not agree to this, because this money would not be available for me if I emigrated. On 23 September 3 o'clock in the morning I was taken to the Gestapo, where I was accused of opposing the "aryanization". Therefore, I had to leave the country within 24 hours, otherwise I would be taken into a concentration camp. As I had a permission to emigrate and a visa to Palestine, I left Austria on 24 September and emigrated to Palestine. What since happened to the clinic I do not know. However, I have heard rumors that it was liquidated in June or July 1939. I traveled to Palestine with nothing except the clothes I had put on".*

It should be added, that the clinic, of course, had a far greater value than what the valuer had decided. The whole process was of course pure fraud.

I did not see my father's departure, as Mother, Ruth, I, and Fräuli went to Denmark in the beginning of September 1938. I remember our last day in Vienna. Mother and Fräuli were busy packing. Our furniture and our utensils were packed in crates and taken over by a freight forwarder. Some of the furniture had already been converted so that it would better suit the conditions, we could expect in Denmark. For Example, my parents' double bed was converted into two beds with individual mattresses covered with upholstery fabric.

The journey was by train via Prague and Berlin. At the border of Czechoslovakia, there was a customs officer who carefully searched all our luggage. He was very happy for my stamp collection, saying only that he would confiscate it. My Mother could not manage to protest. In Berlin, we stayed one night at a hotel before we went to Denmark.

## **In Denmark from 1938-43**

Uncle Mario picked us up with his car at the central train station and drove us to his giant villa on Strandvej 845 Springforbi, North of Copenhagen. Along the way, we were admonished not to call

him “Uncle Grandpa” any more.. Mario had some years before married one of his secretaries Trudi (née Nathan). She was much younger than Mario, German and very beautiful. She would not appreciate that her husband was called grandpa. They had at that time two children, the oldest Miriam was 3 years old and the youngest Dan, 1 year. In the house there worked a cook, maid and nanny.



*At Springforbi. From the left: I, my Mother, Fräuli, Aunt Trudi*

The house had 3 residential floors and basement. We were put up on the top floor, where also the service staff lived. On the floor below were the children's room, bathroom and parents' bedroom. On the ground floor was a dining room, living room and kitchen. There was a huge garden and a large greenhouse with grapes. The house was just minutes from Springforbi station and from the entrance to the Royal Deergarden.

Rather soon there developed a certain distance between my mother and Fräuli on one side and aunt Trudi on the other. Fräuli was critical of the nanny and my Mother of the cook, and Trudi was generally dissatisfied with having the house full of us four.

Mario also had an apartment on the second floor of Vendersgade 33 in Copenhagen in one of the houses with two towers (*see picture page 8*). Here he had lived before he moved to Springforbi and here he also had his main office on the ground floor. Several of the rooms of the apartment rooms were tenanted, but some of the tenants were give notice to quit and then we could move in there. We had in the beginning 3 rooms - a living room, my Mother's room and a bed room for Fräuli, Ruth and me. There was an old-fashioned bathroom with gas-fired water heater and a large kitchen. 3 rooms still had tenants - 2 larger rooms for 2 middle-aged gentlemen, Warming and Rudsø and a room behind the kitchen to a young lady. We agreed well with our tenants who could use the bathroom but not the kitchen where mainly my Mother ruled.

We had not been long in this country before Mother was told that we could not get residence permit in Denmark. This despite the fact that my Mother previously had lived in Denmark for many years and in spite of the fact that Uncle Mario would take economically care of us, so we would not burden society. To send us back to Austria/Germany would be certain death for us, and it became unfortunately the fate of others. With Marios economic assistance, he found a Dane who was willing to marry my Mother pro forma, and thus was Mother married by the mayor in Taarbæk on

22 december 1938. My Mothers formal name became Hanna Ram-Pedersen. After the war, mother separated from her "husband", Axel Louis Ram-Pedersen, whom I have never met.

Shortly after we moved into Vendersgade, I was put in the German Skt.Petri school because my Danish was not good enough to get me immediately into a Danish School. I went to the second grade of the seconday school, which corresponds to the seventh school year. It was awful. Most of the children and also several of the teachers were Nazis. Therefore, I was terribly bullied. There was only one boy who was really nice to me. It was the son of the German vicar. His name was Gerlach. He invited me often to his fathers rectory at the Skt.Petri Church. The whole thing lasted only briefly, because after just a few months I could Danish enough to get into a Danish municipal school.

It was Helligkors (Holy Cross) School in Nørrebro. My school mates were mostly working class children who themselves had to earn money while they went to school. Most of them were delivery boys working from early in the morning. When they came to school, they fell asleep. I remember that one of the boys worked for a merchant who was supplier to the Royal court. He boasted much of his errands at Amalienborg Palace, where he was to deliver the goods. He claimed that the toilets had red



velvet on the seats. He had noticed that when he was told to distribute toilet tissue rolls. I have never had occasion to determine whether it was true, but he was a boaster, so it was probably not. In the schoolyard stood that many carrier bikes. Many of the children came directly to the school from their delivery jobs. We were divided into boys and girl classes, and there was no dealings between the sexes.

I did quite well in school. Actually, after a year I was number one in Danish, although I still had a certain accent. Only on rare occasions I got in trouble when I had to read a Danish text. One day I had to read P.A.Heibergs satire of nobility. It's called "The von and the van". These are terms occuring in second names of nobility, but they made no sense to me. I had learned that a "v" in Danish is pronounced softly like a "w". I therefore pronounced the title as "the won and the wan".

The whole class including the teacher laughed and for a long time my nickname was "the won and the wan".

Most of the teachers were very nice, although the cane was used as an educational instrument. I never received a caning except in the gymnastics lessons. I was a clown at the gym. Our teacher was an old Staff Sergeant who used military methods in his teaching. If one did not get fast enough over

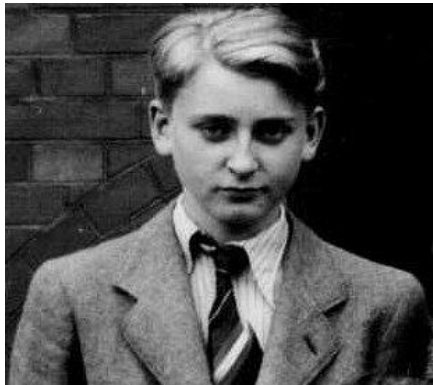
the buck, he would get a flick on his behind with the cane. It happened quite often for me. In the summer we went to school for swimming at Langebro's swimming pool in Copenhagen harbor. There I could make myself respected by the gymnastics teacher, because I was really good at swimming and soon had taken all the swim tests, including the Great Lifeguard Test. In the beginning I was afraid to jump into the water head on, but the teacher taught this to me very quickly using his cane. A sharp rap in the butt, and then I was on head into the basin.

I was very interested in science subjects and shared this interest with several of my classmates. We formed a "Scientific study club" where we gave lectures to each other once a week. We should have a club room, and for this use I was allowed to furnish a lumber room in the attic in the house where we lived. On this floor there was also access to the towers on the house which were used as an apartment for Airforce Lieutenant Knud Clausen-Kaas, a rather weird person and formerly a great adventurer who had flown around the world and made his way by lecturing and writing about his adventures. He was interested in and often came to hear what we were doing.

Club members were besides myself, Johannes Mørk Pedersen, John Kaufmann, Mogens Røjebæk and Hans Jennert. The pictures below are from 1940.



*Johannes Mørk Pedersen*



*John Kaufmann*



*Erik Somer*

Johannes also went to high school with me. He then studied psychology, and has been an associate professor at the University of Copenhagen. I still have contact with him.



John did not go to high school. I have met him a few times. He seemed to be bit dotty with a fanatic belief in UFO's. He died in 2003. I was present at his funeral.

Mogens Røjbæk became architect, and is wellknown for the churches he has designed.

Hans Jennert I have met after the war. One day I noticed his name on a greengrocers shop. I went in and we recognized eachother immediately. The shop is not so far from where I live. I have shopped there a few times, but she shop does not exist anymore.

### **Bar Mitzwah.**

In 1939 I was 13 years. According to Jewish custom a boy at this age has to undergo the religious initiation ceremony called Bar Mitzwah. It corresponds somewhat to the Christian confirmation. The Hebrew term Bar Mitzwah means "Son of duty or of commandment". Being Bar Mitwah means that one from then on is accepted as adult in the synagogue. One can, inter alia, get the task to read in public from the Torah - the five books of Moses. This takes place in the morning worship on the Sabbath, where the Torah is read in an annual cycle. The essential action for the Bar Mitzwah is that that the boy performs that days reading from the Torah in the synagogue. The ceremony takes place on of the first Sabath after the boys 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. In my case it was on Saturday, 2 September 1939.

The five books of Moses are found in a number of Torah scrolls in a sacred cabinet in the front end of the synagogue. It is a highlight of the service when the scroll with today's text is taken from the cabinet. The text is handwritten on parchment, which is rolled up on two sticks. By turning the sticks one finds the text of that day. The Torah scrolls are placed vertically in the cabinet. Each scroll is wrapped in a beautiful



embroidered velvet sheath and fitted with a silver badge stating the content. On top of the sticks there are silver caps, fitted with small bells or other ornaments. The Rabbi or an appointed man of the congregation takes the Torah scroll from the cabinet and carries it to the lecture desk which stands in the middle of the synagogue. He removes the velvet sheath and opens the scroll so that to-days text appears. Then the member of the congregation who is going to read is coming up to the desk. He begins with a prayer blessing the Torah and reads the text with a chanting, singing voice. The readers shoulder is covered with a prayer shawl in white silk with a black border.



*The synagogue in Copenhagen. In the far end the cabinet for the Torah scrolls. In the center: the reading desk. Women have to sit on the balcony.*

A couple of months before my Bar Mitzvah I went to the synagogue to prepare for the reading.. My teacher was Mr. Margolinsky. He was an assistant rabbi and had in particular the task to repair the text in the often very old parchment scrolls where the text might have been worn. This was done with a quill pen and special ink. I had some knowledge of Hebrew script and could read a text slowly without understanding it. In the texts that I was used to words appeared with both consonants and vowels. Vowels in Hebrew are shown as dots or small characters below the consonants. The Torah is written only with consonants. Therefore, one has to know the language in order to figure out which vowels each word has. Thus, I was not able to read the text. I had almost to learn it by heart, but had some help from the consonants. Moreover, I had to learn to read the text with the proper accompanying melody. Finally, of course, I had to understand today's text. Gradually, I learned the text and would then practise in reading it.

. While I was reading, Margolinsky worked at another table with his repairs on other scrolls. However, his attention was firm. He told me immediately if I made a mistake in text or melody. The text was written with very little space between the lines and with very close and rather small letters. In order not to get lost in the text one had a pointer of silver, which ended with a small hand with an extending index finger.



In good time before my Bar Mitzva I could do it all, but I was somewhat afraid of standing in front of the whole congregation with the rabbi at my side and chanting the text..

After the service there should be a celebration at home in Vendersgade. The family from near and far was invited.

The day of my Bar Mitzwah, 2 september, did have a very chaotic progress.. The day before War II began when Germany marched into Poland. The day after England and France declared war against Germany. Also in Denmark there was considerable nervousness. Heavy restrictions were imposed on foreigners wanting to enter into Denmark. My uncle Monek came from Belgium in late August. He had only received a visa for a few days. But on 1 september he was told immediately to leave the country. He had to leave before my Bar Mitzwa. My Mother and uncle Mario, who were in charge of the event, were busy to go to authorities to ensure that as many as possible of those who had come from outside, could be allowed to stay. Everyone's thoughts were elsewhere than at my

Bar Mitzwah.



The whole family escorted me to the synagogue on the morning of 2 September. I had for the first time in my life long pants. (So far I had only used short pants or plus fours) I had a soft felt hat on my head and in my hand I held a velvet bag with my prayer shawl. In the synagogue, I was placed on the front bench, where otherwise only fine dignitaries had their seats.

After the rabbi had taken the Torah scroll from the cabinet and spread it on the reading desk, I was called up. During my reading, he stood beside me and pointed at the text with the pointer. He was also ready to prompt me, but it all went flawlessly.

*A boy(not me) reading the text*

I do not remember anything from the party afterwards, probably because everything was so chaotic. All were very worried. They could not help thinking of our family in Poland, which was now exposed to the ravages of the Germans. They all perished in gas chambers.

## **Denmark occupied by Germany.**

On 9 April 1940 in the morning I was awakened by air defense sirens and a fantastic noise of low flying airplanes throwing out not bombs but leaflets. These leaflets told in a very broken Danish that Germany fraternally occupied Denmark in order to avoid a British invasion. There had been unrest in the days before about German troop movements, but anyway, we were taken by surprise by the German occupation of the country. After a very short resistance at the Danish-German border Denmark gave up.

To begin with, it was quite peaceful during the occupation. The population followed by and large the kings and governments advise to remain calm. Apart from the many German soldiers in the

streets, one did not notice any major superficial change. Some foods were rationed and soon substitutes for coffee and other ingredients in short supply began to pop up.

My mother thought I needed more exercise and change of air. She arranged for me a summer job on a farm near Hillerød named Sandager . It does not exist more. Today, Hillerød Hospital is situated on the fields where I went day after day along miles of rows of beets and weeded at a price of 49 øre per 100 yards. It was not an enjoyable summer.

In April 1941 I graduated from Helligkors School. I was one of the best in the class. I was accepted at the Metropolitan HighSchool in the math- science line where teaching should begin in august.

Between April and the summer vacation I had to go to a different school more or less as a guest student. I took lessons quite easy, because I should not pass any exam there. My major interest at that time was zoology. I used much of my free time to go out in the neighborhood to find salamanders, small fish, tadpoles and water insects, which I had in aquariums at home.

A then very popular zoologist, Hans Hvass, wrote an article in a Danish Newspaper about Danish grass snakes (*natrix natrix*). He wrote that these snakes rarely were more than 1.2 meter long. If they were longer, they would probably be Aesculapian snakes (*cluber longissimus*), but that would be a sensation because they was considered to be extinct in Denmark. The newspaper offered a competition about who could find Denmark's longest grass snake. I wanted to win this competition because i I had seen a very large grass snake near som ponds in the Royal Deergarden. Armed with a card board shoebox on the luggage rack of my bicycle and a tape measure I went on the hunt. And in fact I found the snake. I lifted it up by its tail and measured it. It was 1.27 meter long. It came down into the shoebox and I then went home. The next day I took the snake with me to school to show it to my biology teacher, with whom I had discussed the competition. The shoebox was tied with a string and put down under my desk.

I was so careless that I told one of my school mates about having a snake in the shoebox. He could not help but tell the others, and during a break slipped some of them up in the classroom to look at the snake. None of them were accustomed to deal with such an animal. When they had loosened the string and lifted the lid the snake went out of the box wriggling around between the desks. Terrified jumped all up on their chairs. In the same moment the bell rang to call us up from the school yard to the next lesson, where we should have maths with our dreaded teacher Mr. Lorentzen. When I came up in class, there was wild turmoil. I immediately realized what had happened and went on to catch the snake. With a



shoebox in one hand I caught the snake by the tail and lifted it up. The snake had in the mean time become quite mad about all the fuss. It was waving wildly with the body, so I could not get it fixed into the shoebox. I stood close to the teacher's desk. I managed to get the snake to roll up on the desk. Quickly I put the shoebox upside down over it. In the same moment somebody shouted: "Lorentzen is coming." I just managed to get the lid placed on top of the inverted box and run back to my place. Lorentzen came into the class where everybody yelled. Lorentzen was furious. He walked up to his desk, discovered the shoebox and was immediately aware that it was causing the commotion. He could not see that there was no bottom in the box and would take it up. All cried out: "Leave it. There is a snake in the box ". He then asked to whom the box belonged. After a short hesitation I lifted my arm. "Take the Box" he screamed. I went up to the desk with cheers from the class. I was a little puzzled there, because I could not just lift the box. "Hurry on" shouted Lorentzen. I grasped the thin class register which was on the table and carefully pushed it under the box. I could then turn the box and carefully slid the lid over it. I was immediately told to go home with the snake and to stay at home until further notice. I sneaked off with the snake and felt that the world was unjust. At home I put the box on a table, where we also had a cage with our canary bird.

I had hardly come home before my mother, who did not know anything about the snake story, was telephoned by the school director and asked to see him immediately. There she was told that I was expelled from school. When she came home, she was very angry with me and asked where I had the beast. I pointed to the box near the cage. Meanwhile, the snake had managed to get out of the box, which had gradually become rather worn. It had crept into the cage and swallowed the canary. This further increased my troubles. I was immediately told to pick up the snake up and return to the Royal Deergarden where I had found it. Saddened I went away on my bike. I went to a small forrest not so far away, freed the snake and went back home.

Two days later there was an article in the Newspaper. Somebody had found the snake in the forrest where nobody earlier on had seen grass snakes. It was established as Denmark's largest grass snake and the person who found it got the prize.

Some of my earlier schoolmates told me that the class had fun about this happening for a long time. Poems and songs were written about it.

One was based on Homer's Illiad, which begins "Rage – Godess – sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles...". The "Lorenziad" went on on with the line "Rage – Godess - sing the rage of Mr. Lorenzen".

But I myself got an extra long summer vacation. I was not allowed to remain lazy. My mother had again found a farm where I was going to be something between an agricultural student, a

laborer and a holiday guest. It was with the Thyssen family on the farm "Sandal" near Frederiksbund. I think that my Mother had found the place through a Jewish organization which arranged for young Jewish refugees to get an agricultural education, which they could use when they once could get to Israel for work in a Kibbutz.

The Thyssen family were some of the nicest people I have met. I have maintained a lifelong friendship with members of this family.

The Father - Anders - was a gentle, mostly smiling man. He was the son of the Rector of Lyngby State School, which was founded in 1871 by his grandfather.

The mother - Edel - was a strong-willed woman and an anxious mother. Her father had a bicycle factory in Odense.

There were five children:

The eldest Karen Margrethe was of the same age as I. She was later married to a Norwegian gardener. They emigrated to America, divorced later on, but remained. They moved to Sweden, where her husband was responsible for the production of peas at Findus. Karen Margrethe died about 10 years ago.

The second oldest Ragnhild - who later changed her name to Jette - still belongs to my best friends. She graduated from Lyngby State School, became weaver, married first the painter Ole Strøjgaard, divorced and later married photographer Helmer Lund-Hansen, with whom she has a son - Nikolas. Also they were divorced. She has also adopted a Ethiopian boy - Tujan. She is a very recognized artist with woven tapestries and serigraphs as a specialty.

The third child was Ditlev, with whom I was a very good friends during my early years at Sandal.. Ditlev later emigrated to the U.S.. There, his character has changed completely. He became a racist, with a strong anti-Semitic attitude. He moved to Denmark a few years ago, stayed at Sandal and died a year ago (in 2001).

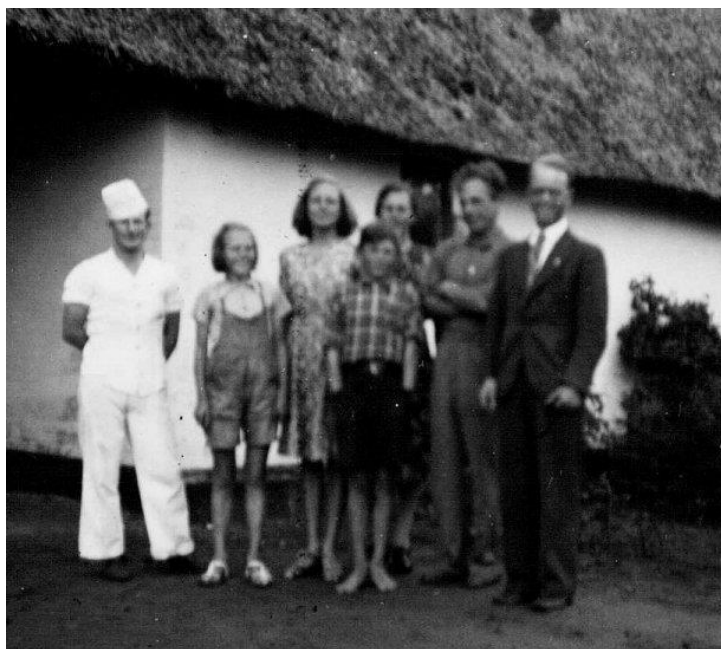
Next came Sanne, who was a sweet and gentle girl. She was a laboratory technician, had somewhat sectarian attitudes and married a man with similar tendencies. She is now a widow.

The youngest - Knud was probably four years old when I first arrived at the farm. He became engineer specializing in metallurgy. After a period of employment at Varde steelworks, he moved back to Sandal, where he has established manufacture of metal products, mostly equipment for fireplaces. He still lives on the farm and has married a Polish lady.

On the farm there was also a Jewish farming student -Josef Feldmann. He had probably come to the farm through the organization who also gave me a place on the farm. He belonged to the group of



Jewish refugees who called themselves Chalutz- pluralis - Chalutzim. They wanted to train in agriculture and later come to Israel and become members of a Kibbutz.



I was quickly accepted as one of the family. I worked half-day, gardening, picking berries, and played with the children after work hours. When the children visited their family, I came with them. Several times we biked to Asserbo (40 km north), where the children's aunt had a large summer house.

*Some members of the Thyssen family. The two girls are from the left Ragnhild (now Jette) and Karen Margrethe, the boy is Ditlev, Feldmann with folded arms. The cook and the others are employees*

I was there again next summer, but part of the time I worked with Anders Thyssen brother who had a farm in Rørbæk, a few kilometers south of Sandal. There was a peat bog, where I worked with peat excavation, stacking of peat for drying and loading them on a horse-drawn carriage. (During the war there was a shortage of fuel, so peat had to be used) On the farm worked also a young girl Øje Løje and her brother. He was a somewhat arrogant guy who showed off being able to drive the wagon from the peat bog to the farm. He sat nonchalantly on the wagon while he guided the horse. Once he fell off the wagon in a side swing. I grabbed the reins, stopped the horses, picked him up and then drove the wagon to the farm. Then he was not so arrogant anymore.

Feldmann introduced me to a group of Chalutzim who planned to escape to Palestine in the midst of war. Their plan was to sneak into a so-called brake box under a German railcar bound for Germany. There they would try to find a car that was going to the still partly neutral Romania. From there they would go through Turkey to Palestine and join the British army to fight against the Germans. It was important that they were well trained to move unnoticed in the landscape and to find their way. Therefore, they held exercises each weekend, mainly in the area around Asminderød (30 km NE), where several of them worked on farms. Friday night we took off on our bikes, walked, trained in orienteering and in bivouacking. We only fed on food we could find in nature. Sunday evening we went back to the respective farms. Everything was considered top secret and none of the farm people knew anything about it. The whole plan was extremely risky and I do not know if anybody

in the group succeeded to implement it. I know that the group leader left, but I have not heard whether he succeeded.

*(In 2013, 70 years after our escape to Sweden, I learned the full story of the mentioned Chalutzim activity. In October 2013 several lectures were given about the escape of the Danish Jews to Sweden. –in one of the lectures the Chalutzim in Denmark were mentioned in general terms. In the discussion afterwards I asked if anybody knew something about this activity. Yes, said the lecturer I can give you two references. On a piece of paper he wrote the names of Uri Yaari and Leni Yahil. I looked for these persons on the internet. I found a lot of references on Uri Yaari in Danish but none in English. Here is a German reference, where you can find the story in some more detail than below:*

[http://www.was-fuer-ein-leben.de/anschauen\\_einzeln.php?id=684&sec=28fbc9ca](http://www.was-fuer-ein-leben.de/anschauen_einzeln.php?id=684&sec=28fbc9ca).

*On Leni Yahil I can recommend the following reference:*

<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/yahil-leni>.

*Uri Yaari was actually the leader of the group. When I met him during the weekend exercises in 1941 his name was Hermann Waldmann. He was not the kind of person who could wait, until the Germans would find the time ripe for taking care of the Jews in Denmark. He wanted to fight against them. He and his comrades found the escape to Sweden useless, because if they went to England from there, they would be interned as German citizen. They decided to try – as I have mentioned above - to find their way through the Balkan countries and then via Turkey to Palestine. After thorough training they decided to make the trip under railway wagons in steps one by one. Uri Yaari made the first trip, came via Hamburg to Maastricht in the Netherlands and returned from there to Denmark in order to tell the group about his experience. Another one went as far as Sofia, but was arrested in Hamburg on his way back and sent to Auschwitz. The forty members of the group did not hear from him as expected when he had reached Palestine. They gave up the plan as being too risky. Uri afterwards joined the Danish Underground Movement and was in connection with an action betrayed and taken by the Germans. He came also to Auschwitz. There he met another member of the group, who shortly before he died told him about the one who had been to Sofia and who already was exterminated. Uri survived and came after the war to kibbutz Neot Mordechai in Israel. He died in 1987 in Copenhagen.*

*Leni Yahil was an historian who in her doctoral dissertation in 1964 at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem wrote “The Jews of Denmark during the Holocaust.” Her thesis has been issued as a book and has been translated into English and Danish. It is the most comprehensive story about this period up to now. In the book she mentions Uri Yaari and tells about his activities. She died in 2007.)*

At the Metropolitan School I completed first and second high school class. I did fairly well. To my dismay, I did not get the highest marks in German, in spite of the fact that I spoke it better than the teacher. He did not like my Austrian dialect. Therefore, I by and by learned to speak German with a Danish school pronunciation. It helped on my marks, but meant that later in life nobody in Austria would believe that I was an Austrian by birth.



The school was a boys' school, but there were also some girls. The school had a line in classic languages (Latin and old Greek). As there throughout the country were not enough girls with this interest in order to establish a classical line class for girls, they were allowed to join the boys in this class at our school. Their interaction with boys gave them a very special position. They felt that they would surpass the boys in impudence. One girl

named Gertrud Galster who later became a sculptor and known as a shrew, got hold of some condoms, got them filled up with hydrogen in the chemistry lab. and let them loose in the high-ceilinged main hall where we had singing lessons with a quite young, female teacher. There the condoms jumped around under the ceiling. When the teacher discovered the reason for the students' loud vocal behavior, she began to cry, ran out of the room and called the old rector Bang. Interrogations to find the culprit were held. This was not successful, until I now more than 60 years later reveal the culprit..

Not all girls were like that. One of them, Katrine Højer, was incredibly beautiful and sexy. She teamed up with another student, the tall and handsome Bjørn Watt-Boelsen, who became a famous actor. At break time they went close entwined around the schoolyard. But it did not last. I met Katherine approx. 10 years later. She was married to Piet Hein, whom we will meet later on.

My own relationship with girls was very platonic. I certainly looked at them, but apart from my sister Ruth, I had absolutely no experience with the opposite sex. Of my own age, mind you, because I was the subject a woman rule by my Mother and Fräuli. I was very wary of teenage girls and I felt extremely clumsy in their company.

Our Science Study Club flourished still. My main interest was now astronomy. Using a map of the sky, I learned to know the position of most visible stars. I participated in an astronomical study groups at the astronomer Luplau-Jantzen, who had his private Urania Observatory in Frederiksberg. I was also a member of the scientific Astronomical Society, with astronomy professor Strømgren as chairman. I also built my own telescope. The first telescope was a 10 cm refractor with a focal length of 1 meter (refractor telescope as opposed to reflector telescope). The lens was a 10 cm diameter spectacle lens and the eyepiece was taken from my small microscope, which I already had in Vienna. The telescope tube was made from cardboard, the



two-dimensional turning mechanism was extremely simple and as a tripod I used a painters easel. With the easel in a proper position, I could position the instrument, so that one axis of the turning mechanism pointed towards the North Pole. In this way one can follow a star in its movement by turning only one of the axes of the telescope. With this telescope I could, among other things follow nebulae, such as the Andromeda nebula, the nebula in Orion's belt and the star cluster in Hercules. The telescope was not color-corrected and so the picture was somewhat fuzzy.

I was not happy with it.. Therefore, I wanted to build a reflecting telescope, which does not suffer from this defect. I got hold of a German textbook on grinding astronomical mirrors and established an optical workshop in our attic. I bought two 15 cm diameter disks of porthole glass, mounted one on an old nightstand as grinding block for the disk, which would become the mirror, lying loosely on top. As an abrasive material I used carborundum powder in progressively finer and finer fractions. The grinding was done by holding the mirror glass disc on top of the lower disc with flat hands, moving it forth and back over the lower glass covered with abrasive, while at the same time walking around the grinding block. In this way the mirror disk slowly became concave. The cavity should only be a few millimeters. I made a template of metal with which I could test the cavity. In this technique, the cavity becomes spherical, but by varying the grinding and turning method one could change the shape, so that the cavity became parabolic. With the so-called Foucault method one could test whether the cavity had the correct parabolic shape. One could then identify anomalies and eliminate them through targeted grinding. Next the mirror had to be polished, so that all the grinding traces were removed, and finally fitted with a mirror coating by vapor deposition of aluminum, which had to be done at a special workshop. This, I did not manage because I had to flee to Sweden.

My mother thought that I lived too enclosed all day and thought that I should go in for sport. Through an acquaintance, she got me enrolled in the hockey club Orient, which at that time was Danish champion. It is a tough sport where a rock-hard ball is played in goal with wooden sticks. I did not manage to get on the champion team. On the contrary, I was a real clown in this sport, and after a while I gave up to have a career as a hockey player.

As the war hardened the Danes increased their resistance against the Germans. This could also be felt in school. There was a brisk traffic with underground papers between students. Often someone came with a whole pile of them to be distributed by the others.. It was, incidentally, not just papers, but also entire mimeographed books which were spread. I got for instance hold of a copy of John Steinbeck's "The Moon is Down ", which describes an unnamed people's resistance against an occupier.

Also in town the underground resistance was noted.. Very often we heard explosions due to the blasting of buildings and plants working for the Germans. A particularly powerful bomb near by on 24 August 1943 caused the windows to rattle where we lived in Vendersgade. It was the Forum, a large exhibition building which was blown up because it was planned to use it for accommodation of German soldiers.



*German soldiers in front of the bombed Forum*

At this time began spontaneous general strikes all around the country. The earliest one took place in Esbjerg with sabotage against the transport of fish to Germany. There were also strong demonstrations in Odense, which caused many people from there to flee to Sweden, where I later met several of them.



In Copenhagen there were built barricades in several streets and there was a lot of shooting between Danes and Germans. The Germans asked the Danish government to enforce extremely strict measures against these activities. The government did not accept this and on 29 August 1943 gave up trying to run the country, which now came under German

military rule. On the Danish side Ministries continued their work as best they could under the leadership of permanent secretaries in stead of the politically elected government..

## **Escape to Sweden.**

After the government was removed, Hitler decided that now might be the right time to arrest the Danish Jews. However, a Danish politician and through him the Jewish community were informed by a German that an action was imminent. Historians are somewhat divided about the background of the German warnings. It seems that the warning came via the marine attaché at the German Embassy in Copenhagen Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, who after liberation was highly praised for this action. He even became the German Ambassador to Denmark in the years after the war. The "official" version of the story is that it was his noble-mindedness that made him reveal the sinister German plans. And this is also the background in Duckwitz own report from 1946.

However, recent research (Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies) has demonstrated that Duckwitz (against his own denial) was a senior SS officer, and raises doubts about his motives. It seems that the SS in Denmark was afraid that a large-scale action against the Jews would create strong revolt tendencies in Denmark which it could be difficult to manage, and therefore warned against the enterprise. There are even (uncertain) allegations that the top German leader in Denmark, Werner Best had been in Sweden asking the Swedes to prepare for the expected refugees, and that the majority of smaller German patrol ships simultaneously were sent for repair so as not to impede transport across the Sound between Sweden and Denmark.. In any case, the Danes succeeded in helping more than 6000 Jews to come to Sweden in small boats during a few days. However, 472 Jews were arrested and sent to the concentration camp Theresienstadt in the present Czech Republic. Fortunately, Theresienstadt was not a real extermination camp, so the majority survived. In the last days of war they were brought home by the Swedish Red Cross, together with Danish and Norwegian concentration camp prisoners.

It should be added that the Danish official policy which was rather friendly towards cooperation with Germany might be a major reason that Danish Jews survived the occupation better than Jews in most other occupied countries. This cooperation, however, was definitely also in Germany's interest, partly because it ensured a good supply to Germany of Danish food and other essential war commodities, and partly because the occupation could be carried out with far less German troops compared to what had been required by a brutal occupation. The importance for the Jews of the Danish cooperation policy should not be interpreted to mean that the Danish Government was particularly friendly towards Jews. Indeed, continued expulsions of Jewish refugees to Germany took place, just as Jews who held Swedish entry visa were denied to leave Denmark. Actually a top officer of the Police informed the Germans about these people. When the Danish government became aware that Germany would launch a persecution of the Jews, there was a suggestion from the government to the German governor Werner Best to keep the Jews in Danish concentration camps instead of sending them to German ones. This was rejected by Best, which was lucky for the



Jews, for if Denmark had performed the executioners task of collecting the Jews in Danish camps, it would have been easy for the Germans subsequently to send them to Germany, just as it happened with the Danish communists, who after having been interned in Denmark, were taken by the Germans into German concentration camps.

It therefore seems quite right that the Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen in 2005 has given the Jews in Denmark an apology for the treatment they got from the Danish government before and during the occupation.

Here now follows the story of how it went my family and me. I have previously told this in the Danish Radio's youth program in connection with the 25-year anniversary of the Jewish escape. My granddaughter Anna Olivia Somer Christesen has as part of her high school studies prepared a 20 minutes video in 2002 together with me about my escape story.

At the end of September 43 it was clear to us that a German action was directly imminent, and we decided to go underground. My Mother was on the pretext of illness admitted to Bispebjerg Hospital, where her name Hanna Ram- Pedersen secured her from being discovered as a Jew. Simultaneously, it was agreed that my sister Ruth and I should take refuge at my good friends, the Thyssen family at Sandal near Frederikssund. Fräuli took us there by train. We were placed in a guest room on the first floor of the main building. We were told not to leave the house, so that others should not discover us. Mrs. Thyssen, in particular, was rather nervous about the situation. After the German action against Jews was launched in the night of 3 October it seemed to her to hear German voices in the bushes around the farm. Ruth and I were about to go to bed when Mrs. Thyssen came up to us and said that we had to hide in the straw in the barn. Ruth and I did not particularly like this idea. We also reassured Mrs. Thyssen, so that we could go to bed and sleep.

After approx. 14 days Fräuli phoned and said that now we should be picked up.. My uncle Mario had contact with a group that organized crossings to Sweden and my Mother, Ruth and I should make use of this transport together with him and his family.

Fräuli came by train to Sandal. She had a suitcase with clothes for us. We should put them on, one on top of the other, because we could not have hand luggage on the transport. Ruth and I got berets pulled down over our dark hair, in order not to be easily recognizable as Jews, and then we took the train back to Copenhagen. On the train there were several people who wished us a good trip, so we did not manage to disguise ourselves. At the Central Station in Copenhagen we shifted to another train to Klampenborg - a suburb north of Copenhagen near the coast. It was prearranged that Fräuli on the platform in Klampenborg should take contact with a man with crutches, who would react to the watchword "Christian". Fräuli went forth and back on the platform and whispered, "Christian" to many men, but nobody reacted. Finally she found a man with a cane. It proved to be

the right one. He had indeed no crutches and did not know anything about the watchword "Christian", but when he saw the two Jewish children together with Fräuli, he realized ready that it was us he should take care of. We then took leave of Fräuli, who as a non-Jew could stay in Denmark and take care of our apartment in Vendersgade. We did not see her again until after the liberation in 1945.

The man took us by car to Holte, where we were put up in a large villa, which belonged to a Supreme Court lawyer. He and his family were not at home, so the house was exclusively inhabited by refugees. There I met my Mother, my uncle and his family. We stayed there one night. The next day, my uncle realized that there were problems with the planned transport. Somehow he made contact with a police officer who had relations to an other transport option from Taarbaek Harbour. Meanwhile, several other refugees had come to the lawyers villa. It was decided that we would all should go to Taarbaek. One of my uncle's employees Mr. Grundsøe got hold of four taxis which should take us to Taarbaek. We were divided into the cars. My family and I got to sit in the second car while my uncle and his family came with the fourth car. The cars drove southwards to Taarbæk along the Coastal Road. Just north of Taarbaek the road divides into two branches. The left one leads to Taarbaek harbour, the right one bypasses Taarbaek and continues southward towards Copenhagen. The first car drove towards Taarbaek harbour, but shortly after the fork the car was stopped by a German patrol. All passengers in the car were taken by the Germans and ended up in concentration camp. The driver of car number two, where my mother, sister and I sat, discovered that the first car had been stopped by the Germans. Immediately he turned the car down the right path. Approximately one hundred meter after the fork the road goes over a bridge, under which a path leads to Taarbaek harbor. There we stopped, and via a very steep slope, we came down to the road leading to the harbour. A little further on we met the police officer who took us to a fisherman's house at the harbour.

We were guided down to the basement, where there already sat several other refugees. A little later came the passengers of car number four. It was my uncle Mario and his family. He told us that car number three went along the left path and there everybody again was taken by the Germans. The driver of car number four did just as the second car and drove to the right, and in the same way as



we arrived my uncle's family to the fisherman's house.

Now we waited to be picked up by the fishing boat which should sail us to Sweden. But a little before midnight came the policeman and told us that a German patrol vessel had entered the harbour. Therefore, we could not be taken up by the boat there.

*Taarbaek harbor. We waited in the yellow house with red roof.*

The fishing boat would sail alone out of the harbor, as if it should go fishing. Further out, the boat would turn towards the coast further north where the refugees had to wait for the boat at a jetty. So we waited again in the basement. Soon after, the police officer came and told us that one half of the refugees should sneak along the coastal road to the jetty about one kilometer north of the harbor. The boat was only able to carry around 25 refugees and we were approximately fifty. We were disappointed not to come with the first half. It was clear weather, and the moon would soon rise. At a later transport, we would be more visible. We were sorry about that, but there was nothing we could do about it.

After a further one hour the policeman came and said that now another boat had arrived at the harbor. So now the rest of the company should leave.. We walked in small groups towards the North along the coastal road. My mother, sister and I went together. Suddenly, we heard the characteristic sound of a German truck coming from the North. Now we had to hide in a hurry. We were just passing a nearly two meter high dense hedge on the left side of the road. In one way or another we all three got over this hedge. To this day I cannot understand how my tiny Mother managed to climb the hedge. Behind the hedge, we saw the German car pass and soon after we slipped out through the gate of the garden and came to the jetty. There already waited most of the refugees who should go on this boat.

Soon after we heard the fishing boat come chugging and we were quickly herded aboard. It was, as I already said, clear weather, and the moon had risen. There was phosphorescence in the water surrounding the boat, and on the Swedish side we saw a string of lights along the coast. Unlike

Denmark, Sweden had no blackout. When we came out in the Sound, we were discovered by the German patrol boat in Taarbæk harbor. A machine gun started shooting with tracer ammunition toward the boat. Fortunately, the shots went too high.

I cannot remember that I was scared. Only that it all was an amazingly beautiful scene with the moon, the phosphorescence in the water, the beautiful string of lights in Sweden and even the string of glowing projectiles over the heads of us. When we had come about half way to the Swedish island of Ven, where we should go ashore, a small Swedish naval vessel came towards us and went between us and the Germans in order to protect us. We were now in Swedish territorial waters and the machine gun fire ceased. We sailed against Ven's North coast where there is a small harbor town Kyrkbakken. Coming closer to this harbor, we noticed several Swedish boats sailing around with projectors lighting up the sea. We did not know what that meant, but we got soon to know that the first fishing boat by a wrong manoeuvre was run down by a Swedish naval vessel which intended to protect it from the Germans just as we were. Seven of those on board drowned. So after all we were happy that we did not come with the first boat. Shortly after we were in the harbor. We were received by a Swedish soldier with the words: "Welcome, here you can sing freely."

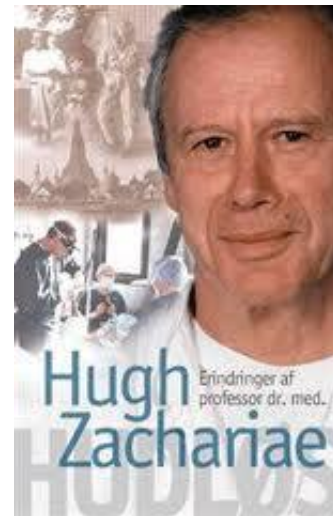
I know it sounds trite, but up on the quayside several of us sang the Swedish national anthem, "You old, you free, you mountain rich North". We were brought up to Kyrkbakken's small cinema where we sat down waiting for a preliminary registration. So we put ourselves to sleep on the seats. The next morning we sailed to Landskrona and were taken to the barracks, where each got a straw mattress and some food. Furthermore, we all got fleas.



*Kyrkbakken*

Before I tell you further about our stay in Sweden I will tell you about something that happened at the same time back in Denmark. At the Metropolitan high school had my schoolmates and teachers obviously noticed that I no longer met in school. But they did not know what had happened to me. On 3 September, when the newspapers wrote about the German raid against the Jews, the class gathered and decided to go on strike. One of my mates, Hugh Zachariae, who later became a

professor in Aarhus, phoned around to other high schools and the next day all Danish high schools went into strike in protest against persecution of the Jews.. The strike was only called off several days later. Hugh has a few years ago written his memoirs where he tells about this incident. Hugh has actually been one of my inspirations for also to write my memoirs.



### **In Sweden 1943-45.**

When we came to Sweden, we were absolutely sure that our stay would be limited. 1943 was a turning point in the war with a significant downturn for the Germans and their allies. Already in January Stalingrad had fallen with over 90,000 Germans taken prisoner. Throughout the year the Germans were driven progressively from Russia. In Africa, the Germans and Italians capitulated in May with 250,000 men captured. In July, the Allies landed in Sicily and on 8 September Italy capitulated.

Around the time of our flight to Sweden, Italy even declared war on Germany after Mussolini was overthrown. The USA which had joined the war in the late '41 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, started to recover more and more of the areas the Japanese had initially taken. In Europe, the German air force was virtually wiped out, so that the Allies almost without disturbance could carry out heavy bombardments of Germany's cities. We were full of confidence over the war's eventual outcome.

After a night in Landskrona, we traveled to Gothenburg, where a refugee camp had been installed at Sahlgrenska Hospital, where we were housed in large dormitories. There we stayed for about 14 days. Then we managed to get a room in a guesthouse at Södra Avenue where we - my Mother, Ruth and I - got a room for sharing. Also other refugees lived in the guest house. Among others, we became good friends with a daughter of Sigmund Freud.

From the Swedish side, much was done to make private people open their homes and summer houses for refugees. In about a week, it was our turn. A teacher's family in Härryda, about 40 km from Gothenburg had a small guest house "Lillstugan" (the small cabin) next to their own house. It was placed at our disposal. The teacher's family, Wilhelm Clarin, his wife Eva and little boy Kjelleve, gave us a hearty welcome. So did actually the whole Härryda with the

stationmaster, grocery store and farm owners. My mother kept them as friends throughout her life even after we had returned to Denmark.

Lillstugan was a tiny house of approx. 20 square meters. There was a small room where I slept on a sofa, next to that was an alcove with two beds on top of each other for Ruth and my Mother. There was also a tiny kitchen with wood stove and a basement with toilet and firewood. The house was near a small stream, and had a small garden.



It was Mother's home for the rest of the war, while Ruth and I after some time moved to Gothenburg, as we will hear later on.

I came to Sweden wearing several sets of clothes on top of each other, but unfortunately I had only one shirt. The Swedes had asked people to give used clothing for the refugees. When it was my turn there was only one shirt that fit me. It was a white waffle fabric shirt with stiff chest and detachable wing collars, intended for evening dress. As there was no alternative, I was happy to get it.

It was now time that I went on with my studies. At this time there were no high school opportunities for me. My ideas about my future went mostly in the direction of becoming an astronomer, but I was aware that this required extremely good math skills. Although I was pretty good in mathematics, I was aware that I was not good enough. Therefore I wanted to become an engineer in order to work with the preparation of optical glass in continuation of my activities with the grinding of astronomical mirrors. I had the opportunity to get an apprentice job at a machine shop and thought it might be useful.



I began to work on Ljunggrens Mekaniska Verkstad where projectors and other equipment for the theater and movie industry were manufactured. I was handed a gray work coat and was set to drill tiny holes in castings on a drilling machine.

I probably did not exercise sufficient care, because the delicate drills constantly got broken in the casting with the result that the object would have to be discarded. I was then transferred to cleanup work. One day I would wear the shirt I had from Denmark and the next day with the white shirt with the wing collar, while my Mother washed the other one in HÄrryda. I took the train to work and back home and sparked amusement on the train when I came with the white shirt with wing collar.

Around the turn of 1943/44, a Danish school was established in Gothenburg including high school. I was immediately admitted there, and my mechanic apprentice career came to an abrupt end.

Both teachers and students were a mixed bunch. Approximately half of the students were Jewish refugees, the other half young people who had to flee because of work with the Danish Underground. Some of the teachers were highly educated university professors. For instance, I had Professor Sven Henningsen in History, a professor of Contemporary History and Political Science at the University of Copenhagen. In biology we had Dr. Finn Salomonsen, ornithologist at the University of Copenhagen (and father of singer Sanne Salomonsen). He was a womanizer and could not take his hands off the two girls in my class. Other teachers had a normal teacher education. My Danish teacher was Mr. Hyldgaard-Jensen, legally resident in Sweden since he was teaching Danish at Swedish high schools. His wife was a Swedish teacher and she taught us Swedish. They both perished in a shipwreck in the Kattegat after the war. Other teachers were young students at the Technical University. Thus, my physics and chemistry teacher was Viggo Oehlenschlaeger, student in chemistry at the Technical University of Denmark.. The school headmaster was a high school teacher, Gudrun Henriques. The overall supervision of the school was provided by Prof. Franz Blatt, a classical scholar from the University of Copenhagen..

Among the students I had most contact with was Axel Randrup. His father was butcher and was known in Denmark as "The Steak". In his younger days he opposed a group of vegetarians, who claimed that vegetarians were stronger than meat eaters. To prove the point a highly publicized race was organized in 1931 between him and a well know vegetarian called "The Banana." "The Steak" won the race. Axel's sister Judith was also in the class. Axel's mother was Jewish , and for that reason they fled to Sweden..

The class also contained 3 to 4 young high school students from Odense who had to flee because of their participation in the public uprising in Odense leading up to the 28 August 1943 defiance

of the Nazis. The oldest in the class was named Gleisner. He posed as an author, but never could tell what he had written. He was gay and consorted much with very young Swedish soldiers, whom he called his "syslings" a made-up Danish word somehow indicating remote family relations. My class and the one below had the Vogel brothers, who changed their name after the war to Foigel. One of them later became the Minister of Taxation. The class was mixed, partly corresponding to the modern side of the grammar school, partly the science side. We had some common courses, e.g., Danish and history, but split up for specialized subjects.



*Pixbo.*

Shortly after the school had been established, we moved into a dormitory for Danish high school students. It was in a small manor called Pixbo, near a beautiful lake.

Here I shared a room with a school mate, whom I will call "K". He was very preoccupied with religion and was initially studying at a Catholic seminary in Gothenburg. Despite his religiosity, he cursed and swore like a trooper. Early in the morning he had to go to matins in the Catholic Church. I was awakened by his rummaging in the room: "Where the hell is my prayer book. " - "Well, God damn it, here it is."

His Catholicism did not last. He switched to Buddhism. It became visible as he went clad in a linen sheet and therefore switched to a women's bike. I gradually got used to his behavior. Sometimes we would ride together to Lund, where there also was a Danish high school. During the war the Swedes had removed all street signs in order not to facilitate the entry of an invader. We came to a fork in the road but did not know what road we should take. A Swedish peasant in a horse cart came slowly towards the fork. When he saw the strange man dressed in linen, he tightened the reins and stopped abruptly. We asked him about the way to Lund, but he just gaped: "What kind of a fellow are you?" he asked K. "I am Buddhist" K. replied in his best Swedish, as he rose in the saddle. He could not fool the farmer. "But you speak Danish" said the farmer.

"Well, I am a Danish Buddhist " said K. Then the farmer said " Gee!" and went away. Somehow we made it to Lund.

Later K joined the Danish Brigade, formed by refugees in order to drive out the Germans from Denmark after their defeat. The brigade had its camp near Uppsala, north of Stockholm. He wanted to go there by bike. It is a very long trip, especially when you are wearing a sheet.. I bet him that he wouldn't make it. He went off and every day he sent us unstamped postcards from the places he had come to. We had to pay the penalty postage. Finally he came to the Brigade, where he had to replace his sheet with a uniform. He sent us a gloating unstamped postcard from there. We found a cobblestone, which we wrapped and sent as a "beneficiary pays" to him with a accompanying letter in which we wrote that this stone took a load off our mind when we heard that he had made the trip successfully. Then we did not hear from him for a long time. Eventually, he came limping back to Gothenburg. He had grown tired of the brigade and in order to get out of service he had cut the toes of one foot with an ax. I lost contact with him, but met him once after the war in Bagsvaerd. We greeted each other with a nod. He looked very shabby.

In May - June 1944 I had finished high school and needed to take the examination for the General Certificate which would allow me to study at a university. It was pretty hard because I have actually had only been in the last grade since January, and thus lost half a school year. In addition, several of our teachers were untrained. We were given the impression that this would be taken into consideration when evaluating our performance at the actual exam.

I noticed this concession especially at the oral examination in physics. (I've told this story many times and each time people have a hard time believing it.) At my 75-year anniversary I got a greeting from my old teacher, Viggo Oehlenschlaeger. I will let his translated letter tell the story. By the way, Harald Bohr who is mentioned in the letter, was the brother of Niels Bohr and Professor of mathematics at the University of Copenhagen.

*21 August 2001*

*Dear Somer,*

*With my birthday greetings I want to tell you that you have played an important role in my stories about what happened during our stay in Sweden.*

*Here is my story:*

*As teacher in physics at the high school I facilitated the final examination in physics where the external examiner was the lovable Harald Bohr.*

*Your performance was fair, but not in any way outstanding.*

*When voting on the evaluation, I had to seriously wrestle with my own sense of justice when Harald Bohr suggested giving you the highest possible mark.*

*I questioned whether I should oppose him and lower your mark.*

*So I opened the door and told you and your school mates waiting outside during the voting that you had got the highest mark, an A.*

*You exploded: "But Viggo, that is impossible!!"*

*Harald got exited. He rushed to the door and explained how difficult the problem was which you had to tell about and how convincing and qualified you tackled the problem. It had been a pleasure to listen to you.*

*What happened later on I do not remember.*

*I hope that you can recall this story.*

*Kind regards*

*Viggo, who still is going strong*

Teachers and examiners knew that I wanted to study engineering. I suspect that they did their bit to ensure that I got more than the required examination result. They also succeeded far beyond expectations. My average was full marks A. If I had graduated from the Metropolitan School in Copenhagen I would not have got such high marks.

We could now become university students. This was celebrated according to Danish traditions. Danish student caps were transported to us illegally across the Sound. We drove around Gothenburg in a carriage decorated with Danish flags and flowers, which caused quite a stir because it was not a tradition in Sweden.



*The new-born students driving through Gothenburg followed by their female admirers. Picture taken from a carriage with other of the students.*



*Erik with the Danish studentcap*

Then it was time for a well-deserved summer vacation. I had the opportunity to get on a Nordic youth work camp in Roslagen, an area north of Stockholm around Uppsala. The place was called Upplands-Väsby. It was a camp organized by the “Frisksportar” movement, which was based on the Norwegian Are Waerlands ideas of a lacto-vegetarian diet together with physical activities. There were lots of cooked potatoes, peas and beans, fruits and kruska, a porridge made of oatmeal, wheat bran, raisins, and water. Alcohol and smoking were not permitted. During the day we worked in the field. In the evening there was song and play after a hearty meal with lots of legumes. We slept in large dormitories, and there was a very lively farting due to the evening meal.

Here I had my very first close encounter with a girl. Her name was Barbro, and she was a Sunday school teacher. She was a very sexy girl and it was indeed she who took the initiative in our relationship, which, because of my total inexperience and shyness only became quite close petting. We corresponded afterwards for about half a year, but then it ebbed out, probably because we both had gone on to other pastures.



Another lasting memory from this camp is that we are all learned to dance Finnish polka from some of the Finnish participants. I'm certainly not a hero on the dance floor, but this dance has stayed with me through the years as I -- especially when I have had a little to drink -- cannot resist finding a partner to dance the polka. More on this later.

After the Frisksportar-camp I went to another Nordic Youth Camp for male students. It took place at Lundberg Boarding School in Värmland. The boarding school was located in a beautiful area with woods and lakes. There were good swimming opportunities including swimming competitions. Here I won the competition in the 200 meter breaststroke. The woods surrounding the school held lots of chanterelles and often in my spare time I would pick these delicious fungi. I cooked them in the kitchen and enjoyed them at the common evening meal. For this reason I was nicknamed "Chanterelle."

We also spent Midsummer there according to Swedish traditions. Some of us who had been Boy Scouts were told to prepare a bonfire on a bare rocky hill in the woods. The traditional Midsummer speech was held by the school principal, who was a priest and dressed in full Swedish priest vestments. When the festivities were concluded, he asked if we had remembered to bring water to extinguish the fire. We had forgotten but the priest knew what to do: "We will have to piss into the fire." We gathered around the fire. The priest struck his long cassock to the side and we went along. We gathered around the fire illuminated by the glowing embers from which a dense steam arose while many jets aimed at the remaining fire. It was an unforgettably beautiful vision.

After these glorious camp trips, I lived a while in Lillstugan in Härryda with my mother. She had a job as embroideress for a fashion salon, where she embroidered for a paltry salary sequins and other decorations on evening gowns. She got the material and drawings of the decoration at the salon and worked at home. There were very often tight deadlines for her work, so my Mother often had to sew day and night.

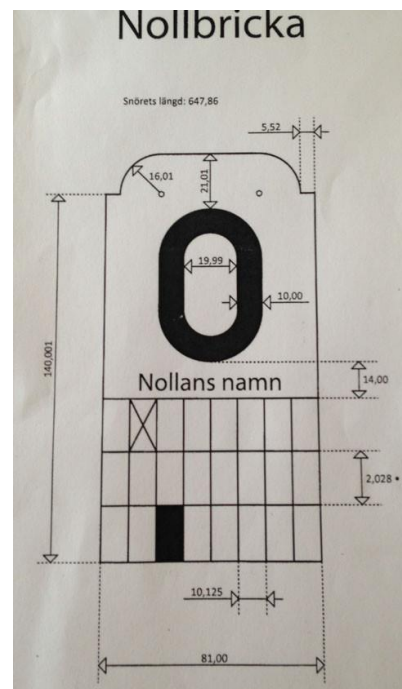


I started my studies in chemical engineering at the Chalmers Technical University in Gothenburg in the beginning of September. It was a tradition that the first year students were hazed by the older students. It started when we at the Students' Association should pick up the drawing for a "Nollbricka" a Zero-breastplate", i.e., a rectangular plate, which we had to wear on a cord around our neck every day. The picture was drawn so that it was impossible to construct it correctly. It gave rise to the first skirmishes with upper classmen because no matter how you made it, the older students would criticize it. On a sign-up table, the older students would place their comments about the poor first year students who at that time were called zero year students.

After a month it was time to be inaugurated as first year students.. This took place in a ceremonial party in Chalmers new chemistry building, which stood on a rocky hillock on the outskirts of the town. Under the lowest floor of the building there was an uneven space with the raw rock at the bottom and the ceiling of the lowest level at the top. One could only move through it by crawling. Access to it was through small hatches. The poor zero-students were sent into this basement, where it was pitch-dark. Guided by a taut string, one could follow the route. Along this route firecrackers were thrown down through hatches. Finally we came to a hatch in a vertical wall. This led into another completely dark room where we had to wait, one by one. Another hatch was opened and the waiting zero student was met by strong projectors totally blinding him or her. With a giant forceps around the neck, one was pulled forward onto a table level with the bottom of the hatch. This table stood in the chemistry students' banquet room. The idea was to symbolize one's birth as a student.

Thereafter, one was exposed to a series of individual trials. While she was still dazzled by the light, the only female student on our team was wrapped with a rope around her legs and was then hoisted by the rope through a hook in the ceiling, so she hung upside down and dangling. Her dress fell naturally down around her body and her lovely legs and underwear got lewd comments by all the older students.

*Drawing for the Zero-breastplate*



I was subjected to other hardships. I was told that I as a chemist should learn to know products of chemistry and soil. The chemical product I should taste was shoe polish. Strangely enough, it didn't taste so bad; but when I got a schnapps to wash it down, it tasted disgusting.

Then I had to try one of the products of soil. It was an earthworm covered with soil particles. One of the older students held it between two fingers and the worm writhed in despair until I got it in my mouth. Oh, thank God, it was not a live earthworms but a soft-boiled macaroni, which was colored pink and rolled in burnt breadcrumbs. It was only the guy who held it and rolled it between his fingers and I who knew that. Everyone else thought it to be a real worm, and I left them with that impression. I was praised for carefully chewing it before I swallowed

In the chemist's banquet hall we had several parties during the semester. We drank beer tapped off casks into large mugs. What we did not know was that the beer was fortified with a lot of laboratory alcohol, which strangely enough could not be tasted. After the first party I was terribly drunk. Together with a Swedish friend in the same situation I stumbled home. Actually the Swede fell into a gutter and remained lying there, but I made it home. At this time I lived in a rented room. As a university student, I could not live in Pixbo anymore. I came into my room, locked the door, laid down on the bed, which began to move around the strangest ways. I threw up, but do not know what happened next, until I was awakened in my terrible headache by a loud knock on the door. It was the maid who wanted to know what had happened to me. It turned out that I had been laying with all my clothes on in a total mess for over a day. However, I must have been in the toilet at one time because it looked terribly there. Needless to say, my tenancy was terminated.

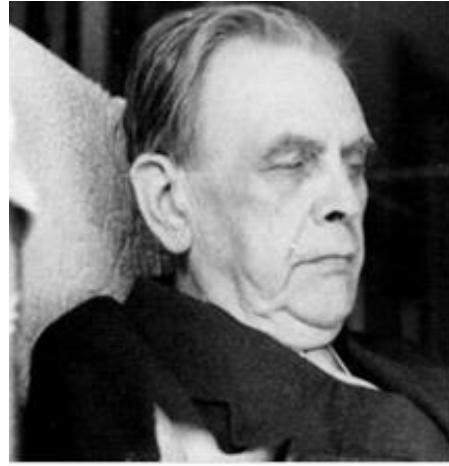
I moved into a boarding house a little further up the street. People not living there could also eat there. For lunch there was a large buffet with lots of Norway lobster. It was cooked on the day before and placed in a locked pantry but with a window on the courtyard that was open. From one of our rooms, we could reach out to the large platter with lobster, and it happened that in the evening we would appropriate one or two.

Among the students of my year at Chalmers was another Danish refugee, namely my high school buddy Axel Randrup. In Gothenburg, there was also a dormitory for female refugee students. My sister Ruth lived there amongst others. There Axel had met a lush red-haired girl, 10 years older than he. Her name was Ellen Pedersen. She was daughter of a longshoreman in Odense. She was one of the many students who had to flee from Odense after the uprising in late august 1943. To Axel's mother's great despair, Ellen became his great love until Axel returned home in May 1945. Ellen and I also were good friends (platonic) and it lasted even after our return to Denmark.

Axel also brought me together with someone else who had a great impact on my development. It was an old bank clerk, Nils Dreilick. He had a nice apartment with a huge library together with his sister. Axel got me invited for afternoon tea with Nils and it was a friendship that lasted for many years. Through Nils I became greatly interested in literature, particularly Swedish writers. It turned out later on that Nils was homosexual, but neither Axel nor I noted that.



*Nils and I in 1946*



*Thorsten Thorsell in 1945*

Nils had a good friend Torsten Thorsell, a retired rector of a boy boarding school in Kungälv, a city about 40 km from Gothenburg. We visited him several times, but then he moved to Gothenburg. Thorsten became like a father for me. He was also homosexual, but again it was not something I experienced. Thorsten had in his youth been secretary for Ellen Key, an important Swedish writer who was active in the period before and after 1900. Ellen Key was among others a close friend of the Austrian / Czech writer Rainer Maria Rilke, whom Thorsten also had met. Rilke was for me a great experience. He became and still is my favorite writer. Through my acquaintance with Thorsten and Nils I became interested in becoming a writer myself. I wrote a few poems and continued with this activity for a while after my return to Denmark.

Through Nils, I also met another Danish refugee. He was a journalist and was called Victor Petersen, but was only known by his pseudonym Tricky Victor. After his return he worked for several Danish provincial newspapers and even owned some of them. He was a well known citizen in Ribe, a larger town in Southern Jutland, where he lived with his wife and four sons. He was a business genius and used his money to buy works of art. He eventually collected a number of the Danish painter and sculptor J.F. Willumsen's works. He moved to Hjørring and opened a

Willumsen museum.



*Victor and his wife Kirsten at their museum.*

His sons are known as the "Jutish brothers." They were indicted but acquitted in connection with a business in China including a bicycle factory. When I had moved to Bagsvaerd, the family visited us several times and stayed with us. Victor died in 2002.

Nils and Torsten's influence led me to consider a shift to a humanistic education. I began to follow lectures and tutorials at Gothenburg University in philosophy and psychology. Eventually I had to give this up, because I could not fit it next to my chemistry studies.

In 1944 – 45 while studying at Chalmers, I had two female acquaintances. The one was named Franzi Feldmann and was a German / Jewish refugee. She was a nursing student and lived in a dormitory for student-refugees.

The other one was Chris Johansson. She was about to take an office education. I was still very insecure and inexperienced, so it only got as far as petting. Maybe that was why these relationships did not last that long. Chris I met again many years later in Denmark. More on this later.



*Chris in 1944.*



*Franzi Feldmann*

In early 1945 we followed world events with increasing attention. We were aware that Germany was about to fall. We listened to the BBC Danish broadcasts and heard the message of the German capitulation in Northern Europe on 4 May. I called Chris and several of my Danish friends. We agreed to meet at Göta square, a central place in Gothenburg to celebrate that the war now was over for us. At the agreed time I went to Göta square, but so did over 100,000 others. It took a long time to find my friends. The whole evening we went singing and cheering through Gothenburg. At midnight we met a police officer. He came towards us, so we lowered our voice, but he said he had received the order that this night we were allowed to make as much noise as we wanted. Arm-in-arm with him we walked along singing and screaming.

Most Danish refugees went home in the days after 5 May. So did my Mother and sister Ruth. I had decided that I would take the 1st year exam at Chalmers, as there was an agreement with the Danish Technical University that the Swedish exam would be approved in Denmark. I was examined by Swedish professors according to the Danish curriculum.



The last period in Sweden I shared a room with Ivan Malinovski who was in love with my sister and later became her husband. He became one of Denmark's most well-known poets.

I moved back to Denmark in July 1945.

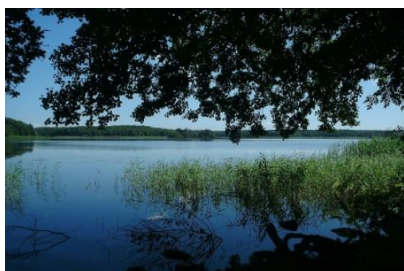
*Ivan with my sister in 1963.*

## **In Denmark from 1945**

When coming back to Denmark I was of course happy to see Fräuli and my friends again. Our flat in Vendersgade was not affected by the occupation with one small exception. One day a projectile smashed a window and came to rest in a cupboard door, where we left it as long as we had this cabinet.

Four of my friends from the "Scientific Study Club" and I decided to go on a camping trip together. We had the forester's permission to camp at a clearing in the woods on a small peninsula that stretched out into Esrum Lake. All was very comfortable. We had camp beds. From our kitchen we took a small cast iron stove, which had been used for cooking with peat when there was no gas during the war. There was a carpet to put on the ground in the tent. We hired a truck that transported the equipment for the five of us along small forest trails to the site. We had a wonderful time all by ourselves. We gave names to the different places around us: a bay was called "The Dead Man's Bay." A hill, which we passed on the road to the site, became "The Tea Trolley Hill."





*Esrup Lake*

The only drawback of the site was that it was visible from Soerup on the other side of Esrup Lake. One day a boat with four youngsters of the type that was then called zoot suiters arrived. They put up their tent next to ours. They did not care that they were not allowed to camp there by the forester. Now our peaceful time was over. One day all five of us gathered a lot of long-legged harvest spiders - abundant at this time of the year, and at night we eased them into the tent of the zoot suiters. Then we went into our tent and kept calm. Soon after, we noticed turmoil in the other tent. They had no light, but could feel that something crawled and squirmed over them. They went up and shook everything in their tent outside. The next day they disappeared, and calm was restored.

Soon after coming home I had to prepare for the exam in Mineralogy and Crystallography, the only subject from first year syllabus, which I had not taken in Sweden since it was not taught there for chemical engineering students.. I went to the Museum of Geology for a month or so and got personal tutoring by a professor. I passed the exam with flying colors.

In September 1945 I started at Denmark's Technical University. Unlike at the modern facilities at Chalmers, our chemical courses were taught in a late 1800's building. The facilities were terrible with insufficient ventilation. There was consistently severe risk of fire. In these rooms approximately 75 students carried out their laboratory work.

It took me some time to get in touch with the others who had known each other from the year before, when, under very difficult circumstances, they tried to complete their studies during the last period of occupation. Axel Randrup had in some way caught up and got into the same grade as I. One of the others in the group was Georg Schlichtkrull who had been a high school buddy with Randrup prior to his escape to Sweden. We became very good friends. Georg was very impressed by my sister, but his feelings were not reciprocated. Ruth was faithful to her Ivan. Fräuli was in the beginning highly offended that Ruth was in love with a male being, but later on Ivan and Fräuli became good friends.

I met Ellen Pedersen, Axel Randrup's former girlfriend, again in Copenhagen. Ellen lived then with a sculptor and ceramist who made small ceramic animals in a small stall in Tivoli. Ellen had a friend from the time she lived in Odense, Rigmor Jensen. She was a farmer's daughter and had an advanced job as correspondent. We became very good friends. Yes indeed, we kept together for approximately 5 years. Through here, I finally experienced love's physical side. The relationship, however, was not so strong that both of us did not occasionally graze in other

pastures, but we always reunited. The relationship ended only when I got married in 1950 with Nete - but about that later on.

## One World 1947-50

While I was in Sweden I began to be interested in going to work internationally. I would like to be involved in reconstruction work in the war-torn countries, especially in Eastern Europe. For this reason I wanted to learn a Slavic language. In Gothenburg I found a Danish refugee who had been a teacher of Russian at the Berlitz school in Copenhagen. This school uses a method where from the very first lesson, one only speaks the language to be learned. It's also how children learn a language.

I joined a team of four others. Together with the teacher we sat around a round table. The teacher pointed to the table and said *tablya*. It therefore meant "table." He put his hand repeatedly on the table and said *na*. It means "on." Then he pointed to a chair and said *stul* - a "chair." He held a cigarette and said *papirosy*. Then he rapped like a duck and said *utka*. He looked searching around and said *gdje* - "where." Then it was time to start a conversation. He turned to his neighbor and said *gdje utka?* - Where is the duck. The neighbor looked searching around. A smile crossed his face and he pointed to the table. *Utk na tablya*. Then it was the neighbor's turn. He was looking for a cigarette. *Gdje papirosy?* His neighbor pointed to the chair - *papirosy na stul*. And in this way ducks and cigarettes were either on chairs and tables. It got quite boring.

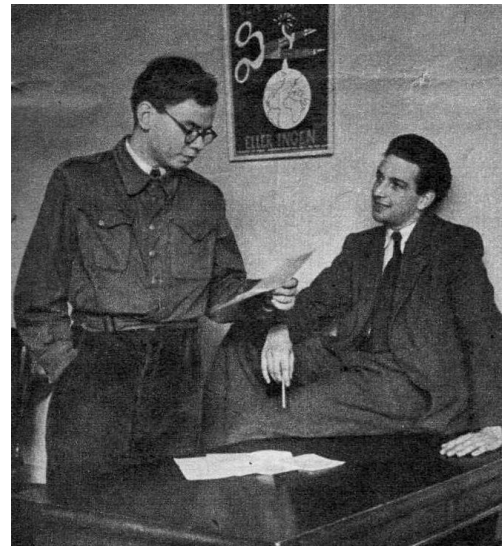
Next, we had to learn the Russian alphabet. The teacher had a blackboard with the Russian letters and pronounced them one at a time. After that we should read from a text, while we had the opportunity to look at the blackboard. It went on very slowly. Although I eventually learned to spell my way through a Russian text - of which I still did not understand anything, I quickly realized that it would be easier to learn a Slavic language that used Roman letters.

Therefore, I found a teacher in Polish. It was a sailor who at the beginning of the war ended up in Sweden. He started to tell us that Polish was a language that was difficult to pronounce from a written text since it was difficult to find out of where the stress was on a word. He said that by singing a song with Polish text, we would automatically figure out the pronunciation and where the stress should be put. He had duplicated some songs, which we then sang in chorus. The idea was good. We learned the rhythm and melody of the language..

Shortly after I visited my Mother in Lillstugan in Härryda. She was born in Poland and I now wanted to show her what I had learned. Boldly I sang one song after another. My Mother was terrified. It turned out that the songs were utterly disgusting Polish sailor songs. My Mother advised me to stop this teaching immediately. Then I got busy with my exams and after that went home. My urge to learn a Slavic language was unresolved. But my interest in international work continued.

Already shortly after the war, it appeared that the newly formed United Nations were not very successful. Binding decisions presupposed that all affected countries agreed on a case, but this happened rarely. Everywhere – particularly in the Western world -- it became clear to many that the world organization could only work if it got a more independent and strong ability to make decisions - a world government. Even today more than 60 years later, we have the same problem.

In November 1946 I saw an invitation to discuss this at a meeting of the Student Union. The invitation came from a group of young students, who all had gone to Frederiksberg High School. The Speaker was a young student of history Thomas Hatt Olsen. He was one of the most gifted people I ever have met. He was elected as the first president of the association ONE WORLD (in Danish Een Verden), which was established that same evening. At the meeting there were 17 persons present, all of them students except one: the journalist editor Anker Kirkeby from the newspaper Politiken. He did not want to join the board because he wanted to be free to write about the organization. I was elected to the board, which only consisted of students. My task on the board was to edit a little magazine, which also was called "One World." Moreover, I got the assignment to create a special Student faction. Our membership grew rapidly, partly thanks to Anker Kirkeby's writing in Politiken. Local associations were established around the country. Many famous people joined the organization. Soon the poet Piet Hein joined our board and became chairman. As a result, I very often visited his home in Hellerup. He had married Kathrine Højer, who as mentioned previously attended Metropolitan School simultaneously with me and at that time was the girlfriend of the later Actor Bjorn Watt Boelsen.



*Thomas Hatt Olsen and I*

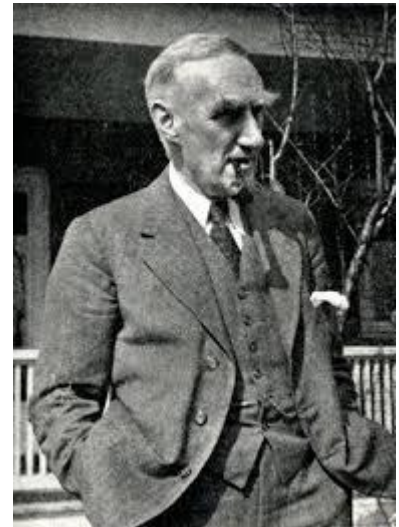


*Piet Hein      Newspaper caricature of three of "OneWorld"s*

*Chairmen: the actor Ebbe Rhode, Piet Hein, Prof. Poul Brandt Rehberg*

## **France.**

We had also established contacts with similar organizations in other countries. The organization had its origin in the U.S. under the name "World Federalists." Associations around the world joined together as the "World Movement for World Federal Government ."The international president was Lord John Boyd Orr, who had been Minister of Supply in Britain during the war and after the war became chairman of the UN food organization FAO. It was also agreed to establish an international student organization under the name "World Student Federalists ."Boyd Orr visited us in Denmark to give lectures. We had arranged the finest suite at the Hotel Angleterre for him and the board gave a dinner for him at the hotel. I especially remember the dessert, a cake that I baked quite often later called Boyd Orr-cake. It had an almond base with apples and at the top a hazelnut meringue. It was served with vanilla custard.



In spring 1947 we got an invitation from the French Student Federalist organization to come to Paris, where the organization "World Student Federalists " would formally be established. From Denmark we got together a delegation of five to take part. I was chairman of the delegation and had my girl friend Rigmor with me. The correspondence with the French went a little sluggish as they were probably just as inexperienced as we were. At that time it was almost impossible to get currency for such a trip, so we agreed with the French for a so-called "clearing." They should take care of us financially, and we would, in turn, provide them with money when they came to Denmark.

We were informed that the conference was to take place at Chateau Grignon near Paris and start around the 18th August. On 15th August, we went by train from Copenhagen to Paris – a very long and strenuous trip on wooden seats. It was appalling to run through the totally devastated Germany with ruined cities such as Hamburg and Cologne. Food was nearly impossible to get during the trip.



*Cologne station with the partly ruined cathedral*

We had no German money, but cigarettes could be used as currency. At one station I bought a slice of very coarse bread with a jam that was made from beets. I paid with a single cigarette and got a lot of paper money back.

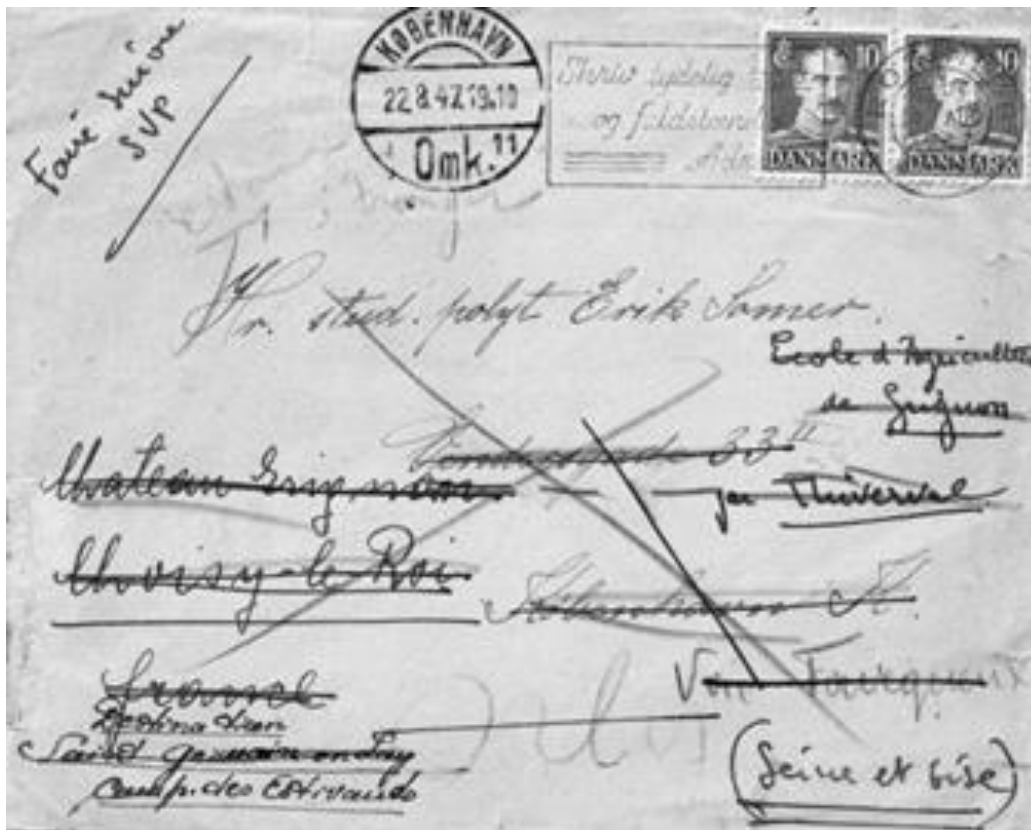
After nearly two days' journey, we arrived at Gare du Nord in Paris. We had expected to be received by our French hosts, but no one was there. Already at home I

had found out that Chateau Grignon was in the suburb of Choisy-le-Roi, south of Paris, and had also given this address to my Mother.

We had only a few francs with us and took the metro to Gare d'Orsay, from where the train to Choisy-le-Roi went. When we arrived there, we found out that the distance to the castle was 7 km. It was terribly hot. I had a lot of baggage, including a tuxedo and a typewriter. We dragged ourselves away sweaty and tired after the long train ride. The castle turned out to be a seminary on summer holidays and virtually empty. After some yelling on our part, a window on the second floor opened, and a priest stuck his head out and asked what we wanted. He knew absolutely nothing of any Congress, but informed us that there was another Chateau Grignon west of Paris. The nearest railway station was called Plaisir-Grignon. Without little "plaisir" we returned to Paris and the metro.

We arrived at Gare St.Lazare and from there took a train to Plaisir- Grignon. It was this letter from my mother, which was returned to her getting dark. Late at night we arrived at the castle, an agricultural

college. They had heard about the conference, but no arrangements had been made for us nor was there any trace of our French friends. However, we were allowed to sleep in a dormitory. The next morning, we were advised to go to St.Germain-en-Laye, where the castle had been converted into a youth hostel.



*This letter from my mother, which was returned to her as "address unknown", shows our three stations: Chateau Grignon – Ecole d'Agriculture de Grignon and Saint Germain en Laye.*

It was Sunday. Telephone calls to the French "hosts" were fruitless. We went to the palace St.Germain-en-Laye, where some Catholic priests in long brown cowls and heavy mountain boots received us and assigned us a mattress in a large dormitory, housed in one of the castle's great halls on the first floor. Through large French doors, we could get out on a balcony that went around the entire castle. This high point gave us a magnificent view over Paris. (Some years later I visited the palace again. It was by then converted into an archaeological museum. I went to the same balcony and looked out. In the park in front of the palace, the trees had been felled during the war to provide fuel, but they had now grown up, so one could no longer see Paris from there).

At night it was unbearably hot so Rigmor and I moved our mattresses out onto the balcony. In the morning we were awakened by a monk kicking us with his heavy boots. It had rained a little in the



morning, leaving the mattresses a little wet. He shouted that we should replace the mattresses. We fled quickly from the scene and went to Paris, where we immediately went to the office of the French organization that had invited us. Nobody was there. Neighbors told us that our hosts had probably gone to another conference in Montreux, Switzerland. They had probably forgotten to tell us remote Danes about the cancellation of our conference.

We were not the only ones who were in distress. On the way down we met four young tall fair men, who looked very angry. It turned out to be the Norwegian delegation. Like us, they had very little money. By pooling our funds, we had enough for one night at a very cheap hotel before we returned home.

We decided that Montmartre was probably the place where we would find a cheap hotel. The Metro took us to Place Pigalle at the edge of Montmartre.

We walked up the first side street, rue Houdon, where all the hotels looked quite shabby except for Number 9 which appeared to be slightly better. We went in - it was called Hotel Malakoff - and asked for rooms. After some hesitation, apparently because one of us was a woman, we were assigned rooms. I got a double room together with a young student named Bent.



*Rue Houdon with hotel Malakoff, the white building in the center.*

While we took care of our luggage, there was a knock on the door and two naked girls came in. We had landed in a brothel! While we managed to get them out of our room, one of the Norwegians didn't. When we prepared to leave the next day, it turned out that his dalliance had fallen in love in him and would not let him go. He was loyal to us and said that he would only stay there if all of us could stay.

The girls consulted together about this situation and made an offer to us. We were allowed to stay there for free if we would provide them with clients. They told us that the best customers were Allied soldiers, and there were many of them in Paris in 1947. The bars where these soldiers came were "off limits" for the girls, but not for us since we came from Allied countries.

Therefore we should go to these bars, find clients for them and take them to the bar "Au Soleil Levant" on the corner of the Place Pigalle and Rue Houdon. There they would meet the girls. For the next

two weeks we lived in Paris as pimps! Rigmor was the best for the job because, as a girl, she quickly met soldiers. She would deflect their advances by claiming that she was having her period or that she had a venereal disease, but, she would tell them, she knew some nice girls. Quickly, she got them in to a taxi which was told to drive to "Au Soleil Levant."



*Rigmor and I in the Luxembourg park*

After 14 days, most of us had to go home, as work called, but one of the Norwegians and I remained. During our activities in a bar we had made friends with two English deserters. They lived in a tent camp in an empty lot just by the Ministry of War. There we moved in.

*The camp near the Ministry of War*



Here I met a Swedish friend, Bosse Gustafsson, who was a painter. I knew him from Gothenburg, where he was in love with Axel Randrup's sister. He was a funny guy who chased all the girls in the tent camp. Many years later I met him again in Copenhagen. By then, he was a writer, with two successful books, one of which was filmed - "Kungsleden"- The King's Trail about happenings along a famous trail in Northern Sweden.



*Bosse Gustafsson*

If I wanted to stay in France, I would have to find a job. The two British deserters, the Norwegian and I went to the French Ministry of Education, which had a student employment agency. There we got jobs as grape pickers in Pouilly-Fuisse in Southern Burgundy. Mine was with a winegrower, named Monsieur Dondin. To facilitate our journey we got a letter from the ministry allowing us to hitchhike and asking our employers to apologize if we were late because of this unpredictable mode of travel. We went to Place d'Italie on the southern outskirts of Paris, and tried to get lifts going South.

Soon we found out that it was useless to try to keep all four of us together. First, we divided into two groups of two, but soon I left my companion. Along the way I got a lift with a traveling circus, who hired me as circus servant. For 14 days I raised tents and packed them together, took care of animals and paraded with a fine circus uniform. Then I felt that I had to move on.

Near Beaune in the north of Burgundy, I got a lift with a winegrower. I told him that my biggest dream was to lay down with open mouth in front of a full wine barrel, from which the bung had been removed. He laughed and drove me to his farm to fulfill my desire. He called all his people together, placed me under a three meter high wine barrel. Then a man came with a sledgehammer and loosened the bung. I was simply washed away by the strong jet of wine. I was completely soaked in red wine. Having placated my desire, the winegrower said good bye to me.

It was evening. I had only the shorts and the shirt I had on. All my paraphernalia fitted into a canvas bag designed to hold a gas mask. I purchased that bag at the flea market in Clignancourt when I sent the tuxedo, typewriter and everything else home with Rigmor. It was hot, and the wine had evaporated and everything was sticky on me. How could I expect to get a lift in this condition? I found a small stream that crossed the road and jumped in with my clothes on to wash away the wine. I then went to sleep in open air under a bush. The next morning I woke up with the worst pain in the back I have yet experienced in my life.

In this state, I arrived that evening in Pouilly, where I immediately went to see Monsieur Dondin, a very hot-tempered gentleman who received me in quite a grumpy manner. Not only was I almost fourteen days late, but I was totally incapacitated and he now had to feed me. I was put up on a loft, where I could sleep on a bunch of hay.

The next morning when I felt no better, Monsieur Dondin fell into a rage. “Monsieur Dindon, I'll soon get better,” I said soothingly. When he heard this, he threw me out immediately. I was completely baffled. What had I said? I went to see Monsieur Henry Plumet, who was the employer of two of my other mates. He was a younger, very nice man and also the village mayor. When I told him what had happened and how I had tried to address M. Dindon, he laughed loudly. “Did you really call him *Dindon*? Do you know what this means?” I looked at him inquiringly. “The man is called *Dondin*.



You've called him *Dindon* which means a male turkey, and it is his nickname, which he obviously does not want to hear. He must have thought that you were making fun of him.”

*Erik in M. Henri Plumet's vineyard. Every morning and every afternoon we got a small barrel holding 2.5 l of wine. At lunch and dinner we got more wine and the strong Marc de Bourgogne. I was nearly constantly drunk.*

Fortunately, I then got a job with Monsieur Henry Plumet. He lived with his elderly mother, and under their excellent care I recovered quickly. I worked there for approximately 14 days.

Mme. Plumet was a woman of wide reading. One Sunday, she took me up on one of the low mountains, which are characteristic for that area. There she stood on the edge of a vertical rock with her long white hair fluttering in the wind and declaimed a poem by the French national poet Lamartine, who had stood at the same place when he was inspired to write the poem she recited. In the vertical rock wall, there was in fact a cave where people had lived in the Neolithic age in a period called Solutreen after the main town in the area. I had heard that name before from an archaeologist friend of my father in Vienna, Dr. Otto Hauser. When visiting us, he once told me about his excavations in Solutré and gave me a book about the Stone Age people. I still have this book which described the district where I now was.



*M. Plumet and some of the students picking grapes.*

Every evening after work M. Plumet took me into his wine cellar, where he told me about the wines from different vineyards, which he owned. At each barrel there was a small silver cup called a *tâtevin*. With a large glass pipette he took some wine from the barrel and from a distance he sprayed wine into the cup, without wasting a drop. After a fortnight, I thought I could taste the difference between the vintage and location of every wine. Pouilly-Fuisse is a well known excellent white wine. Plumet's white wine was sold to the Danish royal family, and Mme. Plumet was very proud of this. After my return, I corresponded for some years with M. and Mme. Plumet. Mme. Plumet was a royalist and wanted to know more about the Danish royal family. I sent her many issues of a Danish weekly, which always featured our royalty.

I had got a taste for harvest work and went to a place near Perpignan to work harvesting chestnuts. I did not know that you had to bring thick leather gloves to protect yourself against the very sharp thorns on the chestnut husks. After one day's work I got blood poisoning and was hospitalized. When I got fit again, I had just enough money to take the train back to Paris.



There I met at once a chap, whom I had met previously in Paris. He worked on the Danish broadcasts for the French state radio. He wanted to go home on vacation and needed a replacement. I got the job. This led to some wonderful experiences. In addition to having to read the day's news text which we got in French and had to translate, we also got the opportunity to be involved in some public events.





I took part in a press conference with de Gaulle in the small town Colombey-les-deux-Eglises where the General lived. I interviewed a Danish magician at an international conference of magicians. I also earned a lot of money, got new clothes and moved into a good hotel near the Sorbonne.

*Charles de Gaulle's house – le Boiserie – in Colombey les deux Eglises.*

When my friend came back after 10 days, I went home to Denmark. When I arrived home, my mother saw me and began to cry hysterically. I had neither cut my hair nor shaved in all the time I had been gone to France. I had long wild hair and beard.

We had a visit from my Aunt Sala from Israel at the time. She was a sweet girl, who convinced me that I had to do something about my appearance. When I had shaved and been to the barber, my Mother calmed down.

It was now close to Christmas and I had lost half a year of my studies at the University. I was not able to catch up because I had not taken part in the chemistry lab exercises, which had started at the beginning of the term. France cost me a one-year extension of my study, but my experiences there were more rewarding to me than a wasted year.

I took a job as a lab technician at the chemistry laboratory at the Nordic Cable and Wire Factory on Amager. I had to make spectral analyses on samples of the metal to be cast the following morning in order to ensure that it had the correct composition. Therefore I had to meet at four in the morning.

My boss was Dr. Kühnel Hagen. He had also taught at the Technical University and written the textbook on inorganic analyses. He was himself trained in the military which affected his behavior. Extremely harsh and overbearing, he always arrived in time in the morning and stood with a pocket watch in his hand if one just arrived even a minute too late.

I had agreed with Professor Th. Bjerger, who was my teacher in physics, to make a special study in spectral analysis and atomic theory. It was also agreed with Kühnel Hagen that besides my regular work I should have the opportunity to conduct the analyses, which belonged to my special study. But every time I tried to get on with it, Kühnel Hagen would give excuses for not letting me begin. After a few months I complained about it and he immediately threw me out. Since then I have harbored such a



hatred for this person that I went over to the other side of the street when I met him when he came to the Technical University as he often did.

I decided that I would never have a job where I would need to rise so early in the morning. And I have stuck to this decision since then.

I quickly got another job at the Nordic Synthesis Laboratory at Frederiksberg. The boss - Theander - was a skilled chemist who had never completed his studies. I had to carry out a number of chemical synthesis tasks. We prepared mustard gas for use for military training purposes. It was unpleasant and dangerous work that was done without what we today would regard as obvious safety precautions. I would depolymerize polystyrene to produce styrene, a volatile liquid found naturally in hyacinths, giving them their characteristic scent. But here I had to do with styrene in quantities corresponding to millions of hyacinths. Since then I have been hypersensitive to this odor, and therefore have not allowed hyacinths in our house.

I gave up the job after a few months, partly because I now had to look after my studies, partly because I still spent a lot of time on work with the One World association which was growing very fast. During 1948 there were local groups in virtually all towns in Denmark. A secretary for the association was hired. Within the youth and student group, which I chaired, was formed an active group. Young people helped in the office, arranged meeting facilities, produced and distributed information material, etc.

Since we considered a world government as the sole means in the long run to prevent a nuclear war, much of our activity aimed at not only explaining the threats posed by nuclear weapons, but also describing the possibilities for peaceful development of nuclear energy.

Together with my physics professor Th. Bjerre, I started to prepare an exhibition on the dangers and opportunities of nuclear power. We had a professional exhibition company to handle the practical arrangements. Exhibition architects were Jorgen Bo and Vilhelm Wohler, who also were architects for the museum Louisiana. Exhibition objects were made available to us from many international sources. The exhibition was held in 1948 at Charlottenborg in the center of Copenhagen and was a huge success.

In 1948 I invited a group of German students for a week's stay in Denmark where they would learn how a democratic society functions. The students were accommodated privately and the University of Copenhagen made facilities available for our meetings. It was the very first time after the war that a group of young Germans came to Denmark. It caused much debate, but the fact that I as a Jew had arranged it was a guarantee that there were no Nazi ideas behind it. Nevertheless, there were many who criticized the arrangement, including the Danish Jewish Community. I had to explain that we could not resolve the German problem by beating all Germans to death. Since we had to live side by

side with them, the best we could do was to show them that there were other and better ways of life other than the Nazi way.

The event was obviously just a drop in the ocean, but after that it became more common to set up such meetings.

### **World Student Federalists.**

As mentioned previously, I failed to take part in a conference organized by the One World international student organization since the French, who had invited us to an inaugural meeting in Paris in 1947, were, at another conference in Montreux and where the organization was founded. In the meantime, we stayed at a brothel in Paris where we established international contacts and I was elected to the international student organization's executive committee.

In 1949 I finally participated in an international student conference in Amsterdam. We were billeted in one of the large passenger ships which were built for traffic between Holland and the Dutch East Indies. These ships had been vacant since Indonesia was established as an independent state. Lord John Boyd Orr opened the meeting and I was elected president of the world organization World Student Federalists. On the board were a Ceylonese, a Nigerian, a Japanese, a German, an American and other from various nationalities.

The organization had a paid secretary. The head office was located in Paris. During the year of my presidency, I attended board meetings in Paris, London and Bonn, where we had meetings and lived in a bombed out house. I made many international friends and acquaintances.

One of the more exciting was a leading Indian politician Rammanohar Lohia who was the leader of the Indian Workers' Party, and who visited me in Copenhagen. I introduced him to One World Chairman Piet Hein, who arranged a lunch for him and me in Tivoli. I think the roller coaster there was Rammanohar's best experience in Denmark. No, in a letter he sent me later, he wrote that next to Tivoli, what impressed him most was that he had met a poet whose verse had sold a million copies worldwide. Several years later Rammanohar was murdered in India.

I want to mention a few other interesting people I came in close contact with through my work for One World. The actor Ebbe Rode joined One World quite early. Because it meant a lot to us to have famous people as active members, he was elected to the board of which I also was member. We often had board meetings at my home in Vendersgade, and Ebbe Rode was a frequent guest. He was very straightforward, did a lot of work for the organization and very often went on One world lecture tours where he gave readings.



One of the international personalities who were active in the movement was Abbé Pierre, a French monk, who always dressed in a black cowl and heavy mountain boots. He was particularly active in the youth movement, which I chaired. He visited me in Copenhagen. My mother was horrified when she saw the bearded man with the heavy boots come into the room with its fine carpets. He often visited the Student World Federalist Office in Paris. The girls who worked there were always terrified when he came because he always pawed over them. Later Abbé Pierre became known as the organizer of the international ragpicker camps – the Emmaus movement, which made collections in favor of international relief work.

Abbé Pierre was born in 1912 as Henri Grouès. He participated in the French Resistance during the war and got his new name. While I knew him, he was a member of the French Parliament. He started the Emmaus movement late in 1949 and soon after he discontinued his activity in the One World organization. In 1996 he was notorious for having supported anti-Semitic theories that the German extermination camps were a myth and that the Jews controlled the world. He now lives in an Italian monastery, but still manages the Emmaus movement. (He died in 2007 after the publication of my memoirs in Danish).

One World had branches all over Denmark. In Odense the local chairman was the city waterworks director Georg Andrup who until his death a few years ago was one of my best friends. He was a man of strong, often provocative opinions. He was one of the first who cared about our aquatic environment. He later fell out with the mayor and had to take early retirement. I was a frequent visitor at his home in Odense and later in Kerteminde where he moved after his retirement.

In 1949 I started to cut down on my commitment for the Danish One World association. The main reason was that I had to gather my strength to complete my study for the chemical engineering degree. I had already lost a year and did not want to lose another. Furthermore, I was beginning to doubt whether it would be possible to achieve the goal that the association had set itself - a world



government. The Iron Curtain was holding Eastern Europe in an increasingly tight grip. The Cold War raged. There seemed to be no possibility of the Soviet bloc to come to terms with the United Nations, which in most cases was proving to be powerless. I decided to stop the activity when my presidential term at the World Student Federalists expired in 1950. This took place at a great congress in Folkestone, England. It also meant my farewell to Rigmor.

For at this time I had met Nete, whom I married in 1950.

*I hold the opening speech at the conference in Folkestone.*

## **The Chemical Engineer becomes a family man**

In January 1950 I got my M.Sc. as chemical engineer with my thesis on silicate chemistry. My task was to design a plant for the production of ceramic sewer pipes on the island of Bornholm, where a suitable clay was available. For this reason, I spent a month in 1949 on Bornholm, learning more about this trade at the Hasle Stoneware Factory.



*Hasle Stoneware Factory in 1949..*

I stayed at the youth hostel in Hasle and became almost a member of the family of the hostel manager. I had

an easy time at the plant and managed to see most of Bornholm, where I had not been before.

Soon after completing my exam, I got my first professional job at the company of Christian Fahrner, who sold machines, kilns and materials for the ceramic and glass industries in Scandinavia. Shortly after starting in the company, I visited the large ceramic factories in Sweden, Finland and Norway along with my boss Christian Fahrner.

For this purpose, Fahrner rented a small private plane, an Auster MarkV. Fahrner had no pilot license, but wanted to learn to fly. Later, he became president of the Danish sports flying club.

As a pilot, we had a young man who lacked some of the necessary flying hours to get his certificate as professional pilot. The machine we flew on was a 2-seater machine with two seats side by side. Behind the seats was a triangular trunk, where a person could sit crouched. This person was I. I sat with my back to the flight direction and had a fine view, because the cabin roof was of clear plastic. The machine was a school machine but with the pedals for the student removed since we flew without a qualified teacher. However, there were small connecting stubs, intended for fastening the pedals. With stockinged feet, one could hold his toes around the stubs and thereby with some difficulty control the flight while also stretching to the left and making use of the pilot's steering wheel. In this way, Fahrner flew a large part of the two weeks trip in order to practice his flying skill.



*An Auster Mark V plane. I was crouching in the narrow compartment behind the wing.*

We had a lot of promotional material on the tour, catalogs, descriptions, samples etc. We started from Copenhagen to Jönköping in Sweden as the first stopover. The machine was fully loaded with petrol in the tank which was in the front of the machine just behind the motor. We had severe overload, especially with me in the trunk at the rear. Shortly after leaving Copenhagen Airport, the machine became gradually heavier at the tail as we consumed the fuel from the tank in the front. It became clear that we would arrive at Jönköping as a helicopter, if we continued.

Therefore we returned to Copenhagen where we emptied the machine for baggage and put it all up on luggage scales. All baggage was examined carefully by us to see what we could do without. Fahrner rang for his wife who would take over everything we would leave behind us. Out went most sales literature, all spare clothes, even toilet utensils were removed, so we only had one set for sharing. Then we flew off again. And this time we came to Jönköping and thence to Gavle, where we visited a factory.

Then came the most beautiful part of the trip. The flight over the archipelago of the Aaland Islands to Turku. The weather was beautiful, clear skies and sunshine. There were hundreds of islands below us. And the same circular pattern repeated itself at each island. Farthest out the blue sea that turned green in shallow water, then a fringe of white foam on the coast, which consisted of red porphyry rock and further inland on the island the green pine forest.

We came to Turku and were received by the airport staff with a gloomy look. It turned out that just before we landed, a Finnish plane similar to ours had crashed during the landing and the pilot and his fellow passenger were killed on the spot. The machine had come too far down while landing, the wheels had hit a wire fence, so the machine tipped over. We will revisit this incident later.

In Turku we visited a few ceramic plants, and then we flew to Helsinki. On our way we came close to Porkkala which was then still occupied by the Russians and consequently was a no-fly zone. However, we got too close resulting in two Russian fighter planes flying toward and passing by our plane in order to chase us north. Our plane came thereby in strong oscillations, which felt especially uncomfortable on my small trunk where I sat with neither seat nor any belt, so I moved around back and forth which made me nauseous.

In Helsinki, we were billeted at the first class hotel Mannerheim, and visited the Arabia china factories where our company had just successfully completed a large tunnel kiln. Because of this, the top managers of Arabia invited us to a nice dinner at the city's newest hotel Tornio (the tower) with the restaurant at the top of the skyscraper. Coffee was served after dinner.



*Hotel Tornio with the restaurant at the top.*

The waiter came and told us that for the first time after the war, Bols apricot liqueur had arrived in Finland. We had to try it. It was a sweet, but strong stuff. After the first two glasses, the pilot, who sat beside me and I agreed that we should not have more if we wanted to be sober for the flight next morning. However, our hosts continued to fill our glasses. When nobody noticed it, the pilot and I emptied our glasses under the table where there was a fine Oriental rug. This was repeated several times, so the pilot and I could



hardly find a place to put our feet due to the increasing liqueur puddle on the floor. Meanwhile, the others became more and more tipsy, especially my boss.

When we broke up, we went to our hotel. My boss flew with outstretched arms and wobbly steps through the streets, while he was making loud aero plane sounds. It ended with a police patrol car taking Fahrner to detention, while the pilot and I got a well deserved sleep at Hotel Mannerheim.

The next morning, we packed our few belongings and picked Fahrner up from detention, and then we went to the airfield to find our plane that stood in a hangar. We also found an Auster plane and when we got up in it, we discovered that the windshield and the metal structure in the cabin roof were covered with blood and brain residue. We had accidentally found the crashed plane from Turku, which had been shipped to Helsinki for further studies. This was too much for Fahrner, who promptly vomited.

From Helsinki we flew over Turku to Bromma airport in Stockholm, and then to ceramic plants in Porsgrunn and Egersund in Norway and from there back to Denmark. It took several days before I could fully stretch my legs after having been crouched for so long in the trunk of the plane.

During the summer of 1950, I was also sent to England by the company, partly to negotiate with the factories which we represented in Scandinavia, partly to learn more about the machines, kilns and products that we dealt with. I lived in Stoke-on-Trent, which is capital of "the Potteries," where the ceramic industry and its suppliers are concentrated.



*Stoke-on-Trent around 1950. Note the many old-fashioned coal fired “bottle kilns”*

My main host was Mr. Podmore, the owner of a large company that produced glazes for the ceramic industry. His company had specialized in glazes that were not toxic because of their lead content. Lead poisoning was then a scourge that hit many workers in the industry. In addition, it was important that the finished article not release lead, lest it poisons the user. It was especially a problem in Denmark, because potters argued that without a high amount of lead in the glaze, it would be impossible to produce ceramics with Danish clay without having the glaze crackle afterwards. This problem would be my concern for much of the next year.

Mr. Podmore and his wife were lovely people. I almost became a member of their family. Mr. Podmore, who was a chemist, had worked during the war in the Ministry of Supply, where he had made various studies for the benefit of soldiers at the front. He showed me a report which he claimed had saved many soldiers' lives.

It was called "Pre-or Postlactation of Tea." It dealt with the great question whether milk should be poured into the cup before or after the tea is poured in. He showed that the traditional way where you pour milk in the cup before the tea was the right thing. He explained it this way:

English tea usually has a very high tannic acid content which is unhealthy because it can cause ulcers. The proteins in the milk are able to neutralize tannic acid, but only if they are not destroyed - denatured by heat near the boiling point. When the milk is poured into the cold cup and tea is poured into the cup afterwards, then the milk is able to neutralize a major part of the tannic acid before it becomes too hot. On the other side, if milk is poured into the hot tea, it is denatured immediately and cannot play its role. "Think," said Mr. Podmore, "how many soldiers I've saved from ulcers, because the military at my request arranged for the tea to be treated properly before it was served to the soldiers."

Mr. and Mrs. Podmore were quite sociable. While I was there, they would arrange a mask ball to which I was invited. It would be on a Wednesday. How could I dress up? I found out that my only option was to come as Caesar, using the sheet from my guest room as a toga.

I lived several miles from the Podmore's house. In England there are so many strange people, so nobody noticed anything when I entered a bus wearing my sheet. At the Podmores I was received by the maid. She called Mrs. Podmore, who invited me inside. There were no other guests. We sat down in the living room and entertained each other with generalities. Then Mrs. Podmore asked me if I would have dinner with them. Yes, Thank you, I would be pleased. I was still the only guest.

No comments were made about my beautiful masquerade costume. After dinner Mr. Podmore and I went to the study and we had a good chat about glazes. At 10pm I thought that it now was time to go home. I took leave of them and at the front door Mrs. Podmore said: "It was nice to see you, but do come to our mask ball next Wednesday." – O, I had mistaken the day. And it was typically English that they would make no comments about my mistake. Next Wednesday there was a wonderful mask ball at the Podmores!

This was a good trip to England where I really learned a lot about ceramics. It was actually my second trip to England that year because I also was in Folkestone for the World Student Federalist Congress.

Shortly after coming home from this congress, I was invited to the home of one of my acquaintances from my One World activities. There I met a girl who seemed quite interested in me. That night I stayed there together with this girl who was named Agnete Klint. It turned out later on that Agnete together with my colleague had attended a meeting where I gave a lecture and she found out that she would like to become acquainted with me. And that was what happened. We soon became inseparable, even though our living conditions made it a little difficult. I still lived in a tiny room in our apartment in Vendersgade. She lived with an aunt in

Hellerup, a suburb of Copenhagen, while she went to the Copenhagen Business School studying to become a correspondent.

Agnete, or Nete, as she preferred to be called, was from Ringsted, a town in the center of Seeland, where her father was a goldsmith. I was soon invited to meet her parents, where I in all decency would sleep alone in a room. Her mother was lovable, while her father first had to size me up. Somewhat later in the year, we had to confess to her parents: Nete was pregnant. That settled the matter. We had to get married as soon as possible. This we did at the Copenhagen City Hall on 24 November 1950. Only our closest family was present. Afterwards her father gave a dinner at Wivex near Tivoli, then Copenhagen's leading restaurant.

During the dinner I was asked if I had any idea about what the child should be called. My favorite author was Rainer Maria Rilke. In a novel he called the heroine Abelone. I have always loved this name. So I suggested that a girl should be called Abelone. But what if it was a boy? Spontaneously I replied Abelard, the hero of the middle age novel Abelard and Heloise. I continued: If we will get twin girls they should be called Abelone and Abeline and if it became twin boys Abel and Abelard. Amongst my father-in-law's many virtues, a sense of humor was not to be found. He was shocked by my suggestions and had a heart attack. OK, I was ready for a compromise. When our first child arrived in 1951, she was called Lone.



*Pregnant Nete and I*

As we got married in a hurry, we had not yet found any place where we could live together. So in the beginning we continued to live separately. After a few months we managed to sublease a bungalow in Soeborg on Daltoftevej while its owner was in Greenland for some scientific studies.

Some months later, we were lucky enough to find an apartment in Valby on Landlystvej in a building built during the war and therefore not very comfortable. There were scary sounds. Our flat was on the second floor. Below us lived a family where the boy practiced violin.

It sounded terrible and irritated a family on the third floor so much that they banged with a broomstick on their floor, in order to make us stop the noise coming from below. On the same floor as ours lived a young couple with a violent husband. Time and again, his wife sought refuge with us, while the man would pound on our front door.

But it was now our home. Nete's father bought all our furniture. He was chairman of the Industry Society in Ringsted. Therefore, all furniture had to be provided by Ringsted craftsmen. It was not quite to our liking, but we had no choice.

The most serious difficulty in this time was that Nete's pregnancy was hard on her. She felt sick most of the time. So the delivery, which went well on 10 June 1951, was a relief, especially since our baby Lone was a lovely girl. The day before, Nete hung up curtains with a lot of stretching, and these exercises had probably sped up the delivery. However, it came at the right time.



*Nete and Lone at the maternity home.*

*Nete, I and Lone 6 months old.*



During 1951, I became more and more tired of working for Christian Fahrner. I was mainly engaged in sales work and missed more technical work. When I saw that there was a job available at the Technological Institute, Department of Chemistry, I applied for it and got it.

It was an extremely versatile work I was assigned under department head Palle Bang's friendly management. I was responsible for chemical-analytical work, where I was assisted by an elderly gentleman, candidate Larsen. He was originally an agricultural graduate and started with soil and water analysis, but would eventually handle a broad spectrum of tasks, but sometimes with a bit outdated methods. Also I would work on the department's tasks in the plastics area, along with engineer Mrs. Moustgaard. Plastics were in some respects relatively new here so soon after the war. In addition to helping industry to work with plastics, the general public should become



more aware of the advantages and disadvantages associated with the various types of plastics. This required participation in exhibitions. In collaboration with different housewife associations, I put up exhibitions at various cattle shows where I demonstrated numerous plastic articles.

The department worked closely with the National Police's technical department. This activity was originally started by chief engineer Dr. Th. Madsen, who had previously been head of the chemistry department, but now had another job at the Technological Institute. I was sent to learn his tricks. He told me that there was one thing that was most important at all tasks, and it was "to stare, stare, stare." Then one would eventually see what was the matter. This motto has been mine in all my work life.

I can give you an example. I was called out to many fires where I, with the police, should unravel the cause. We often found one thing in common with many fires in straw and hay barns on farms or in wood chip silos at furniture factories. We'd see that at the top of the burned straw or chips a charred funnel which continued as a tubular duct down through the material and ended at the bottom in a place with some access to air. The Police called these channels "rat channels" and considered the case solved, blaming it on the spontaneous combustion of some material which rats had gathered in a nest inside the pile. But no remains of rats would be found.

However, I began to wonder if there could be another cause. What would happen if an incandescent particle for example from a cigarette landed on top of the pile. The adjacent material would catch fire and the glowing particle would sink slightly into the pile. The heat here would result in an upward air flow that would draw air from the pores in the material below up to the burning material, while the smoke from the fire would lack oxygen necessary for the spread of fire upwards. The fire would thus propagate down into the material continuously in the direction from which fresh air is drawn and eventually it would come down to the surface, which had the best air supply. From there, the fire would then spread to the walls of the container and eventually to the entire stored material.

In order to verify my theory, I bought 2 cubic meters of dried, finely chopped hay and placed it in a big pile in the yard at the Technological Institute. A burning cigarette was put on the top. After a moment it was gone down into the grass and leaving just a small hole surrounded by a thin black ring on the surface. Only very light smoke emanated from the hole. After one day, nothing was visibly except the light smoke still wafting up. Finally, after almost two days, a fire broke out at the bottom of the pile. The fire was extinguished and the pile was cut in two halves. There was a nice very narrow burned channel from the surface and down to the location where the fire broke out.

Thus ended the rat channel theory. I wrote an article in the Police magazine and was invited to lecture on causes of fire at the Police Academy, where, of course, I told about this process.

Unfortunately, sometimes information disappears over time. A year ago a fire broke out in a grain silo in Esbjerg. To combat it, carbon dioxide was blown into the top of the silo. Obviously, that turned out to be useless as the fire was nourished from below and cannot be stifled from the top. Instead, carbon dioxide should have been blown into bottom of the silo.

I also became a specialist in reading what was written on a check that was torn out of a checkbook using photography. In the top check in the booklet the writing of the previous check causes a very light impression. Illuminating this check with light from the side gives a light shade to this impression. A photo is then taken and printed on paper with a sharp contrast, making the shade somewhat more visible. The copy is then photographed and printed with sharp contrast as many times as needed until one can clearly read what had been written on the previous check.

The Technological Institute had many crazy cases, and most ended up in the Chemistry Department with me. One day there came a smelly package. When we carefully opened it, we found a dead hen with an attached note: "What is the matter with this hen?" it said. We could only answer that the chicken was dead and that we did not work with such cases; the sender should have gone for a veterinarian, and that due to its state, we were not able to return the bird, but had to destroy it.

Another time, we received a package in which was found a piece of a chain from a water closet with a small lead weight at the end. The sender wrote that we should give him patents worldwide and exclusive rights to this invention. If the chain with the weight was held over the back of a pregnant cow, the weight would rotate if the cow was pregnant with a bull calf. If it was pregnant with a heifer calf, then it would move forward and back. Again we had to reject the sender's request and asked him to forward it to the Veterinary Faculty of the University, which probably cursed that we had referred the man to them.

We also had several cases of people who had invented perpetual motion machines. It was difficult to convince the inventors that they did not work. A very energetic man came several times. Each time after he had been rejected by an explanation of why his invention did not work, he would return with a new drawing with small modifications. The last time I saw him, I spent much time to explain to him that perpetual motion machines do not work in general and his in particular. Finally, he commented, "You took a load from my mind." He was now able to see that it could not be done. "Thank you," he said, "because you have freed me from my

hopeless thinking on this machine.” He walked toward the door and turned to me: “But you should think about it anyway.” When he came back some time after, I refused to see him.

In the early 1950s, the U.S. decided to give an economic boost to Europe - the Marshall Plan - so that countries could quickly overcome the consequences of the world war. Denmark also received a large sum of money that was spent in different ways for the benefit of industry. Among other things, there was a training program for so-called productivity consultants who could work for individual companies and assist in production improvements.

The Technological Institute came to play a significant role in this context, since several people - including me - were offered to undergo this training. So several times we were sent to the Institute's vacation home Salgaardshoej at Tisvilde where we got a concentrated education in many subjects in 14-day periods.



*The cliffs below Salgaardshoej and Kattegat. In the background Sweden.*

One of the subjects was social psychology, where we had professor Sigsgaard and Dr. Bahnsen as educators. As part of this training we were sent as interns in schools and businesses. I particularly remember two episodes in this context. At a school for mentally handicapped children I was to teach a small class about fractions. I started: “Here we have a pie. We divide into two parts. Each of them, we call for a 'twoth' or a half. So we divide the half pieces once more. How many parts do we have now? Count after me. Really - four. Each of the four parts, we call a fourth. Now we take each of the four elements and divide in half again. How many parts do we have now? Really - eight. When we split the pie into two pieces, called we each of them a 'twoth.' When we divided it into four parts, we called each part a fourth. Now we have divided it into eight parts, what shall we call each of these parts?” - No answer. I repeat the question. A little timid girl puts her hand up. “Well, what would you call each of the eight

parts?" I asked. The girl replies: "I will call them Yrsa". I stared stiffly into the air. Why would you call them Yrsa, I asked. - Well, because I think it's such a pretty name."

We also went for a trip to Juncker's sawmill in Koege to inquire into the employees' motivation to work. Juncker's manufactures beech parquet flooring. Much of the work consists in sorting the cut beech, which passes in front of the sorters on a conveyor belt where they extract the useful pieces.

Eventually, only the very worst wood - mainly thin strips of bark – are left on the belt. This leads to a shed, where the belt goes through a hole in the wall. Here a lonely man cuts the rejected wood into pieces of kindling and bundles it into large rolls. I talked with this man while he took one piece of wood after another and cut it up with the circular saw, in my opinion, an incredibly monotonous job. When I had gained his confidence, I asked him what he thought about his work. Oh, he liked it very much, he replied. What is it you like about your job. Well, it's so diversified. I was startled, but did not show. He went on cutting one piece of wood after the other, I asked: What made it so diversified? He pointed up to the hole where the wooden pieces came from and said: Some are short, some are long. It has been a lesson for me the rest of my life. Whatever you work with, it is possible to find the motivation to do so. When I am about to despair of a monotonous task, I say to myself - some are short, some are long - and then I can stand up to it again.

I also started ceramic consulting at the Institute. One of my first customers was a terrazzo worker Ejnar Soerensen, who lived on Jydeholmen. He came up to me dressed in bricklayer's clothes and with clogs filled with straw. He said that it had become fashionable to use flooring with ceramic mosaic instead of terrazzo. The ceramic small squares 2 x 2 cm were imported from abroad and were quite expensive. He would like to start a fabrication of these squares. He had a friend who was a mechanic, and he had an idea for a machine that could press those squares. The machine was absolutely unorthodox and remote from the usual methods for preparing such ceramic squares. He knew nothing about ceramics, and I had to prepare the recipe for the ceramic mixtures to be used to make these squares in several different colors. It all seemed a little uncertain, and I asked for a deposit of 5000 Danish Kroner (DKK) before I would start working for him. Oh, so I must go and make some floors - he said and left.

After a month he returned with 5000 DKK and I started to work the case. I had soon made mixtures in white, blue, green, brown and reddish. And these were just the colors he wanted. He bought some bags of the ingredients, mixed them in a concrete mixer and poured them on the machine made by his friend. The result were the best looking squares, one could imagine, made faster and of a better quality than if they had used the conventional machines. Then the work

had to be stopped again due to the lack of money. Again he spent time putting terrazzo on floors and then returned.

Now I had to help him find out how the squares could be fired. We soon found out that in a small electric ceramic kiln, he could only burn so few that it would last over a week to make enough squares for a single bathroom. From my work at Fahrner, I knew of a ceramic factory in Noerre Aaby on the island of Funen that had gone bankrupt. I had at one time offered them a tunnel kiln from one of our companies, but for them, it was too expensive. They chose instead a kiln from a competitor which turned out to be totally unusable. They came back to me and our company built a workable oven. In the meantime, the market changed and the products that the kiln could produce would no longer sell. Therefore, the factory could be bought cheaply.

Soerensen - Jydeholmen, as he called himself, went to Noerre Aaby. With samples of the squares I had made for him he convinced a bank to lend him the necessary capital and he bought the plant. It all worked well for him, only he thought that the tunnel kiln was impractical for his purposes. A tunnel kiln is a long brick channel where the goods to be burned are fed in the one end on small railway wagons. In the middle of the furnace are burners, where the wagons drive by. The combustion air is blown into the kiln from the end where the wagons exit. This cools the filled wagons, while the combustion air is preheated. That is a very economical combustion process used in all large factories.

For Sorensen, the problem was simply that it took a very long time to load the small squares onto the wagons where they had to lie flat in a single layer on refractory panels. These plates would then be stacked on some kind of shelves on the wagons. Soerensen wanted to run the unfired squares directly into the kiln without stacking them. Resolutely he tore the existing furnace down and he then built a kiln with a floor of refractory plates and tilted high up at the entrance and low at the exit, so that the squares, with just a gentle push from above, by gravity would slide through the kiln.

The burners were sitting as in an ordinary tunnel kiln in the middle of the oven. This had the added advantage that this kiln worked with natural ventilation without fans. Combustion air ascended from the kiln upward and drew fresh air in from the bottom. The world has never seen such a kiln before, but it worked perfectly. The squares moved from the machine that made them on a belt through a tube in which combustion air dried them, and thence directly into the furnace in which a mechanism constantly pushing them forward. They exited fully fired and cooled off at the bottom. He came to my house with the first results.

By that time, I had moved out to Bagsvaerd (more about that later) and Sorensen tiled my bathroom floor with his mosaics. Then he began selling them at a much lower price than for the

existing mosaic squares on the market. But the major importer of these pins - Evers - lowered his price so much that Soerensen could not compete. Shortly after he had to stop production.

Soerensen did not give up. In addition to installing floors, he also mounted wall tiles. At that time ordinary cement mortar was used for the mounting. He came to me at the Technological Institute and said he was dissatisfied with this mortar, partly because it was not sticky enough, so that the tiles had a tendency to fall off before the mortar was cured, and one had to wet the wall first, because the dry brick wall pulled moisture out of the mortar, and without water it cannot harden. I thought that I could help him. Without testing my solution, I advised him to try to add a particular substance, which I must keep secret, to the mortar. This he did, and he came joyfully back and told me that he had never had a better tile adhesive. Shortly after he started producing this mixture. Today he owns plants worldwide producing his tile adhesive LIP based on my recipe. He no longer needs to install floors, except perhaps in his villa with sea view, which he now has in Cannes.



*The LIP plant in Noerre Aaby today.*

He died in autumn 2005. I was contacted by a family member a few days later. She told me that Soerensen as he lay on his deathbed, several times had mentioned my name. He was sorry that he could not thank me for the help I had granted him. She promised him to tell me. I wrote a letter to his widow, but she was hospitalized with an incurable cancer. So I have not heard more from Noerre Aaby.

I have before mentioned that there was a poisoning problem with Danish ceramics caused by the use of the lead glazes. An expert committee was appointed to evaluate options to solve this



problem. The committee came with a report which I read shortly after I arrived at the Technological Institute. I found it to be very poor, even though the professor in silicate chemistry A.H.M.Andreasen was chairman of the committee.

I thought that I ought do something serious about it. I applied for a grant that would fund a study trip to England and Germany to find out how these countries resolved lead issues. I traveled in autumn 1952, first to England, where I again made contact with my old friend, Mr. Podmore. In both countries I visited the ceramic research institutes, the industrial health organizations and several ceramic factories. I learned much about how one could produce good lead-free glazes.

In Germany I went to Höhr-Grenzhausen, located in the Westerwald area east of the Rhine in the center of the German pottery industry.

Here there was a research institute where I worked for a few weeks and also visited several enterprises. After coming home I wrote a long report in which I managed to establish a mathematical formula for the preconditions for a glaze not to crack. Based on this formula, I could describe the appropriate glazes, which now are in general use. Thus the problem was solved for the Danish ceramic industry.



*The ceramic research institute in Höhr-Grenzhausen.*

I finished the trip by going to Bad Gastein in Austria. Here I had the opportunity to meet my father, whom I had not seen during the 15 years that had elapsed since we left Vienna in 1938. He was in Austria to negotiate compensation for the losses he had suffered due to the Nazis. During the war we could not correspond with him, except for very short messages via the Red Cross. After the war, there was some exchange of letters, but I had the impression that we were distanced.



We agreed to meet in Bath Gastein at the end of my German study trip. There he paid for me to stay a week. He told me a lot about his views on the relationship with my mother and how her brothers had helped to turn her away from him. He admitted, however, his infidelity to my mother. I cannot say that we became close. After I left Bad Gastein, I would never see him again. He died the following year in Israel of a heart attack.

*My Father and I in Bad Gastein in 1952.*

I will mention another job I had at the Technological Institute. A company called Golf, which made central heating radiators, had a problem with corrosion, causing hot water to

leak onto the floor. It was absolutely devastating for their business. So the factory turned to me and to the Technical University in order to solve the problem.

At the university a chemist named Hakon Nord was assigned the job as a theorist and I as a more practical guy. We found out that one could add a so-called inhibitor to the water. This prevented corrosion. As inhibitor we used was water glass, a soluble silicate. It was intended to remedy the problem, but, unfortunately water-glass, when it dries becomes a sharp abrasive. Therefore, when some water escaped at the circulation pump gasket, the pump shaft is worn, and then hot water leaked from there. We tried then to add some phosphate to the water, and this solved the problem. However, there was reason to investigate how and why phosphates functioned.

Hakon Nord, who in the meanwhile had become a good personal friend of Nete and me, put an enormous complicated device up in his laboratory. He worked with it for many years without ever publishing anything. Hakon lived with a German girl Margaret, with whom he had two children. After some years he met an English girl. He left Margaret without providing her and the children any assistance. This was too much for Nete and me. And it was the end of our friendship.

I also worked on the problem of phosphate as a corrosion inhibitor. I would like to examine whether, and if so how, it attached to the iron surface. It could be tested by an isotope technique using radioactive phosphate for the test and measuring the radioactivity on small pieces of sheet metal, which for varying time periods would be placed in water with the radioactive phosphate.

In 1953 the Society of Danish Engineers started a course in isotope techniques. I got the permission of the Technological Institute to go to this course, where the students at the end of the course would perform a task of their own choosing. I performed the previously mentioned experiments with phosphate, which showed that the phosphate formed a film on the steel surface in sub-seconds.

I must have been a good student, because I was asked to be a teacher in the subsequent courses. It was the beginning of my isotope work that would occupy me for the next 20 years.

In 1952 Nete and I were tired of staying at Landlystvej. We had planned to travel south in the summer, but the night before we were to leave was horrible. In the living room below us people were playing, singing and dancing. On the floor above us there was a heavy hammering onto the floor because they thought that the noise came from us. The woman in the other flat on our floor came in because her husband would kill her. We then decided to use the holidays to find another place to live.

At that time, a few years after the war, there was a great housing shortage. In order to encourage construction, the government offered incredibly attractive loans. One could get 40-year loans, which corresponded to 95% of construction costs at the incredibly low interest rate of 1.5%. The condition was the house should fulfill certain quality standards and it was limited in how much the construction could cost. The ceiling was 40,000 DKK corresponding to about 7000 US\$ [about \$62,000 2013 inflation adjusted US\$.]

Nete and I went to work systematically. On a map we pointed out the areas around Copenhagen where we would like to find a building lot. The first day we were in Birkerød and Bistrup without finding anything that suited us. The next day we were in Bagsvaerd. Using ads in the newspapers, we had found vacant lots, which we went to see together with a realtor. The second lot we visited, was Skraavej 12. The area was undeveloped, covered by alder trees and led down to a small lake called Nydam.

We could get the lot for 7000 DKR. Furthermore the municipality would get another 7000 DKK for road and sewer construction. It could be paid over a longer period.

Nete's cousin Carl Egil was an architect in Ringsted. With us, he inspected the land and accepted it. I drew sketches for a house on which Carl Egil based his architectural drawings and

description. On this basis, we sought and were granted the government loan. A lawyer in Ringsted assisted us, and through him we bought the land. Oddly enough, it turned out that it belonged to my uncle Mario, who had received it from a debtor who had no money to repay his debt.

Nete's father insisted that Ringsted builders undertook the construction. The bricklayer was a young man who had just established himself as a master mason without ever independently having completed a building. We choose him because he was the only one who offered us the bricklaying within the restrictions of the government loan.

Our own capital was 300 DKK. The remaining part of the 5% of the total construction costs that



we were to provide was covered by my painting the house. Before the walls were finished, I had to throw out the bricklayer because his work was horrible and he also stayed away for long periods. Fortunately, he had not yet received much money for the work done so I could get another master to finish the job.

*Our house in Bagsvaerd 1954.*

The house was finished New Year 1953/54 and I have lived there ever since.



*Steffen, One year old.*

Before we moved in, Nete became pregnant again. On 24 April 1954, our second child Steffen was born.

After moving in there was much work in both house and garden. I have previously mentioned that the entire garden behind the house toward the lake was covered with alder trees, all of which had to be removed. As soon as the frost left the earth, I began the felling and removal of tree roots. It was hard, but good exercise. When

spring came, we could see the lake from the house.

The lake, however, was very overgrown. Next to our land was a large island, which also was covered with an alder thicket. Only a narrow channel separated the island from our site. It showed that this channel had been dug by a distant neighbor who had thrown the earth up against the shore. Then he bought the strip of land that was formed. Therefore, I did not have actual access to the lake. To get this access, I had to purchase said strip from this man.

The plot next to ours belonged to an engineer at Ford Motor, who had no plans to build in the near future as he might be transferred by the company away from the Copenhagen region. The next piece of land was owned by Axel Rex Thomsen, who had begun to build his house at the same time as we. If our house later should be enlarged, it would be best if it could grow towards the engineer's land. Similarly this was also the case for Thomsen if he wanted to expand. Thomsen and I therefore agreed to buy the engineer's land jointly to share it if he was transferred and therefore would sell the land. This happened soon, but I had no money to pay half of the site because the price of land had increased a lot in the meantime. Thomsen then said that it did not matter. He would buy all the land and sell the half to me if I later came into money. After some years I thought that I could afford to buy this half. But property prices again had increased so much that it once again exceeded my financial capacity. That is why I gave up the idea of buying some of this land.



Nete stayed at home after Lone's birth, and therefore Lone and later on Steffen did not start kindergarten before the age of four. They went to the Hanna-School's kindergarten, which was very close to where we lived. The Hanna-School was a private school, affiliated with the Quakers. The kindergarten was led by a very sweet lady, Hanne Friis, with whom we still have some contact, as she and her husband now live in the old peoples' home Hareskovbo near us. We see her often when we go over to Hareskovbo to have dinner there.



*The Hanna- School*

### **The Danish Isotope Centre.**

In 1954, Niels Bohr wrote a letter to the Academy of Technical Sciences, in which he explained that the use of radioactive isotopes as tracers had become increasingly important in science, medicine and engineering. He recommended the establishment of an institution that could provide guidance in the use of radioactive isotopes and which would carry out research with a view to finding new applications. The Academy appointed a committee to consider this.



The President was Per Soeltoft, Professor in chemical engineering at the Technical University of Denmark. The Committee decided to hire a professional secretary, who had experience in working with radioactive isotopes and who would assess the needs of science and technology.

*Professor Per Soeltoft*

The obvious choice for this job was the head of the isotope school M.Sc. Per Gert Jensen, who worked at the Finsen Institute for medical radiology. However, it was not possible



to reach agreement on his employment contract. In the meantime, I had become senior teacher at the Isotope School. The Academy asked me to take the job. I made sure that this was not unfair to Per Gert Jensen, before I accepted the job.

There was, however, the difficulty that the Technological Institute did not want me to leave. It came to an agreement that the Academy would rent space at the Technological Institute for my new activities, so that I still lived at Technological Institute which also would supply secretarial assistance to me. I took up the new job on April 1, 1956, and simultaneously agreed that I should not be secretary of the isotope committee, but the leader of the Danish Isotope Centre, which would now get its own board as an independent institution. This all started in a single room.

Initially my work consisted in reading the literature to find out areas in which radioactive isotopes were applicable in relation to the Danish industry and science. I visited the few companies where radioisotopes were already in use, and prepared a study trip to England, where I would go to The Isotope School at Harwell. I hired my first employee Ole Berg, a student at the Technical University who would help me with correspondence and take care of the office while I was away.

In late summer 1956, I was accepted at the school at Harwell, where I spent a month. Harwell was the major nuclear research center in England with several reactors. There was a department that handled the same tasks that I had to work on in Denmark. The leader of "The Isotope Division" was John Putman and he and his staff became my good friends for years to come.

When I completed the schooling, for a few weeks I was a guest in the Isotope Division and took part in a number of tasks.



During my stay at Harwell, I lived in the small town of Abingdon, not far from Oxford. In Jerome K. Jerome's book, "Three Men in a Boat," which describes a boat trip from London to Oxford, Abingdon is briefly mentioned as "desperate and dull," and I cannot disagree. The school was pretty elementary for me since I had already taught for several years in isotope technology. But I was very pleased to be with the other students who came from many different industries, because it really was a kind of market analysis for me.

#### *Abingdon*

One of the jobs, where I collaborated with employees at the Isotope Division, was to detect a leak in a buried oil pipeline in the

countryside. I worked together with a middle-aged female physicist Nan Wildblood, starting in the morning to inject some radioactive oil into the pipeline. This portion would then move with oil and some of it would leak out at the leakage point. The subsequent non-radioactive oil would cleanse the pipe of radioactivity, so that radioactivity would be detectable only at the leak site.

By evening, we had only inspected half of the pipe line. As we were working with a short-lived radioactive substance, we had to continue through the night. When we got to the spot where radioactivity was measured, I asked Nan to take a reading of the Geiger counter. I said to her: "Did you get the reading." but she heard it as if I had said "Get that reading." She was certainly very offended because I as a student could not allow me to give her as the experienced leader such an order. Tearfully, she completed the work where the leak now was found and without talking to me, we went to the little inn where we should to stay overnight. It took me a long time when I finally - in all decency - sat at her bedside to convince her that I did not intend to give her an order but that she, because of my poor English, had misunderstood my words.

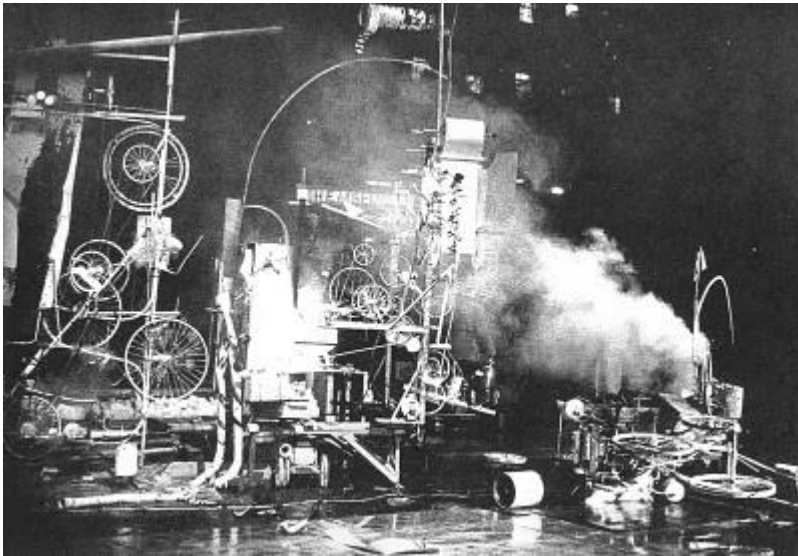
Leak detection became in fact a very significant source of revenue for the Isotope Centre, especially in concealed piping in central heating systems. The first survey we conducted was at the museum for contemporary art called Louisiana, while it still was under construction. The problem was under the floor of the present cafeteria.



*Leak detection in buried pipes with radioisotopes. A radioactive solution is added to the water in the system. At the leak some of the radioactive water will seep out. The system is flushed with clean water. There only remains radioactive water at the leak. The radiation can be detected from the surface.*

I must here put in a happening from Louisiana's first year. With the interest I had in Louisiana back in the construction stage, it was natural for me from the outset to join the Louisiana Club, which among other things allowed us to attend the opening of new exhibitions.

In October 1961, there was a large exhibition entitled "Movement in Art." The big media event at the opening was the burning of a "self-destructive installation" constructed by Jean Tinguely and titled "Hommage à New York" - tribute to New York. The installation filled the lawn in front of Louisiana's main building. It was a jumble of rods, reels and wire. At the top of a pole there was a cage with a live pigeon. We stood in the front row in front of the main building to see what would happen. It began quietly with a small flame which developed quickly and went obviously completely out of control. It burned and blazed everywhere. Fireworks were fired in all directions. There was fire in the cage with the dove, which was roasted alive. This led subsequently to profound indignation in the press and from the police for animal cruelty.



Suddenly a large number of rockets were fired horizontally toward us in front of the main building. A hole was burned in Nete's fur coat. Steffen was hit by a rocket in his stomach, causing him to howl loudly. A photographer took a picture of him and the day after his photo filled the front page of the newspaper BT with the subtitle, "He was impressed by the art."

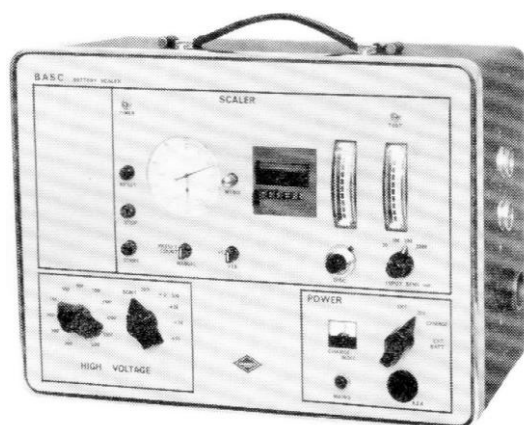
Unfortunately, this experience was not shown on television. The TV cameraman stood beside us, but when he too was hit by a rocket, he rushed away in panic. His camera was connected to the audio tape recorder with a cable. The tape recorder was ripped out of the hand of the sound engineer. I saw the camera man disappear into the distance with a tape recorder bouncing after him in the grass. This accident captured media attention for quite some time.

Back to my England trip.

On the way home from Harwell, I met a Danish journalist in London. Martin Hartung, who became my friend for many years. He was the London correspondent for BT and had his office at the Times, where I visited him. We sailed home together and decided to meet more often. His wife Gerda became Nete's best friend. They had land for a summer cottage in Tibirke, almost a clearing in the forest. We were there quite often, put our tent up and stayed there some days. Later Martin got a job in the youth department of Denmark's Broadcasting System.

In connection with the 20th anniversary of the escape of the Jews to Sweden, he asked me to tell about our flight on the radio. This story I have used almost literally here in the memoirs. I will later return to the story of Gerda and Martin.

Rather quickly after my return from England, the Isotope Centre expanded considerably. We furnished a chemistry lab with a so-called hotlab, i.e., a space specially provided to work with rather strong radioactive materials. This included a lead walled hood where everything could be operated by remote control. We also installed an electronics laboratory and a machine shop, so we could build our own instruments. I hired an electronics engineer, Brock-Nannestad. He constructed a portable radioactivity measuring instrument called a scaler. We called it BASC for BAttery SCaler. The name was intended to suggest DASC which was the name of the first Danish-built computer, created by one of our sister institutions- the Calculation Center.



This instrument was later commercialized, as it was produced with license from us by an electronics company. It went from release to release all over the world and is still produced today in a modernized version, partly by a firm in Roskilde and partly by FORCE Technology, which merged with the Isotope Centre many years later.

At that time I wanted to get in touch with my Nordic colleagues. In Stockholm, there was a group at the Institute of Nuclear Chemistry, led by Professor Torben Westermarck, who worked with isotope techniques and conducted studies for Swedish industry. The three senior engineers in this group were Lars Erwall, Hans Forsberg and Knut Ljunggren. They as well as Torben Westergaard became really good friends with me for many years. The three formed at this time an independent institution, the Isotope Technique Laboratory ITL, which corresponded completely to the Isotope Centre, and we collaborated a lot with each other.

Lars Erwall was a tall, fair-haired, very charming guy. He had a summer house in Falsterbo, where we often visited him. Much later he moved to Helsingborg, where he became director of a margarine factory. Hans Forsberg was later employed by the IAEA - International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. He mediated several international assignments for the Isotope Centre. I met him often in Vienna and around the world at conferences or major international studies. He later became director of a major shipyard in Landskrona. When this shipyard was shut down just as many other shipyards in Europe were, he went to Stockholm as president of IVA, the Academy of Engineering Science corresponding to the ATV Academy of Technical Sciences in Denmark. I still have contact with him also after he has retired.



*From the left: Lars Erwall, Ingegerd Forsberg, her husband Hans Forsberg, Nete, Nete's friend Gerda Hartung (wife of Martin Hartung) at a IAEA conference in Vienna in 1963.*

Knut Ljunggren was a lovable person with a great sense of humor. When his two colleagues got other jobs, he continued for some years to work in the ITL. He died

quite young.

In Finland, isotope activities were under the aegis of the Finish Boiler Association. The work was led by Erik Rotkirch, who also became a very good friend of mine. I have visited him quite often in his villa near Helsinki and also in his summer house on the most remote inhabited island in the archipelago of Turku.

In Norway, isotope work was conducted at Kjeller, Norway's nuclear research institute. I have been there several times, but did not have such close connections with my Norwegian colleagues that I remember them now. I remember, however, my very first visit with my colleagues in Stockholm. I visited them together with my assistant Ole Berg, who in the meantime had got his M.Sc.

In Danish there are two different terms for "you." To children and very close relatives one says "Du"; for almost everybody else, one used "De." At least that was the case in the late 1950s. By contrast, in Sweden it was absolutely unthinkable that colleagues would address each other in any other way than with "Du." Since now both Ole and I said "Du" to the Swedes, we could hardly say "De" to each other when we were together with them. So we solemnly agreed with each other for the "Du." But then a problem arose when we came home again. We could not just say "Du" to each other and simultaneously say "De" to the others in the Isotope Centre. So again, it was solemnly decided that we all should use "Du." Today this all sounds completely ridiculous, but it was really a problem then. To-day the formal "De" has almost completely disappeared in Danish.

We had a female accountant, a very determined lady. None of us dared to propose to say "Du" to her or to be on first name terms with her. Only many years later we got on "Du" terms with Miss Theda, but she persisted, however, to be called "Miss Theda." Today, I cannot even remember her first

name. She worked, incidentally, part-time as a driving school teacher, and quit many years later to do this full time.

The IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency - the UN's atomic energy agency) held annual scientific congresses on isotope techniques. The first time I went to such an event was in 1957 in Paris.

Four of us went. Brock-Nannestad and his wife, Nete and me. We drove in Brock-Nannestads car, a small Citroen van, as I did not have a car or a driving license. It was a long trip, where Nete and I sat squeezed in a very narrow rear seat without adequate legroom.

But for me it was wonderful to revisit Paris 10 years after I had last been there. Nete and I went up to Place Pigalle, where I showed her the brothel, I had lived in. We sat on the sidewalk cafe "Pigalle" and saw the world pass by. One of them was my Swedish colleague Knut Ljunggren who, unknown to me, also would attend this conference.

We had a really nice time in Paris as well as greatly benefiting from attending the meetings. Many new Isotope friendships were established.

Almost simultaneously with the establishment of the Isotope Centre, the Danish Atomic Energy Commission was founded, but it took some years before it had got its laboratories at Risoe, where recruited staff could be trained. I was asked if we could take care of the first two chemists. I allowed them to work in our hotlab and for two years the Isotope Centre was the first working chemistry laboratory under the Atomic Energy Commission. We collaborated with the Atomic Energy Commission in other ways as well.

A nuclear reactor school was created for the people who would work with Risoe's nuclear reactors. I was allowed to take part and completed the exam with a license to operate a reactor.

When Risoe's first major reactor DR-2 was built in Denmark, the Isotope Centre was in charge of a number of quality control activities. The reactor vessel was surrounded by a very heavy lead shield, which was cast at Elsinore Shipyard. No air pockets were allowed in this radiation protection device. An international invitation for bids for this control job was held, in which we took part. We were awarded the contract. We constructed a huge rack that ran around the upper edge of the reactor vessel. Inside there was a strong radioactive source and on the outside a radiation detector, which moved around the container in a spiral motion. At the detector was placed a stylus that put dots on paper which was wrapped around the vessel. At sites, where too much radiation penetrated, dots were placed closer. So on the paper one had a clear picture of any leaks in the lead. It was the first time that this technique was used. Today hospitals use this technique, scintillation scanning, to locate cancer tissue in humans, for example.



When a similar reactor was built for the nuclear research institute in Karlsruhe, Germany, we again were awarded the contract. We went into partnership with a German colleague, Dr. Sauerwein, and completed the task in Essen, where the reactor was built. It led to a long-term cooperation and friendship with Dr. Sauerwein. We will meet him again later on.

In 1959, the state hydrographer Frede Herman at the Danish Institute for Fisheries and Marine Research asked us if we could perform tracer experiments in the Sound, where Copenhagen municipality was planning a wastewater discharge.



*I am resting on the boat used for the tracer study in the Sound.*

He needed details on the current conditions at the discharge point. We carried out the study which was the first in a long series, which we undertook in the next 20 years. They became the nucleus of our activities. More about that later.

### **In Turkey and Israel.**

In 1960 I received a request from the IAEA. They sought an expert for a professorship in nuclear chemistry and isotope techniques at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. I applied for the position and got it. I traveled in early September to be there from the start of the new semester. While the university was founded by UNESCO and admitted students from all over the Middle East, in reality, mainly Turks attended this university. Instruction was in English, but many students came

with a very poor knowledge of that language. Rather, good political connections of their parents were more important.

I worked with the US-educated department head, professor Bahattin Baysal. The practice at that time was that an IAEA grant for the employment of a foreign expert, would include a certain percentage for equipment needed by that expert. At that time, Turkey's strained currency situation did not allow for the purchase of foreign equipment. Nor was it easy to get funding for equipment alone. Instead, one applied for an expert and through him received the needed equipment. What the expert did was more or less unimportant. In my case, Professor Baysal wished to continue the work he started as part of his Ph.D. in the United States, something very quirky in uranium chemistry and something of little use in Turkey, needless to say, inconsistent with my job description. My refusal to support Professor Baysal's shopping list created a certain degree of antagonism between us.

I was then asked by him to teach first year students in regular basic chemistry, roughly at a secondary school level. Of course it was nice to get my chemistry knowledge refreshed and quite satisfying to teach the young students who were not used to being taught by western methods where it is more important to understand what was being taught than to apply mechanical cramming of lectures. I wanted also to do some laboratory work with the students, which included the ability to carry out exact weighing. In the laboratory there were a number of analytical precision balances, a gift from Czechoslovakia which had never been used. When I looked closer at them, I found out that they all lacked their balance beams and were thus completely unusable. It was not clear whether the beams went missing when unpacked or whether they were not included in the shipment. No one bothered to find out as it was easier to apply for new balances from another country, but they had not yet arrived. Likewise, when I wanted to show slides, the bulb was missing in the projector. New bulbs could not be obtained, and it was not something you could apply for from a donor. Instead, the university applied for a new slide projector. I learned something about foreign aid to developing countries.

While I went alone to Ankara, I was entitled to have my family with me. I wanted, however, to first find a suitable home. After a few nights at a hotel, I got me a room in a guesthouse that was run by an elderly Russian woman. It was situated on Ankara's main street, the Ataturk Boulevard. It was incredibly dirty. Nete had a good friend, Vibeke Saggau, who was secretary at the Danish Embassy in Ankara. Unfortunately, she got seriously ill shortly before I came down and had to return for a prolonged hospital stay in Denmark. Her very large apartment now stood empty. I wrote to Nete and asked her to ask Vibeke if I could sublease it while she was in Denmark. It would rid her of an expense, and there would be someone who could look after things. Nete got Vibeke's acceptance and through the embassy I got the keys for the apartment.

It looked terrible. Vibeke had left the apartment hastily. When I came into the kitchen, I noticed a compact black coating on the kitchen table. When I turned on the light, the coating disappeared just as quickly as if you pulled up a blind. It turned out that there were thousands of cockroaches feeding on the remnants left by Vibeke. They knew how to hide in a hurry. I turned off the lights and waited a moment for the black coating to return. With a rolled up newspaper I hit the table and killed hundreds at a stroke. I repeated this process a few times and then swept up buckets of dead cockroaches. I also used an insect spray. After a few days, I had gotten rid of the cockroaches and all the food remnants. I began to feel at home in the nice apartment.

Just few days after late in the evening there was a ring from the doorbell. Outside stood a desperate Danish girl - Inger Madsen. She was also an acquaintance of Vibeke, had just been through a difficult divorce and had asked Vibeke if she could live in her apartment in Ankara. Afflicted by her current illness, Vibeke had completely forgotten that she had already promised Nete to let me have it and said yes to Inger. The apartment was quite large. I said to Inger that she could have a room here and maybe earn a little by keeping the house for me. That was OK with her but she expressed reservations about her cooking as the only thing she could prepare was pancakes. I liked pancakes, so it was OK for me. So for one week she baked pancakes morning and evening.

At the UN office in Ankara was a Danish-Turkish married secretary who was quite indignant that I had a girl living in the apartment as it was strictly against Turkish rules and behavioral standards. I told her that the only thing we made jointly was eating pancakes. She did not believe that this would be possible, and she actually was right as soon after we also shared a bed. However, I was very unhappy about being unfaithful to Nete. I wrote to her and asked her to come as soon as possible with the children. I went and leased a furnished apartment which was ready by the New Year.

Shortly before I left Denmark, I got a driving license and we purchased our first car, a small van. This Hillman Husky was almost a small station wagon with no windows for the rear seats. According to Danish rules, such a van was taxed much more cheaply than a passenger car. In Ankara, I made a pair of very good friends, a Norwegian couple, Alma and Helge Bergh. He taught isotope techniques at the agriculture department of Ankara University. They were going home to Norway before Christmas, but would be back at New Year. They drove by car back and forth. On the return trip, they would pass Copenhagen and I asked them to drive in convoy with Nete and the children. And it went well. They went over Austria, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, were in Sofia New Year's Eve, and arrived in Istanbul on New Year's Day, where I met them. We were there for a day or two and then drove together in the car to Ankara where the apartment was ready.



*The house in Bagliyan Sokak in Ankara, where we had our apartment on the second floor to the right.*

Inger Madsen stayed in Vibeke's apartment. We remained good friends and neither Nete nor anybody else knew anything about the detours we had. My family then

had a wonderful time together. We got a Turkish housekeeper, an elderly lady, who for years had worked for foreign diplomat families. Each time a family left the country, they recommended her to newly arrived diplomats. From her, we learned a lot about Turkish cooking, something I still appreciate.

Nete gave lessons to Lone in order to let her keep up with her education. We went on many trips around the country, often with my closest colleague at the university, Turgut Balkas. He was a young chemical engineer who was glad to be trained in isotope techniques. We planned a study of flow conditions in Ankara's wastewater treatment plant. We did not implement it while I was down there, but Turgut did it afterwards on his own, which showed that he had the courage to proceed with the case. He later became professor of environmental engineering at the university. I would meet him again in Ankara in 1990.

Turgut had an uncle who owned a lagoon with a fish farm on Turkey's Mediterranean coast near the town of Silifke. Along with Turgut, we drove in our car down there and spent a few days at Seker Bayram, the celebration of the end of Ramadan and the end of the long Moslem fast. It was great to take part in this festivity with a traditional Turkish family. Except for Nete, no women were at the table. She told me she felt very lost because none of the men looked at her. A Moslem could not look at another man's woman.

We had helped to fish with a large net pulled across the lagoon and besides these fish were many other delights. All made sure that the best was given to me. I became somewhat funky when some round bits were put on my plate. It was Koc Yumurtasi – mountain eggs - I was told with a canny grin. I found out that they were ram testicles. They tasted quite good.

Many years later I revisited the lagoon with Inga. The man who now was in charge of the fish farm could still remember Turgut.

We had many good friends in Ankara. There was a Scandinavian club. Its President was the Danish embassy's first secretary Skjold Mellbin, a bad boozier, who nevertheless went on to a brilliant

diplomatic career. Among the people we met there and made friends with was the Danish architect von Spreckelsen, who studied old Turkish architecture. He later became world famous for his design of the Grande Arche at La Defense in Paris. In Denmark, he was best known as a church builder. Also at the university I had good friends. A colleague, Hüsameddin Guz was Kurdish and told us horrible stories about how the Turks treated the Kurds.



*Our friend, the architect Otto v. Spreckelsen*

An American colleague, Professor Lawson, who, like me, was employed by the UN, often visited us together with his wife and four children. They were terribly frightened of being infected by the local food and so imported all of their food from the U.S. Even during their visits to us, the family would only eat dry crisp bread. In spite of this or perhaps precisely for this reason, the children were constantly sick with bad stomachs. They had simply not boosted their immune systems by eating local food.

We also imported different things from Denmark. As we had diplomatic status, we could shop duty free. There is a Danish mail order company Ostermann Petersen supplying diplomats of all nations around the world with food, spirits, furniture, electronics and everything else. We too bought from them.

On weekends and holidays we went on tours around Turkey.

It was a great experience to come to Cappadocia, approximately 300 km southeast of Ankara in a volcanic area dominated by the over 4000 meter high volcano Erzyas Dag. Through millions of years, eruptions had deposited a several hundred meter thick layer of volcanic ash and lava, called tufa, in an area with more than one hundred kilometers in radius. By erosion, much of this layer has been eroded so that today there are hundreds of columns and cones of tufa in the area. Tufa is easily workable and for thousands of years people have lived in caves dug into the tufa. When Turkey became Islamic 1300 years ago, Christians fled into the area and built churches into the tufa. These are often quite large with columns and arches shaped by excavation of the surrounding material. The walls were adorned with frescoes.



*Before going to Turkey I bought a Bolex-Paillard 8 mm movie camera. Here I demonstrate the camera to children in Cappadocia.*



*In 1960 people still lived in this 10 story high natural rock in Ortahisar. Cappadocia*



*Natural rock formations formed by erosion with a door leading to a cave church*





*A ruined cave church*



*Fresco in a cave church*

Another trip took us to Hattusas, which had been the capital of the Hittites, a people ruling over large parts of Turkey around 1400 BC. Here the Germans had made large excavations in the 1930s and discovered a city with thick walls, a royal palace, shrines and much more. I wandered around the ruins. In a room in the royal palace, which had been an archive for the storage of clay tablets with cuneiform script, I found a cuneiform record that had eluded the attention of the explorers. I took it with me. Many years later I showed it to the Assyriology department at the University of Copenhagen. It was found to be a missing link between the two other tablets, which were in the US. The tablet describes some sacred rites, which were used at a special celebration. Thanks to my tablet, one could now get the complete description.



*An evening party at our home in Ankara. From the left: Alma and Helge Berg, I, a German friend, Inger Madsen, Vibeke Saggau, who had returned to Ankara, Nete.*

At the end of the semester in May my job at the university came to an end. Before I left Ankara, Turgut and I visited some Turkish companies to get them interested in the use of isotopes. We were received well at Devlet Su Isleri, which is the Turkish state organization responsible for all of the water supplies in the country. We talked to a senior engineer named Suleiman Demirel who later became

prime minister. I also gave a lecture at the Turkish Engineering Society and was finally asked to give a series of lectures at the Technical University of Istanbul.



*A farewell party for me held by my Turkish colleagues in 1961. From the left: two other chemistry lecturers, I, in a theatrical attitude, Nete and Turgut Balkas. my closest colleague.*



*When I was in Turkey in 1991 as consultant for the Turkish Environmental Agency, I met Turgut again. He was now professor in Environmental Engineering. Here he is in his home together with his English born Wife.*

While I was in Turkey, I received an invitation to come to Israel for IAEA to assist in setting up an isotope division at the Nuclear Experiment Station Yavne, south of Tel Aviv as well as to collaborate with researchers at the Weizmann Institute, who also worked with isotopes, particularly in hydrology. We sailed from Izmir to Israel on a Turkish ferry that sailed along the Turkish Mediterranean coast, stopped in Cyprus, and finally arrived at Haifa.

But I had trouble paying the ticket. My salary was deposited into an account in Denmark, while our stay was paid with dollars deposited into a bank account in Turkey which would then be converted to Turkish lira. I had a large surplus in this account, and it was needed for the ticket. The ticket, however, had to be paid for in dollars. Even though dollars were paid into the account, they could only be cashed in Turkish currency. In order to get them cashed in U.S. dollars, I had to get a permission from the Ministry of Finance. I went to the Treasury department for foreign currency in order to obtain the permit. There I was told that it would take several months to get this license. I obviously could not wait that long. I asked to come to talk with a superior. He could not resolve the case and so I went upward in the system. Finally I asked to come to talk with the Minister of Finance. He sat in a government meeting that took place in the ministry where I was. I do not really know how it happened, but I got an audience and thus met the whole Turkish government. They were very friendly people. I was asked about my work. It made an impression on them that I worked with the physics professor Erdal İnönü, who was the son of the first Turkish president after Atatürk. The Minister of Finance wrote something on a scrap of paper which I should show, where I had started in the ministry. There I was treated with great respect, and I immediately received the permission I had asked for.

From Istanbul, where I held my series of lectures, we went by car to Izmir, where our car was lifted by crane on to the deck of the ship. We sailed first to Antalya. While the ship was unloaded and loaded, we took a trip inland to Aspendos, an ancient Greek city with a very well preserved theater. On our way back we were to pass over an old Roman bridge. Unfortunately, a large road construction machine had gotten stuck on that narrow bridge. Resolutely a part of the ancient bridge was demolished to make room for the monster. It was sad to see how people treated such old memorials.

We got back to Antalya just to see our ship sailing out of port! By motor boat, we caught up with the ship and came up a ladder on board again. After two more stops - Mersin and Iskenderun, we came to Cyprus. While aboard, we had become good friends with a young girl who was visiting her uncle. With her uncle as guide, we toured Nicosia and elsewhere on the island. The uncle's name was Rauf Denktash and he was the leader of the Turkish minority on the island. Today he is the president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

In Haifa, we were very well received, which helped us through all entry difficulties. I had diplomatic papers, a so-called United Nations Laissez Passer, and it helped us here as well as in Turkey. A car with private chauffeur was made available to us, but we used mostly our own car. We got an apartment in the center of Tel Aviv on a square which today is called Jizhak Rabin Square, because Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated there.



*Our fashionable apartment in Tel Aviv was in the building in the center, on what then Town Hall Square, but now is called Jizhak Rabin Square.*



*The Isotope Division at the Weizmann Institute*

At the Weizmann Institute, the head of the Isotope Division, Professor Dostrofski received me. He introduced me to a young engineer Chaim Gilath, who was to be my closest colleague and the one I primarily would train. A few years earlier, Chaim had come to Israel from Romania where he lived in the Hungarian-speaking section. He was very talented and had even before my arrival started an isotope division at the reactor center, but did not have any experience how to come into contact with potential users. So we traveled around the country and visited all sorts of companies, and started activities here and there.

I also took the opportunity to make contact with our family. My cousin Joseph, who as a child was called Pauli and was the son of my uncle Arno, was a teacher in Sfad, an ancient city in northern Israel. The school was mixed - Jews and Arabs - and also had Arab teachers. One of them invited us to visit his family who lived in a small village nearby. It was exciting to get into an Arab home. In a room with chairs and sofas around the walls sat the family men. The women stayed in the kitchen and only came in to serve Turkish coffee and very sweet treats for us and the men. Sfad is located high up in Galilea's mountains with a wide view of the country. At the highest point there was a strange

monument. A homemade mortar, which during the war in 1947 was used against the attacking Arabs. Sfad has always been a Jewish city. We visited several ancient synagogues.



*The mortar in Sfad.*

Dan, also cousin to me, showed us Jerusalem, which was then still a divided city. The old town with the Jewish Quarter and the Wailing Wall was occupied by Jordan. We walked around along the border, which was marked by barricades across the streets. The relation with the Jordanians, however, was not particularly hostile. From a vantage point that Dan led us to, we could see over to the Jordanian-occupied part. There were Jordanian troops on several of the flat roofs. We waved to them and they waved friendly back to us.

We also visited Rita, who now called herself Ruth, a cousin five years younger than I with whom we had played in Vienna. She was now married, but had no children. Her parents, Aunt Leah and Uncle Julia Gruberg, who in Vienna lived in rather poor conditions, appeared to be better off now. Lea designed dresses, which she and some home seamstresses sewed and Julia sold. As was the case before, Lea worked hard and seemed tired and somewhat worn out.

My uncle Benno, who was the son of my grandfather's fourth wife, was just a few years older than I. He was an engineer married to the very sweet Carmella and had two boys. We spent a pleasant evening at home with him.

Sala, my youngest aunt, whom I knew from Vienna and who had also visited us in Denmark after the war, was happy and laughing as always. She was now in her fifties. She had recently married and she and her husband Julius seemed in love with each other like lovebirds.





*From the left: Aunt Leah, Julius (Sala's husband) and aunt Sala.*

We also came in contact with my father's family.



Marcel, who in Israel called himself Moshe, was the son of my uncle Eli, whom I did not know. He and his wife Lily had come to Israel from Romania. Marcel was a policeman. They had two small boys, Eli and Yossi, and later had another son. They lived in Haifa, where we visited them. They took us on a tour of Mount Carmel, located south of Haifa. There we visited a Druse village with them. The Druse are related to Arabs, but they have their own religion whose rituals are kept secret from all non-believers. During the war in 1947, they fought on the Jewish side and participated in the military in contrast to Arabs living in Israel.

*My cousin Moshe Somer, his wife Lily and their two sons Eli and Jossi*

While we were in Israel, my Mother came from Denmark to visit us. Together with her we visited a number of distant relatives whom I did not know before. I felt that I was member of a very large family.



*My mother in the swimming pool of the Weizmann Institute.*

After completion of my work, we went back to Denmark. We went to Venice with an old, worn down ship in contrast to the modern Turkish ship that had brought us to Israel. After a few days in Venice we went back to Denmark with our car.

### **At Home again.**

While we were away, our house had been leased to an American diplomat family and we found it in good condition upon our return. We had also a lot of money as we had not spent all of our daily allowances for living abroad. My very nice wages had been paid into an account in Denmark. Since my job had diplomatic status, it was tax free. We could now afford a larger improvement and extension to our house.

The living room was extended toward the front yard and the exterior wall in front of the house was replaced with a timber construction a meter further out so that the two small chambers for the children became larger and more habitable. A brick garage was built. The bathroom, which up to now only had a shower, was equipped with bath and a wash basin. We wanted a new floor in the bathroom. It was made at no cost by my old friend from my time at the Technological Institute, Ejnar Soerensen,

with the small mosaic tiles, which I had developed for him. As I have mentioned before, shortly afterwards he went out of business with this production. So our bathroom floor is perhaps the only one that now stands as a memorial of this Danish production.

The Isotope Centre had a lot of jobs, while I was away. Kalundborg city and the pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk, which was to build a large enzyme production plant there wanted to know if it was advisable to discharge wastewater in Kalundborg fjord or whether it should be discharged directly in to the Great Belt further South. Again, we were invited by Denmark's Fisheries and Marine Research organization (DF&H) to implement studies of flow and dilution factors in the two water bodies. These studies were now brought in to a coherent framework. Special instrumentation was constructed for that purpose. The State Hydrographer Frede Herman from DF&fH, with whom we cooperated for the evaluation of our results, felt that we had developed these studies so far that we could handle them without the participation of DF&H.

I decided to hire an engineer specializing in hydraulics to lead these studies in the future, since there had been considerable interest from many cities and industrial companies in our work, so that we could advise them about how and where to discharge waste water into the sea. There was also international interest for our studies because I had given a lecture on "Prediction of pollution from future waste water outlets" at an IAEA conference. This lecture was published in an international journal.

I hired a young hydraulics engineer Poul Harremoës. It was a good choice. With great skill he developed and applied our system. We decided to build a special vessel for these studies: "RV Isotope". (RV means research vessel). It was a 30-foot speedboat type Jupiter II, built in a boatyard on Bogoe. We had an inspector from the National inspection of ships to handle the conversion of this type of boat for our purposes.



The boat was the first survey vessel for our coastal waters. When the counties later on built vessels for their environmental studies in coastal waters, they all took "Isotope" as a model. Simultaneously, the Isotope Centre was doing so well that we could not find enough space at the Technological Institute. We therefore had to find another place for our company. We got a lease in a newly built property in Skelbaekgade in the Vesterbro district of Copenhagen for the three upper floors totaling over 1000 square meters, where we gradually grew to a staff of about 30. I had my office on the top floor, which was a kind of penthouse with a terrace outside, where we placed boxes with plants. I

had a great view from my windows over the city with Tivoli in the center. I often had to work overtime late in the night and enjoyed the fireworks from Tivoli.



We had arranged a canteen and bought good office furniture. From furniture makers Frits Hansen, we bought a large number of the famous Wegner Y-chairs for all offices. Employees were able to buy some at attractive prices as part of this deal. This explains the 8 Y-Chairs we have in our living room.

One of the specialties of the Isotope center was to conduct investigations of sand and silt movements in rivers and the sea by means of radioactively labeled sand.

We have developed specialized equipment for these measurements, extremely robust detectors that could withstand being dragged over a rocky sea floor or river bottom without sustaining damage. We have also delivered this equipment to institutions in England and Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslavian equipment was used for a study of sand migration in the Danube. Yugoslavia had planned to make a huge dam on the Danube in a place where the Danube flows through a gorge - the Iron Gate. The equipment had been financed by The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and after delivery the Yugoslav government and IEAE invited me for a symposium in Belgrade, where they would report on these studies, which aimed to elucidate the risk of silting up of the huge lake that would be formed behind the dam.

I went to Belgrade together with Nete. We had a VIP reception, toured Belgrade and the Yugoslav Nuclear Research Centre in Vinca. At Vinca I also had the opportunity to visit the excavations of a town inhabited from about 5000BC up to the Celtic period around 500BC.

We went on a trip on the Danube to visit the site of investigations. It took us from Belgrade to Novi Sad, some 100 km west of Belgrade, where the artificial lake would begin. We would also visit the construction site for the dam, which lies several hundred kilometers east of Belgrade. First the idea was that we would go there with a hydrofoil. Very early in the morning we went to the river port, but the boat was defective. After two hours attempting to sail, the idea was abandoned. Instead 3 limousines belonging to President Tito were obtained to carry us over land.

The Yugoslav roads were then in a deplorable condition. After about 100 km, the first limousine struck a large stone on the road, destroying the engine oil pan. We crammed ourselves together in the two other vehicles and arrived late in the afternoon to the Iron Gate.

After a short inspection of the site, located at a place where the Danube forms the border between Yugoslavia and Romania, we started our return via another route. This road led along the Danube and went through the gorge on a narrow shelf high above the river. It began to rain heavily. The car's wipers did not work and it was pitch black. The driver was tired and nodded at short intervals. I was sitting next to him and gave him a push now and then to keep him awake. When he could not see out of the windshield, he rolled down the side window and looked out. The single-track road was winding along the gorge. To the left the mountainside went straight up, to the right vertically down to

the river several hundred meter below. I do not remember ever having felt so intense a fear of death as on this trip.



*The Iron Gate Gorge.*

It was starting to get light when we arrived back in Belgrade. Nete and I had a reservation for a flight to Dubrovnik, where we would take a week's vacation. We came straight to the hotel to pack our things together, before we had to leave for the airport. Although the horror was over, we were still in shock after the night's adventures. It took about a day in beautiful Dubrovnik to get over it.

Over the next ten years we made a large number of marine studies in all Danish and several Swedish waters, partly in cooperation with our friends from the "Isotope Techniques Laboratory" in Stockholm. The UN Health Organization WHO (World Health Organisation) had also become aware of our activity. They asked us to conduct a study in West Africa in the sea off the city of Dakar in Senegal, where one of the world's largest construction and consultancy companies Black & Weatch was constructing a good wastewater management system for that metropolis. We worked there in a joint venture with Black & Weatch for almost half a year with a team of employees led by Poul Harremoës.

Immediately after this study WHO asked us to do similar studies for the city of Manila in the Philippines. We were there several times and also trained staff from the Philippine Atomic Energy Centre in carrying out investigations. However, they did not manage it, so we sent a technical assistant Joergen Kronborg, who had been on our team before, to assist them. This task was still paid by WHO. According to the contract he stay there another six weeks. When that time had passed, he telegraphed home that there still was some work for him to do.. We got the contract extended for fourteen days – a process repeated twice. Finally, we had to order him home. It turned out that he had found a Filipino girlfriend and was reluctant to be separated from her. On the whole, the sweet life in the Philippines was not good for him. He was often drunk at work and spent several working hours nearly every day in a bar nearby. After several unsuccessful warnings, I had to dismiss him immediately. He subsequently sued the Isotope Centre for unfair dismissal but lost his case. Undeterred, he came to me. "We are well gentlemen, will you not hire me again?" There was nothing very gentleman-like about him, so I did not.

Some weeks after we got a call from a distraught Filipino girl who had come to Copenhagen to visit Kronborg. She could not retrieve him at the address he had given her and this was also the only address we had. The only thing we could do for her, was to refer her to the bar close by where he used to spend part of the day. It seems she managed to find him. Because some time afterward I heard by chance the morning worship service on the radio. It was from a Catholic church, and there

was a wedding during the church service. It was Kronborg, who married his Filipino girlfriend. I heard from him again many years later. More on this later.

On the home front things were not going very well. My very frequent evening work and countless overseas travel meant that I neglected Nete. We had too many quarrels. In autumn 1964 I was in Poland for a few weeks, partly to participate in two conferences in Warsaw and Krakow, partly to visit my good Polish colleague and friend Andrzej Pradzynski in Warsaw. When I got home, Nete was quite different and restrained to me. The day after my return, she asked me if we could not go out and eat without the kids. We went to the Japanese restaurant Tokyo on Vesterbrogade, and during the meal, she told me that she had met someone with whom she was deeply in love.

I was not surprised that it had gone that way. Shortly before my Poland trip, we were visited by our friend Gerda Hartung, who was married to the journalist Martin Hartung, whom I have mentioned earlier. She told us that Martin was unfaithful to her. We consoled her as best we could and in the course of conversation I told her that something like that did not need to be of lasting importance. As an example, I mentioned my relationship with Inger Madsen in Ankara, which had not resulted in a break with Nete. This fact Nete knew nothing about, and it was probably stupid that I told her about it. For when Nete complained about it to a girlfriend while I was away in Poland, she gave Nete the advice to do the same. Nete made contact with a friend she dated before we met who was now himself married. His wife was heavily pregnant and her condition was life threatening. It developed to a very warm relationship, which Nete said she could not break away from. They would live together permanently if his wife did not survive.

Nete and I took a trip to southern Spain over Christmas, partly to determine if we could patch things up and if that appeared impossible, to find out how we could separate. We both desired that our two children, Steffen and Lone would suffer as little as possible from this. We agreed that although the kids were fond of both of us, Steffen was most attached to me and Lone most to Nete. We agreed on a divorce where each of us should be responsible for one child. They would, however, have unlimited access to each other and to both parents. On this basis we concluded our divorce negotiations in 1965. Due to Nete's infidelity we could part without a prior separation period. Fräuli, our old nanny, moved out to Bagsvaerd, and took care of Steffen and the house. The whole thing was extremely traumatic: I lost over 10 kg of weight during a month.



*Fräuli*

Before the conflict with Nete, I had a really good experience. At the start of 1964, I was telephoned by the Chairman of the board of the Isotope Centre Professor Per Soeltoft. He asked me to come to the rector of the Technical University of Denmark Professor Knuth-Winterfeldt, who together with Soeltoft had something to talk to me about. I could not be told what it was about. It sounded mysterious. When I came to the rector,



a bottle of port wine was on the table. Glasses were filled and Rector congratulated me that I had been chosen as this year's recipient of the Esso Prize. The Danish oil company Esso, a division of the international company, now known as Exxon, had in connection with a Jubilee inaugurated an annual prize, which would go to a young (under 40 years) Danish scientist who had performed a work of considerable importance to Danish society. The prize was awarded on April 1, which was the company's birthday. For the award party I could bring my wife and children.



On April 1, we went to Esso's headquarter in our fanciest clothes. Nete was given a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a golden brooch and each of the children received some nice toys. The press showed up and flashed when I received the award from the company's CEO. We had a fantastic lunch with several speeches. Among other things, last year's winner should make an address about me without knowing anything in advance about me. In addition to a fine diploma I got a check for 25,000 kroner. For this sum I bought a Morris Mascot car for Nete. At the end of the year Nete and the car had gone, but I still have the diploma. Every year I am invited to this ceremony. The price is now called Statoil Prize, because the Norwegian Statoil company bought Esso.

That same year I was also elected as a member of the Academy of Technical Sciences. In 1965, I held the speech for that year's Esso Prize winner, whom I did not know in advance. I succeeded, as it somehow over the years always happened for the previous year's winner.

When I In 1965 left Esso's headquarters after the Esso price party and an animated lunch, I met immediately outside the gate an old acquaintance. It was Chris, my old girlfriend from the last time in Sweden in 1945. She was still very beautiful. She told me she was alone with a small infant and an adolescent girl, and I told her that I similarly was alone with a 12-year-old son. We agreed that she should come and visit me, and it led to almost two years of cohabitation.



A few years after the war, Chris came to Denmark where she married a Dane and they had a girl. At one point Chris became seriously ill, was hospitalized and had one kidney removed. After a few days her husband and daughter did not visit her anymore. When she came home from the hospital, it emerged that her husband without telling her had emigrated to Zimbabwe then called Rhodesia. There were no diplomatic relations with the country, because the country had imposed an apartheid system against the country's black population. And so it was not possible for Chris to get her daughter back.

Only a few months before I met Chris the 13-year-old daughter, who was called Gokki, came home to her mother because the father could not control her. Chris lived at that time together with a man in central Copenhagen. With him she had a son, who, was only a few months old, when we met. We called him our Little Man. Chris had recently discontinued her relationship with Little Man's father.

Chris moved in with me now in Bagsvaerd with Gokki and Little Man. Fräuli had already moved back to town to my mother after I had hired a house maid to take care of the house for Steffen and me. This maid remained with us, because there was plenty to do with three children in the house, and because Chris soon took a half day job as a secretary at an architect's office. Gokki became good friends with Steffen and especially with Lone, who was of the same age.

It was a very happy time for me. I became more relaxed after my break with Nete. She had moved into an apartment not far from us where I sometimes visited her when both of our two children stayed with her. This led one day to a most remarkable experience for me. Nete had a new friend, a foreman at the company where she worked as secretary. One day when I was visiting Nete, the doorbell rang. Through the window peeper Nete could see that it was her friend who came. Nete said that the guy was very jealous, and that he therefore should not see me. The children and Nete hurried to put me in to a walk-in closet. There I had to stand for a long time, until Nete got her friend out of the flat again. I was at that time not yet formally divorced from Nete. So it was the opposite situation compared to marriage comedies, where the lover must hide in the closet when her husband comes home. Here it was the husband, who had to hide in the closet when her lover arrived.



Chris and I had in many ways a good relationship. She was a charming girl perfect for parties and fun. We traveled a lot. She went with me to conferences. Unfortunately, she was also quite pugnacious. After less than two years we decided to move apart, but still keep our relationship. She got an apartment not so far away. There Steffen and I spent many evenings with Chris, Gokki and Little Man.

The end of our relationship came in the spring of 1967. I

had a visit from my German colleague Dr. Sauerwein. We had many discussions about our work and cooperation and neglected, therefore, an appointment to take Chris out for dinner and dancing. We arrived at Chris' place an hour late. She was very offended. The evening was spent fairly peacefully. We ate in the inner city where I parked my car on the street. Then we went out to find a place to dance. Late in the evening, all of us left to stay overnight at my house. But I had a terrible time finding the car. It made Chris even more mad, and when I finally managed to find the car, she asked to be dropped off at her own apartment. It was the last time I saw her. She did not call me and she did not respond to my inquiries.

### **Inga.**

In the days following the events just described, I was very busy. I was going to an isotope conference in Istanbul where I would give a talk on an instrument for soil moisture measurements, which we had developed at the Isotope Center applicable to agriculture, hydrology and other fields. The testing of the instrument was carried out with the Danish AEC, Risoe's agricultural division.

In the evenings I worked at home with my employee, Poul A. Jensen. I wrote and he made drawings for the lecture and would go to Istanbul with me. Fräuli had come out to us again and would take care of Steffen while I was away.

It turned out that the cheapest way to get to Istanbul was on a charter trip with a travel office. By booking a 14 day trip -- a week in Istanbul and one week on Rhodes -- we could fly and live cheaper than what just the flight alone with SAS would cost. The week in Rhodes would, of course, be deducted from our outstanding vacation time. All in all, it was advantageous for both us and the Isotope Centre. At the last moment we got the lecture with slides etc. finished and off we went in a rush.

While boarding, I noticed a beautiful young girl with white skin-tight pants. Great was my joy when I got to sit beside her I at the orientation meeting at the hotel. I had already introduced myself on the plane. My name is "plum," I said. She thought that this was a strange name, but I explained that we now were in Turkey, and in Turkish a plum was called "Erik." And so the ice was broken. I told her that I really was not a tourist, but was here to give a lecture on isotope technique. I expected that she did not know anything about it. I was greatly surprised when it turned out that she worked with isotope techniques in the agricultural division at Risoe, the people with whom I had collaborated in testing my instrument. This was irresistible. Her name was Inga Noergaard and she was on vacation with a friend named Else. Even while we were in Istanbul, we had become very close friends and continued our relationship in the following week in Rhodes.

My lecture went very well. At a closing party for the conference participants, I had to borrow a jacket from the Egyptian President of the Conference. In the bustle of our departure, I had forgotten to bring one with me.

We stayed in a hotel in Üsküdar on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, and became quickly friends with several of the other participants in the tourist trip.

I knew Istanbul and its surroundings well from my earlier stay in Turkey and rented a car. Together with Poul A. Jensen and a Danish couple, we went on a trip to Bursa, one of the oldest Turkish cities, about 100 km to the south. Near Bursa rises a high mountain, called the Anatolian Olymp, which we ascended on a cable car to a plateau that continued towards the mountain top. We went for a long walk in the direction of the top, but had to return in order to catch the cable car.

Everywhere on the plateau we observed smoke rising from small gatherings of people. Paul A. and I went to a small group to see what was going on, while the others proceeded towards the cable car. It turned out that everybody up here was picnicking. They all had small metal boxes on legs, which acted as a grill, where glorious lamb was being barbecued. We could smell the delicious odors. We were waved over to a Turkish company and offered lamb and several glasses of Raki, the Turkish brandy. It all went very quickly. The others had not noticed that we were lagging behind. The cable car arrived and would return with us. I had all the tickets for the cable car, which went down without us and the couple. They were, of course, angry with me. Great was their surprise when Poul A. and I arrived reeling and dead drunk. They could not understand how one could get drunk so quickly. Well, we subsequently offered them some Raki, and then they understood it better.

Inga was not with us on this trip, but we later took a trip with Paul A. up along the Bosphorus towards the Black Sea on the European side, where in the small waterfront villages we found excellent seafood restaurants where we could enjoy typical Turkish meals. One evening we took the ferry to Istanbul. I told Inga and Paul A. about my Turkish favorite -- Circassian chicken. We walked up the main street of the old part of Istanbul from restaurant to restaurant and asked for this dish in vain. We met a policeman and asked him if he knew a restaurant that served it. He did not, but he asked other passers-by. After a while we had a larger tail of people with us who all gave us good advice, but finally we had to give up and settle for a more ordinary meal.



Then we had a wonderful week in Rhodes. Inga and I decided that our relationship should not just be a vacation affair, but continue if it turned out that we fit together. That decision has now worked well for 48 years as I write this in 2014.

*Inga and I on a hot evening in Rhodes.*

Shortly after coming home, I received an invitation to come to Israel, issued by the IAEA. I had almost decided to go, but on 5 June 1967 the Six-Day War broke out, and my journey had to be postponed.

Instead Steffen, Inga and I went on a camping trip to Yugoslavia. Inga and Steffen got along extremely well. Inga was not only a kind of stepmother for him, but also an older sister. We lived on the Istrian coast, snorkeling in the sea and had a great time.

On the way home we stopped in Vienna. I visited the IAEA, which had its headquarters there and I showed Inga and Steffen the town where I was born. Incidentally, Vienna was one of the places where I went very often, mainly because IAEA often had their conferences there. We were a group of isotope people from several countries who had become close friends. In the evenings we very often went to an Heurigen in one of Vienna's suburbs. Heurigen are wine bars owned by a winegrower, who serves his own wine, often young wine from the same year. "The same year" is called Heurig in German and this is how these places have got their name. One could also get food there. There would also be music - so called Schrammel music - mostly accordion and violin and a singer. The songs were mostly popular songs in Viennese dialect - Weanerisch. I love these songs.



*An evening with friends at an Heurigen: From the left: Geologist Lars Joergen Andersen, my colleague Poul Harremoes, Pal Theodorson from Iceland, Hans Forsberg and his wife Ingegerd and I.*

One evening we were part of a larger company in Grinzing, where there are a number of good Heurigen. Among them was my Finnish friend, Erik Rotkirch who had the habit of hand- standing on the edge of a table, after he had a couple of drinks. There was also my Japanese friend, Professor Masao Kato, who was very musical and could play on any instrument. This time he had brought a mouth organ. My Scottish friend Jack Cameron was there with his wife Margret. Also I had a custom, which the others knew. When I had gotten something to drink, I could not resist dancing Finnish polkas, which I had learned during the war at a youth camp previously mentioned. I asked Margret to dance with me, and in the middle of the place we started to dance, accompanied on the mouth organ by Masao Kato. Suddenly I noticed a bright light directed at us. I could see a TV camera, which was shooting our dance. It turned out to be the Japanese Television, which made a recording of something typically Viennese - a Dane dancing Finnish polka with a Scottish girl! Later on you will hear more about this recording.

At home, Inga continued to live in her small apartment in Roskilde. We therefore met mainly on weekends when she would come to Bagsvaerd.

### **Around the world.**

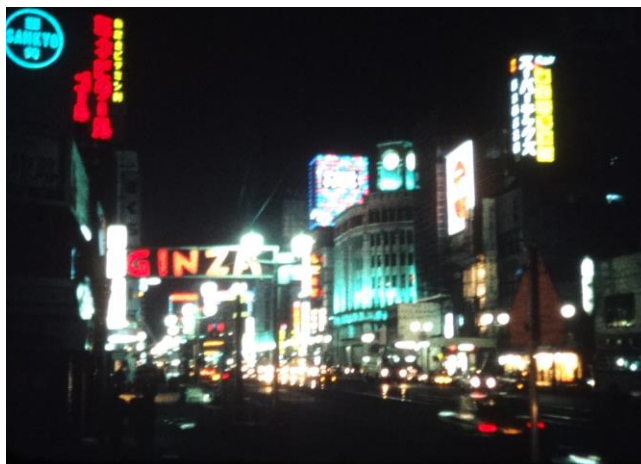
In the autumn of '67, I was invited by Professor Masao Kato to Japan to give a lecture at a Japanese isotope conference and to work for a short period at the Japanese nuclear research facility at Oarai, 100

km north of Tokyo. Simultaneously, I agreed with Thai and Indian colleagues that I after my visit to Japan would go to Thailand and India. In addition to myself, Kato had invited my Polish friend Andrej Pradzynski and a German, Dr. Pröbstl who worked for Euratom. When I entered the plane in Copenhagen, it appeared that Pröbstl was on the same flight. We had a very long flight over the North Pole to Anchorage, Alaska, where there was light snow and a nice view of a high mountain range.



*At a lecture in Japan. Left Andrej Pradzynski, at the desk Dr. Pröbstl.*

Arriving in Tokyo, we were received by Kato and taken to our hotel. Although we had been en route for a whole day, we could not resist the temptation to take a tour of the city at once. We took the subway to Ginza, the main street of Tokyo. There we found the largest collection of neon advertisements I have ever seen.



We went down the street past a very nice store and searched for a place to eat. In the narrow crossing streets were small restaurants, one beside the other. They did not have restaurant menus outside, but instead plastic replica of the dishes that were served stood on glass shelves in the window with a price tag. We found a place that looked fine and had a look at the choice on the shelves in the window. We decided for a plate with three large prawns and rice with a pink sauce. We went in and found a geisha who served, dragged her outside and pointed at the shrimps. She asked a question in Japanese, which we understood

as if she wanted to know how many prawns each of us wanted. Both Pröbstl and I raised 3 fingers. It corresponded to what there was on the plate.





We walked in and sat down at a table. We were the only foreigners. Everyone's eyes were directed towards us. Soon after came a geisha with two small plates with a delicious, steaming, light brown roll on. We figured that it was a spring roll, which we admittedly had not ordered, but considered that it probably always belonged to the meal. Simultaneously we took them with our chop sticks and took a bite from one end. Great was our surprise when it turned out that it was a hot rolled napkin, which we in the weak light had taken for something else. There was laughter around the room when Pröbstl and I sat each with a rolled-up napkin in the mouth. Well, we found out that we had to use the towels to dry face and hands.

Soon after, all serving ladies were called out to the kitchen and then came a procession of 6 of these geishas, each with a plate with three shrimp that were put before us. Again, a misconception that amused everyone in the room. We explained that each of us only wanted one portion. The excess was removed. Every time a geisha came to our table I said "Thank you" in Japanese. I had on the plane en route learned some useful Japanese expression from a phrase book. I said "arigato" which means "thank you". Actually, I said "aligato" because the Japanese pronounce an "r" like an "l". Pröbstl asked me what I said. I explained it to him. He replied that he could not remember this. I said: Simply think of an alligator. Ah, that I can remember, he replied.

Next time a geisha came to him, he looked with a big smile at her and said "Crocodile". Typical for Pröbstl.

After the conference in Tokyo, Kato drove with us to Oarai, where we were accommodated in a traditional Japanese inn, a ryokan. It was very nice. At the entrance from the street, we took off our shoes and got a pair of shaggy socks to put on. Then a geisha took me up to my room. No, it was not a room but a complete flat. There was a room with a low table in the middle. Around the table were chairs almost like car seats. They had no legs. Under the table there was a depression for the legs. The geisha served tea for me there. On one side of the room there was a wide door to a veranda from which one could walk two steps down to the beach at the Pacific, where large waves rolled. To the other side was my bedroom.

There the geisha prepared for my night. Directly on the tatami straw mats covering all floors, she placed a futon mattress, and then the bedclothes. The geisha put a nice brown kimono on the bed and asked me to undress. A little shy, I took one garment off after the other, but she kept on until I was naked. Then she handed me the kimono and led me to the bathroom. There was an over one meters high tub filled with very hot water. I went into the tub. She left me alone for a moment and then asked me to come out of the bath. There I was lathered and rubbed with a hard sponge.

At that moment there was a knock on the front door. It was Masao Kato who looked desperate. "Are you not aware that the entire Japanese Atomic Energy Commission is waiting for you for a dinner party. You must hurry on. I was dried in a hurry and Kato said there was no time to put my clothes on, I had just to come with my kimono. Then he brought me to the hall, where about 20 worthy gentlemen were seated in their fanciest clothes, ie. black frock coats, striped trousers and wing collar.

Besides me, there was only one person in traditional Japanese clothes. It was a music geisha, who would entertain us during the dinner. I got the seat of honor beside her. On the other side of her sat

Kato. Again, the chairs and the table were rather low. The serving geishas who incidentally also were in kimono knelt by each of us when they were serving. They served hot sake during the meal, which consisted of exquisite Japanese cuisine. The music geisha played melancholic Japanese melodies for us on her samisen – a traditional Japanese string instrument.

After the main course Kato told the party that I had appeared on Japanese TV with a dance in an Austrian inn. Some members of the party remembered to have seen the show. Kato took the geisha's samisen and started to play my Finnish polka. Then he told the geisha to get up and dance with me. We danced around the large table. It was quite difficult, because in my version of the Finnish polka one has to make some jerks lifting the legs high up. My kimono was only held together by a belt, and I had nothing on underneath. As we sat back down the geisha whispered something to Kato, at which he laughed. Then I told him about my troubles. He laughed loudly and said that the geisha had just said the same to him.



After some days of work in Oarai to demonstrate some of the methods we applied in Copenhagen for Japanese colleagues, we went back to Tokyo. From there Kato took us on a trip south. First we went to Kamakura, where we looked at a gigantic bronze Buddha. There was an interior staircase, where one could get up in his head and look out through the mouth.

*Hakone lake with a Shinto symbol.*

Then to Atami, a seaside resort on the Pacific, where we had a swim in the Pacific. From there we went to Hakone National Park, located at the foot of the holy Mount Fuji. We stayed in a ryokan in an area with hot water sources. Unfortunately, we could not see Fuji because the mountain was shrouded in clouds.



After our return to Tokyo I went at my own expense to Nara and Kyoto with the Shinkansen bullet train, then the world's fastest train. We rode at a speed of over 300 km per hour.



*The Todai-Ji temple in Nara. One of the world's largest wooden structures, more than 1000 years old.*



*At the Kinkaku-ji temple in Kyoto.*

Nara is a holy city with ancient temples lying in a parkland where deer walked around freely. In Kyoto, I lived in a very nice hotel near the old palace of the shogun. The Shogun was for centuries the real ruler of Japan, while the emperor in Tokyo was only a symbolic person. Also here I visited several old temples, which usually were located in scenic areas.



*A lady from the Thai Nuclear Research Institute received us in Bangkok.. To her left Ken Beswick from UK, To her right Miettinen from Finland. Both good Isotope friends.*

From Japan I went to Bangkok, where there was another international meeting of isotope people. I spent a few days at the Thai nuclear research institute, which took very nice care of me and the other isotope people from abroad. We were invited on a boat trip up the Menam River to Ayuthaia, Thailand's capital until sometime in the 1800s, when the city was destroyed in a war with the Burmese.



The city is full of temple ruins, which are all filled with votive presents.



From children who strolled around between the ruins I bought a number of small bronze figurines and sculpture parts, some of which are more than thousand years old. They form the backbone of my collection of antiques.

From Thailand I went to Delhi in India. I lived in a very nice hotel. It was a stark contrast to the vast desolate poverty I found in the town. An unbelievable amount of people slept on the street. I was constantly surrounded by beggars.

I went on a train ride to Agra, where I visited the Taj Mahal, perhaps the world's finest edifice, built by a maharaja in memory of his deceased wife. I was also in Fatehpur Sikri, a great city with beautiful palaces and mosques, all in red sandstone created by another Indian maharaja in the 17th century, but abandoned after just few years because there was not enough water.



Another international isotope conference took me to Prague. The atmosphere in Prague was bleak. People suffered from the Soviet-communist oppression. We stayed at the Hotel Intercontinental, which was in Soviet-wedding cake style.

There I was witness and participant in a small example of the cold war, or I should perhaps call it, as you will understand when you have read my report, the "wet war ". One evening I had invited colleagues from several countries to a talk in my room. Among the guests was the leader of the U.S. delegation, Bill Mott. I had also invited the Russian delegation leader. He met up with a battery of bottles of Russian vodka. Very quickly most of us, myself included, stopped to continue the drinking. But the Russian challenged Bill Mott by consistently proposing toasts and asking Bill Mott to join in. It was obvious that his object was to show who was the most persevering. Bill Mott took it nicely. He also proposed toasts, which the Russian had to accept. Each time the glasses were emptied. They used tooth glasses from our rooms. Late in the evening the Russian went down. He laid down on the floor and could not be awakened. Some Eastern Bloc people lifted him up and carried him to his room. Bill Mott looked as if he could cope. He was, however, quite wonky when he stood up to say goodbye. Therefore, I and some others went with him to his room. He could not find the keyhole with his key. So I took it and locked up for him. I turned on the light in his room and led him into the room.

The next morning Bill was to give a lecture. The morning meeting began, but Bill did not turn up. Shortly before he was due to go to the podium, I went up to his room to fetch him. I knocked, but nobody replied. I opened the door, which was not locked. Immediately inside the door was Bill on the floor, almost unconscious. The poor man had with all his forces managed just until he was left to himself. Then he collapsed. His lecture was postponed until the next day, but he was still dazed that day. The Russian we did not see anymore at this conference. A small example of how the cold war was all about being steadfast and persevering. This was also how Reagan won the Cold War.

At Christmas and New Year 67/68, we went skiing in Norway. We had rented a cottage in Hemsedal and went there by car and Oslo Ferry. I was greatly surprised to meet my old friend Jette Thyssen and her husband Helmer Lund Hansen on the ferry. I had kept in contact with Jette during all the years after I had been hidden in her father's farm near Frederikssund before fleeing to Sweden.

We had dinner together. We had a lot of tax free drinks during the meal and we continued in the bar. It was more than poor Inga could tolerate. The front of the bar had a curved front, and suddenly Inga went in one graceful motion down the bend and ended up almost unconscious on the floor. Steffen, Helmer and I had to carry her to bed. She was fine the next morning.



### *Skiing in Hemsedal*

We came well to Hemsedal and had a nice Christmas Eve at our cottage with our own food. The next day we went out skiing. I thought of myself as an accomplished skier since I had skied in Austria, and also had been skiing with Nete. We took a ski lift up the mountain where it turned out that all the ski trails down were only for highly experienced skiers. Steffen and Inga had no experience at all and I can after all not call myself that experienced. How were we to come down? We three stood on the cliff edge and looked down into the depths. I had absolutely no desire to take the tour. But suddenly the devil went into little Steffen. He took off and continued down the mountain. Inga was so shocked that she too went down, and then there was nothing else for me to do but follow.

Inga and Steffen came safely down. Unfortunately I fell shortly after the start, dislocating my left arm. It was extremely painful. I was lying where I fell and had to be rescued by an emergency patrol. With an ambulance I was taken to the doctor in Hemsedal. He gave me a shot of morphine, laid me flat on the floor and with himself perpendicular to me. With the feet placed on the side of me, he pulled the arm that was out of joint. It caused a small click and then it was in place. Morphine made me pain free. I was driven home to our cottage and could easily join the others in a card game. We were there a few more days, but there was no more skiing for me.

In 1968 I went on the deferred assignment in Israel. Chaim Gilad, with whom I had worked when I was in Israel in 1961 had in the meantime become the head of the Israeli atomic energy commission's isotope division. I had met him several times in the intervening years at international conferences. He felt that he needed an injection from elsewhere to spur his work. It was at his instigation that the IAEA had granted a 3 month assignment for me.

But first the situation at home had to be adjusted. Inga had to move to Bagsvaerd to take care of Steffen, but the prerequisite was that she needed a car so she could get to work at Risoe. Inga had a driving license, but absolutely no routine. Therefore, she was allowed to drive my car with me beside her. Never have I had to curl my toes as much as during this period. By and by, Inga improved enough so I dared to entrust the car, house and Steffen to her.



Arrived in Israel I was initially housed with a private family but soon there was a vacant apartment in the Weizmann Institute's guesthouse, and there I lived in the greatest luxury the rest of the time. I rented a car for the entire period and could get around the country.



It was spring and the Purim festivities were imminent. I was invited to a Purim party at the Weizmann Institute, together with Chaim and his wife Irith. As always at Purim parties we should be dressed up. I used the costume, which I already had experience with at the masquerade at Mr. Podmore in Stoke-on-Trent: A sheet made it out for a toga, and so was my Caesar attire nearly finished. I thought that it would be nice to have a laurel wreath on my head. I knew there was a laurel bush in the garden of my good friend Aharon Nir, who also was an isotope fellow. Before going to the party I therefore went to Nir's house nearby wearing my Caesar outfit.

### *Dancing with Irith*

I rang the bell. At the door there was an opaque glass window, so from the inside one would see anybody outside as blurred. When Mrs. Nir came to the door and saw a white-clad person outside, she thought it was an Arab and would not open the door. It was shortly after the war, and she was therefore naturally wary. When she did not open the front door, I went to the backyard to get a laurel branch. Mrs. Nir could see the white-clad person prowling about in the garden and because of the darkness, she could not identify me. While I was at the laurel bush, there suddenly rushed heavily armed soldiers towards me from all sides. They had been summoned by Mrs. Nir. I raised my hands up. In the beam from a searchlight Mrs. Nir could recognize me and so the onslaught was canceled. Then I got my laurels and had a good evening.

When I had the fine guest apartment, I had the opportunity to invite Inga and Steffen to visit me. They came on short notice and we had a wonderful time together. In my rented car, we went on trips around the country. I had been invited to give a lecture at the Technion, the technical university in Haifa in the north of the country. I had a good friend in Haifa -- Naftali Shafrir. He had worked for some years in Stockholm at the Isotope Technique Laboratory and was now professor at the Technion.

We were invited to stay with him, but before going to Haifa I wanted to make a short trip to the Golan Heights, which were in Israeli hands after the Six-Day War. The area was very much in ruins after the heavy bombardments. It was dangerous to leave the road because of abandoned mine fields. We drove with our car all the way to the Syrian border at the town of Kuneitra, the main town in the area. The city was very devastated and virtually uninhabited. In the midst of the town our car came to a dead stop. Something was broken but I could not determine what was wrong. There were obviously no shops where I could get it repaired. I managed to get hold of an Israeli military patrol. They dragged the car over to a military barracks, and within a couple of hours I got the car repaired.

Late in the evening we arrived at the Shafrir's in Haifa. They had almost given up on seeing us that night. My lecture the next day went well and we drove without further incident back to the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot.

From Israel we flew home. Soon afterwards Inga left her apartment in Roskilde and came to stay with me in Bagsvaerd, where she also had looked after Steffen, while I was in Israel, and here she has lived with me since then. She got a small Morris Mascot car so she could get to Risoe without my help.

## **Eva.**

After my experiences with Nete and with Chris, I was not immediately prepared to get remarried. Furthermore, I was at that time still an Austrian citizen. Therefore if we were married and had children, they would automatically get Austrian citizenship, such as Lone and Steffen had until they sought and obtained Danish citizenship many years later.

Inga did not want to marry me under these conditions, but nevertheless she had a huge desire to have a child. It did not take long before Inga's belly began to grow. In May 1969 Inga was going to give birth to her child in Astrid a Rogvi's maternity home nearby. 19 May was Inga's last working day before starting her maternity leave. One evening Inga, Steffen and I sat in the kitchen and had our dinner - fish fillets. Suddenly Inga went up and said that she felt that she was wet between the legs. She went into the bathroom and came back shortly after and said that she believed that the amniotic fluid was dripping. It was approximately 14 days before the birth was expected. I was nervous and said she should immediately call the maternity home. Inga was more calm. Let me just finish my dinner, she said. At that time, Inga had not yet had contractions. When Inga called the clinic, she was told that she had to get there immediately. She thought that it would only be a short visit. She was very upset when she was told that she should stay until she had given birth. The only thing that seemed to worry Inga was that she had not cleaned our home properly before she went off and that she had not yet bought all the equipment for the child. She thought that she and I could do this over the next fourteen days before she had expected to give birth. She went on to lament that the floors at home were dusty. I stayed with her. Late in the evening contractions began and early the next morning Eva was born.

I immediately called Inga's parents to tell them the good news. The next day they came over here from Aarhus. I picked them up and together we went to the maternity home, but we were greatly surprised to find that Inga was not there anymore. We were quickly told that there had been a complication after the birth because the placenta had not come out. She was quickly admitted to Gentofte Hospital. We then drove over there and found Inga. She waited to get a curettage if the placenta did not come out of itself. Eva had been placed in the children's department, where Inga twice a day was rolled over in order to breastfeed Eva. It was tremendously hard for Inga not to be with her little child all the time. She had to use a milking machine so that Eva could be fed besides the two times when Inga breastfed her.

Inga required the curettage. It took an additional fourteen days before Inga could return home to Bagsvaerd with our baby. During that time I had acquired all the missing equipment. It was a happy time; Inga and Eva thrived. Eva, however, had a slight congenital squint which required two operations, the first when she was 18 months old.



*Eva, about one year old, bathing with Inga.*

Simultaneous with Eva's birth, something remarkable happened. I had been approached by my good Polish friend Andrzej Pradzynski who had been responsible for isotope activities at the Polish Academy of Sciences. He was thrown out of his job because (unknown to me) he was a Jew. When the Six-Day War in Israel was launched, Jews began to be persecuted in Poland and all Jews employed by the state had to leave their jobs. Andrzej and his family -- wife and two sons -- were forced to emigrate. I

offered a job to Andrzej at the Isotope Centre and promised to ensure that he could get a work permit in Denmark. He accepted this proposal with pleasure.

However, he had good friends in many other Western countries. A mutual acquaintance, an English isotope scientist who had gotten a job at the University of Austin, Texas, invited him to come there, which Andrzej preferred over Denmark, mainly because he thought that Denmark was too close to the Eastern Bloc. Andrzej's youngest son, Florek, however, would not go to the U.S. He had a bad relationship to his parents, and he also was afraid that he would be drafted by the U.S. and sent to Vietnam as a soldier.



*Florek in 2005.*

Andrzej asked me if I could take care of Florek, who was then about twenty years old. Florek arrived, while Inga was in the hospital, so I had a lot to take care of. Florek was sympathetic and highly intelligent. I tried to help him to continue his education or to get a job, but he did not know what he wanted to do. At the same time, I had in mind that he had a very bad relationship with his domineering parents, so I wanted to be careful not to force him into something, in order not to create similar problems between us. I did not manage to get him into a long-term career. Eventually we distanced ourselves from each other, but we have maintained a good contact with each other ever since.

## **Tanzania.**

At the Isotope Centre, we had long worked closely with the large Danish consulting engineering firm COWI which had offices around the world and worked, among other things, with wastewater treatment. In the spring of 1971 we were approached by them to assist their department in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania in preparing a master plan for sewerage for this city, a task that was paid for by international agencies. We had to assess how and where the wastewater should be discharged into the sea.

At this time I had teams at work in Dakar, Senegal, in Manila in the Philippines and in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Thus it was my lot to go to Dar-es-Salaam, a name which means "harbor of peace." The town is situated at a bay which connects to the Indian Ocean only through a narrow channel. The bay forms a natural harbor, which at the time of my arrival was full of large Chinese ships, as the Chinese were building a railway from Dar-es-Salaam to Malawi mainly to be used for the transport of ore from that country. Tanzania was a German colony until the end of World War I, and the town is still dominated by buildings from this time, including the cathedral in typical German style. The city already had its first high rise building where the Danish embassy had its offices, among others

I was met at the airport by an engineer from COWI's local office and brought to the city's leading hotel, where I would live the next three weeks. In the evening COWI gave a dinner for me, and the next day I established myself in COWI's office.

I was introduced to a young girl who was to be my secretary. She had immigrated from Goa in India. Goa was a Portuguese colony which India now had taken over. Many Goans emigrated at this occasion because they thought their chances would be better abroad. The girl was extremely intelligent and well educated. Besides Portuguese and Hindi, she spoke perfect English and by now could also make herself understood in Svahili, the national language of Tanzania.

Unfortunately, her emigration to Tanzania was a big mistake. In the English colonial period many Indians came to Tanzania where they had managed to get important positions. Trade, health and justice was mainly in Indian hands. This aroused envy among the indigenous Tanzanians and therefore Indians were now seen as a kind of parasite. In our conversations, I felt parallels to the Jewish situation in Hitler's Germany. However, there were no real concentration camps and mass killings, but there was a lot of violence against individuals and many Indian businesses were burned and landholders displaced. Just as Hitler's Germany should be "Judenrein," Tanzania wanted to be "Indierrein." My secretary could only be sure to have a job, as long as the Danish company needed her. In the longer term, she had no opportunities in Tanzania. She had applied for a visa to Canada, and I hope that she managed to go there. She deserved it.

Already on the first day I had an audience with the Danish ambassador, who briefed me on the situation in Tanzania, which for a long time had been the main recipient of Danish aid. The country was led by President Nyerere, who governed with strong leftist politics without being a Communist. Tanzania's population consisted of about 120 tribes, who previously often had been hostile to one another, but whose reconciliation Nyerere sought. The relation between tribes had been exploited by the English in a "divide and rule" policy playing tribes against each other in order not to get a strong consolidated power base as an opponent. Moreover, the island of Zanzibar had merged with the English colony Tanganyika, establishing the state of Tanzania. In Zanzibar, there was a bad dictatorship under the

leader Karume, who depended upon an Arab minority against the black majority. In order to hold together this odd duo, the mainland closed its eyes towards Karume's violent regime. The largest proportion of the population lived in villages in the countryside.

Nyerere introduced a system he called "Ujamaa" which in Swahili means something like extended family, whereby villages were transformed into collectives intended to be self-sufficient. At the same time, most of the industry, banks, etc. were nationalized. This system did not work, and the country became poorer and poorer. In other words, it went downhill, just as in most other countries where market forces were excluded. The nationalized system invited corruption, and assistance funds often disappeared into the wrong pockets. It was a fairly pessimistic outlook that I received from the ambassador.

This impression was confirmed at COWI, where people thought that they only had a little chance to establish themselves in Tanzania, if the situation continued. The next day I got a good insight into how foreign aid is managed. I was to introduce myself to the minister who was in charge of all water matters. I told him that my job was to participate in the drafting of a "Master plan for sewerage." He replied such a plan had his highest interest. Come, he said, as he rose and walked to a bookcase. "Look," he said, "here I have already 13 Master Plans for sewerage." I already knew a few of them because COWI's plan worked in continuation of the nearest preceding ones.

But now I realized the game I was participating in. The problem is that none of the countries that provide foreign aid can afford to pay for the billions needed to perform the actual practical task in the field, namely the establishment of the necessary wastewater system. On the other hand, the Minister is politically forced to do something which the country can not afford. So he asks an assisting country to prepare a "plan." So now one can say that he is doing something. When the government, in turn, is pressured politically to do more, they simply ask another country to provide assistance in preparing a new plan. Thus 13 plans had been made without actually any construction work in the field. Well, I admired the Minister for the keen interest he showed for my job and rather quickly said goodbye.

The next day I had to find out what the city previously did about the waste water problem. COWI had a map, showing that a small part of the city was already sewered, probably during the British colonial rule. On the map one could even see a wastewater treatment plant from which the treated wastewater was discharged through a pipeline into the narrow sound connecting Dar-es-Salaam bay with the sea.

Together with some of the COWI people I went out to look at the sewage plant. I found a small house near the beach, where fishermen landed their catch. The house was locked and there were no people around. Looking through a broken window, I saw some drum screens for separating the largest particles from the wastewater, but these were rusty and were not in use. What happened to the

wastewater? As I walked around the house, I became aware of it. It was obvious that a trench had been dug around the house and a pipe leading sewage around the treatment plant installed in that ditch. At some unknown time, the plant had thus ceased to function and without further ado a bypass around it had been dug because funds were not available to repair this installation.

I then followed the sewage pipe into the sound. It was a concrete pipe having a diameter of more than one meter. The pipe went on the last stretch towards the beach on top of the soil and disappeared further out below sea level. As waste water is lighter than seawater, one usually can see a discolored spot on the sea surface, where the pipe ends but such a spot was not found. We procured a boat and with a water glass (a tube fitted with clear glass at the bottom) I looked down at the end of the pipe. There was no discharge of waste water. In other words, at some place the main line was broken, so that the waste water trickled into the ground. Thus, there was no waste water discharge into the sea. None of the 13 prior wastewater plans drew attention to this fact. They were therefore just paperwork without any connection with reality. Here my faith in foreign aid to developing countries received its deathblow.

The next day was spent sailing around with a motor boat along the coast of the Indian ocean. My task was to assess the flow and depth conditions in the area where a discharge line could be placed. I was wearing trunks and used the opportunity to snorkel in the sea. It was my first experience of the amazing wildlife in a tropical sea. There were coral reefs with fish of all colors and forms: A wonderful enjoyment of which one can not tire.

Soon the Easter holiday gave me some days off and a chance to experience East Africa's rich wildlife. My secretary arranged for a plane ticket for me to Arusha, a major city in Northern Tanzania. The airplane was an old DC-3 which had seen better days. We flew along the coast to the town of Tanga, which had given its name to the country and then westward to Arusha. We flew first over the forested Usambara mountain range and then crossed Africa's highest mountain Kilimanjaro, which is almost 6000 meters high. Although Kilimanjaro lies on the equator, its top was snowcapped – but not at the two craters that I could see on the top. There seemed still to be activity in this ancient volcano. Then another volcano appeared, the 4500 meter high Mount Meru, situated close to Arusha. And finally we went steeply down towards Arusha's airfield.





*Kilimanjaro with its snowcapped main peak and crater- Uhuru peak – as seen from our plane. In the background Mount Meru.*

A taxi took me into the town where I had the address of a car rental. It was obviously an Indian, who owned it. Also he told me about the hardships to which the Indians are exposed.

I rented an old VW and with it I

went on my safari into the great Africa. On the outskirts of Arusha, I passed a large coffee plantation. Facing the road a long row of deep red Canna flowers had been planted, a flower that I had not previously seen, and I was very thrilled. We now have one in our porch, but not in the deep red form. I then passed through a steppe area with large flocks of ostriches, where males performed a special dance with flapping wings. On the plain there were isolated Baobab trees. The trees have a very thick trunk and rather small branches. There is a saying that they look like trees planted upside down such that it has roots facing up. The thick trunk can accommodate large water reserves, which helps the tree cope with drought.



My first stop was at Lake Manyara National Park, located near a great soda lake. Like many other East African lakes, it has no discharge. It therefore concentrates a large content of salts due to the great evaporation from the lake's surface. This turns it mainly into soda, which crystalizes. On the lake's western shore was an area of open woodland and some steppe with an abundance of wildlife. The park is famous for its lions, which spend much of their time high up in the trees. This is due to an annoying fly plague close to the ground, including, among others, tsetse flies, which cause sleeping sickness. Thus, lions rest up in the trees to escape the flies.



With my VW, I could run close under a tree, in which a whole lion family with many cubs rested. They were completely relaxed on the branches and let their feet hang down. I rolled down the window and could touch the feet without the lions responding at all. In the park there were also large herds of elephants, giraffes and many kinds of antelopes and gazelles. Of the latter, there were mainly two kinds, Grant's gazelle and Thomson's gazelle, popularly called Grannies and Tommies. They are most easily distinguished by

the fact that the Tommies wave their little black tails continuously, while the Grannies wave them only when the flies bother them most.

The most beautiful animals in the area were the Impala antelopes with a very gentle facial expression and beautiful curved horns.

Everywhere along the road baboons raced round. They were busy overturning rocks, presumably to look for insects beneath them.



Lake Manyara National Park is located near the Great African Rift. Many million years ago there was a break in the great African continental plate, causing the land to the east to sink hundreds of meters below the western part. This rift starts right up in Syria, forms the Jordan Valley with the Dead Sea, continues as the Red Sea, then goes into Africa across Ethiopia and ends down in Mozambique. Here at Lake Manyara, the rift is seen as an almost vertical cliff, where the road climbs up only with great difficulty.



*Climbing up the Great Rift. To the left Lake Manyara, in the left foreground the National Park*

In the afternoon I could see the silhouette of a building at the upper edge of the cliff, probably the Lake Manyara Lodge, where I intended to stay overnight. When I arrived there, it appeared that the lodge had burned down a few days earlier. Thus I had to continue.

About hundred kilometer to the west lay the vast crater of Ngorongoro. On the upper crater rim was also a lodge, where I really planned to sleep only for the next night. Already on arrival at the Lake Manyara Park I heard about the fire at the Lake Manyara Lodge. Therefore, I shortened my visit to reach Ngorongoro before it got dark.

While up on the plain, I met groups of Masai with large herds of cattle. They are tall, beautiful people where both men and women wear pearl jewelry. The men had long spears to defend the flock against lions.

Already from a distance I could see the Ngorongoro crater rise. The crater has an inner diameter of more than 10 km and the rim rises about 1000 meters over the plain. The interior of the crater is approximately 1500 meter below the rim. The rim was shrouded in clouds. The wind is forced upward by the crater rim, whereby the air cools and forms clouds, which when up there is experienced as fog. The rim is covered with a mist forest, a forest type where the trees are covered by long tendrils of epiphytes (plants that grow on trees and utilize the moisture in the fog).

Here I found the Ngorongoro Crater Lodge, a beautiful hotel which was sufficiently below the edge of the crater to be free of fog. There was a great view down into the crater, where I particularly noted a lake, where the shore seemed to be coated with pink sand. The next day I realized what it really was. I could just make out the small round huts of a Masai village.

At the lodge I agreed with some park officers that the next day they would drive me down into the crater for a day trip. The hotel would provide a lunch for me. Before it got dark, I went for a walk down the crater. I noticed big mounds of elephant excrement and returned because these giants could be quite unfriendly. On a branch I saw a small chameleon, which clung to the branch with its two-fingered feet, while the rough skin constantly changed colors.



Very early the next morning, we took off in a Land Rover. Besides a pair of tourists we had two park rangers with us. We crawled along the winding road down from the crater rim and came to the lake, which I had seen at great distance from the top. I found that what I perceived as pink sand were really huge flocks of flamingos, which with their long legs tottered around the shores, while their beaks sifted the water for small crustaceans. It was clear to see that there were a number of age

#### *Flamingos and Wildebeest (Gnu)*

were closest to the shore, where the depth of the water was low. They had not yet gotten the strong pink color, which is caused by a coloring agent derived from the crustaceans. It is excreted in their feathers, just as the pink color of salmon meat comes from the crustaceans which salmon ingest. The next older age class had already stronger red-colored feathers and walked about in a belt further out than the young ones. Furthest away were the adult birds with the darkest colored feathers.

classes. The youngest, not-yet-mature flamingos



Our arrival in the Landrover disturbed the birds. Immediately thousands of birds flew up from the lake and fluttered around with their big wings. This propagated along the lake and in an instant the sky was darkened by the huge bird mass which roared like a storm. When the birds fly up, one sees the black areas in their wings.

We then drove out onto the plain, where the most common animals were wildebeests and zebras.



We met another car with park rangers who told us that we were not far away from a pair of lions. Soon we could see twenty or thirty Land Rovers with wildlife photographers and tourists protruding above the car roof. They were all quite close to a pair of lions, who were lazily lying in the grass and did not seem to notice us. We stood still while watching the couple. Suddenly the male and female mated with the female laying beneath him. When the love act was over, the male yawned and went with a deep sigh back in the

grass to sleep more. The female did not appear to respond for the duration of the session.

In a small grove we sat in the grass to eat our lunch. A flock of blue weaver birds landed close to us to beg for crumbs. We gave them some of our bread and they flew away. It took only a moment. Then came another flock of weaver birds resembling the previous ones with the exception that they were yellow. In this way we had alternating blue and yellow weaver birds coming during our entire meal, but there were never mixed flocks, either they were blue or they were yellow.

Then we drove to visit the Masai village in the crater. For a small sum of money that one of our park rangers gave the local chief, we were allowed to enter. The village was surrounded by a fence of prickly tamarisk branches for the protection of the cattle herd from attacks by lions. There was a

cluster of low hemispherical huts built of branches covered with cow manure. From the houses came an unmistakable stench, which deprived me of any desire to stick my head inside.

The villagers stood outside and looked at us as curiously as we looked at them. The young men and



women stood in groups divided according to their age group. Nearly all the men stood in a very characteristic manner on one leg leaning on their very long spears while they twisted the other leg around the spear. Some of the men and women had coats made from cowhide. The women wore beautiful large pearl collars and the men also had pearl necklaces.

We saw how they were "milking" the cows for blood, which is an important food source for them. With a bow directed towards the animal's neck they shot an arrow into the skin. The blood flowed out. They gathered it in a cup and drank it immediately.

The Masai are a big problem for the Tanzanian government. They are nomads, depending on seasonal moving around with their large herds of cattle. They will not cooperate in the "Ujamaa" system, which the government has established in the villages, and which requires the abandonment of nomadic life. The government in recent years has reduced its demands on the unproductive "Ujamaa" system. Hopefully, the proud Masai people will be able to continue living in their traditional manner.

Before we drove back to the lodge in the evening, we managed to see many other animals including large rhinoceros, which I have only seen in zoos before. There, their horns are worn down by rubbing the bars of their enclosures. Here in the open they have very long, well- shaped horns. In one corner of the lake there was a bunch of hippos. However, I could only see the ears and eyes above the water. Everything else was under water.

Amongst the birds, I noticed the beautiful crowned cranes with yellow plumes on their heads, secretary birds, which have a long feather sticking up to the rear over their eyes so that they look like old-fashioned clerks with a quill pens behind their ears. There was also a snake bird with a very long, flexible neck and eagles and kites with the split tail in flight.



The next morning I drove with my VW into the Serengeti plain, Africa's largest wildlife area where I found more amazing wildlife. After the previous day's experiences with the big game, I was particularly impressed by some very small animals. In a scrub I found the smallest antelope, a dikdik. This small, virtually tailless animal is no more than approximately 30 cm high. When I got out of the car to look for it, I discovered on the ground a little scarab, a beetle that makes balls of animal dung,



which it rolls over to a cave, it had dug out. The dung balls serve as food for the larvae coming out of the eggs the scarab had laid in the balls.

Serengeti is a savannah with isolated groups of Tamarisks which are grazed by giraffes who apparently are not bothered by the long thorns on the branches. Along the way, I passed Olduvaj gorge, where the archaeologist Leakey family had found the remains of the oldest humans, among them "Lucy", named after Mrs. Leakey.

After another night in the lodge, I drove back to Arusha. On the way, I noticed how large bunches of weaver birds' nests hung down from telephone poles. They are built as closed baskets formed of interwoven grass and small branches. Here I met again my blue and yellow friends from the lunch the other day, again it was either the blue or the yellow birds that held together in a cluster of nests.

With the DC 3 I flew back to Dar-es-Salaam via Mombassa. I had some days of work, where I, among other activities, visited the University of Dar-es-Salaam and the State chemist to find out what assistance one might expect from these organizations for more detailed further studies. Finally, I had to write my report, which became number fourteen amongst the minister's Master plans for sewerage.

The last days I looked around the city. I made a trip to the National Museum of Tanzania, where I met a group of young women and men who danced folk dances. They were the National Ballet of Tanzania. They wanted me to dance with them. In return I taught them to dance my special dance - the Finnish polka with high lifted legs. They liked it very much. When I walked away, I saw the whole group dancing Finnish polka on a lawn. It has probably been added to their regular repertoire.

I also went out to one of the suburbs, which in Swahili is called Karriakoo. Svahili is a mixed language consisting of Negro Bantu language, a little Arabic and a few garbled English words. Karriakoo comes from the English "Carrier Corps". During English colonial days, it was here that one would hire carriers for expeditions into the interior.





In this neighborhood lived many refugees from Mozambique who had fled from the cruel fights between the Mozambican Liberation Front and the Portuguese colonialists. Most of the refugees were from the Maconde tribe who lived in the Northern part of Mozambique, bordering with Tanzania. They were very talented wood carvers, cutting figures in ebony, which they themselves harvested in nearby stands. This extremely hard wood can be processed without being dried first, and it has only a slight tendency to split later. The majority of their wood carvings refer to the dream demons, who in Swahili are called shetanis, a word derived from the Arabic sheitan, which in turn is related to our word Satan. They are very grotesque figures, often mixtures of human and animal bodies. It can be a single character or more characters who almost are grown together into an acrobatic group. There is an Indian store in Karriakoo which buys these figures. There I bought several woodcarvings, which I partly retained, partly gave away as gifts. Thus I returned home from Tanzania heavily laden.



## USA.

I was now not at home very long. I had an invitation to accept a brief visiting professorship at North anything about this before I arrived Carolina State University in Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina late in 1971. It was the IAEA, who had arranged it. The university had offered to host an international isotope course to be paid for by the IAEA. The IAEA had imposed the condition that there were foreign teachers in the course and had suggested me and some others. It did not suit the university, which wanted to use its own staff as teachers though out the whole course, but they had to accept IAEA's conditions. I did not know anything about that, until I arrived at Raleigh. I used the opportunity to combine my journey with other visits to the United States.

My first stop was Washington DC, where I was received by Bill Mott. I have referred to him before. He was the head of the US delegation at the conference in Prague, where he was involved in a drinking war with a Russian. I stayed a few days in his lovely house in Maryland, close to Washington. He had a wife and two children.

His wife worked as a scientific custodian at the American History Museum, a branch of the Smithsonian Institute. She invited me for a demonstration show, which she stood for. It took place in a copy of an old American home, where there should be baked apple pie. About this dish it is said that there is nothing as American as apple pie. What impressed me most about the demonstration was that she carried a spray can with the authentic smell of freshly baked apple pie. She sprayed it into the air just before people came to the demonstration. It made the illusion perfect.



Bill Mott invited me on a tour of Washington, which also took us to the Capitol. It happened to be one of the decade's most exciting days. The same day President Nixon had announced that he would go on a state visit to China, which until that day was considered to be the US. public enemy number two after the Soviet Union. The entire Capitol was buzzing on that occasion. Lots of journalists went around to interview members of Congress. Flash light flashed all over. Nixon's statement was a massive turnaround in U.S. policy. It has led to the opening of China, which has influenced the whole world heavily.

*Bill Mott with his daughter Kathy.*

*They visited us later on in Bagsvaerd.*

From Washington I flew to Raleigh. I expected to be met at the airport but there was nobody to take care of me. I took a taxi to the University and with a lot of difficulty I found the section where I had to work. There was no friendly reception of me. I was taken to a very shabby dormitory, where I got an extremely badly furnished room. There was no shower or toilet. For this purpose, there was a room where there were a number of washbasins, a shower and five toilet bowls without any screening. Here I had to make my toilet together with a number of the participants of the course. It was one of my worst experiences.

For my lectures I could only with extreme difficulty procure a slide projector. For the lab exercises the most basic tools were missing. When I complained about the conditions to the local head of institution, he did not respond. I clenched my teeth and persevered for the fortnight my part of the course lasted. When I left, there was nobody from the University to say good-bye. The students, however, had great pity for me. The whole team followed me to the airport and waved goodbye to me. I flew to Austin, the capital of Texas. Here I visited my Polish friend Andrzej Pradzynski and his wife Halina. Andrzej worked now at the University of Texas. Halina

was a cosmetician and had opened a beauty salon in the city, which quickly gained a fashionable clientele. Their oldest son had a job as property manager. They were doing very well.

They took me on long tours around Texas. In particular, we were in San Antonio, where there was a battle between the Mexicans and Texans in 1836. In an old mission station - the Alamo - the defending 189 Texans were killed to the last man. The place is now a national shrine.

From Austin, I went to San Francisco, where two cousins of mine lived. They were my playmates as children in Vienna. He was then called Pauli, but called himself now Joseph. She was originally named Vera, but called herself now Varda. I have mentioned my



*Varda with her son*



*Joseph Itiel*

meeting with Joseph in Israel, where he worked as a teacher, but now he resides in San Francisco. He met me at the airport, brought me to my hotel, and also drove me around the town with his fancy sports car.

He was not on good terms with his sister Varda, so I had to find my way to her myself. I had not met her since our childhood in Vienna. She lived with her husband and child in a nice house in a suburb of the city. She was a professional dancer, but now had a job to apply dance therapy to juvenile delinquents. I spent some days in San Francisco and came to like the town very well. It has an almost European atmosphere.

With Joseph, I was on a trip across the Golden Gate Bridge to the small Muir Woods National Park, where I saw the giant redwood trees and the little hippie town of Sausalito with a lot of house boats.

Then I flew to New York to visit my cousin Ruth Hilde, who was a famous pianist. She lived with her husband and daughter in a fancy penthouse overlooking Hudson River and most of New York. I did not meet her daughter Marina, who was in a youth camp with her school. They also had a dog. My guess is that this dog never was



taken on a walk in the street. The animal spent most of the time in the room where I slept. There was a very bad smell. Ruth Hilde and her husband Jerry, who was a wealthy attorney, invited me for dinner at his club on Long Island. The rest of my time in New York I was left to myself. Ruth Hilde and Jerry spent most of the time in bed looking at the TV, which hung down from the ceiling. I went around New York for myself, spent some time in Central Park, took the ferry to Staten Island, had lunch in China town, looked at Greenwich Village and spent an hour during a heavy shower under Washington Square Arch. After a few days I flew back to Denmark.

### **At Home again.**

The 1960s were the best years for the Isotope Centre. We had plenty of work for marine investigations relative to the planning of wastewater discharges, where we would, on the basis of current and dilution measurements, advise municipalities and businesses on where to locate a discharge. We were the world leader in this area. Our approach was to advise on the whole system. We advised on the necessary initial purification, designed the discharge tube and diffuser at the outlet.; carried out biological and sanitary investigations in order to determine the expected impact on marine flora and fauna as well as on health problems at beaches and determined the natural self-purification processes in the sea.

We had a lot of work at home and abroad. As mentioned before, we had our own research vessel. We developed and built measuring instruments for industry, for road building and for scientific purposes. I was elected as a member of the Academy of Technical Sciences. Students from the Technical University of Denmark stood in line to be allowed to make their final exam work with us. Several of them were later employed by us, but sometimes this led to strange events.

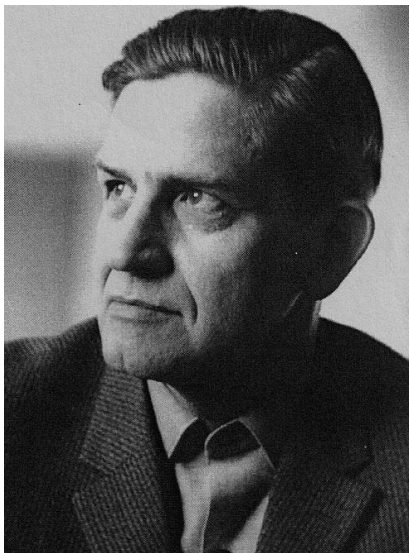
We had one girl who worked for her thesis with us. One day we were sitting in our canteen and talked about the Factory and laboratory Inspectorate, who regularly came to check our facilities. The Inspectorate had an assistant director Grethe Jensen, who in my opinion could be unduly strict. I called her my enemy no.1. The girl cleared her throat and said quietly: "Grete Jensen is my Mother". We changed the subject. I told about my last meeting at the Academy of Technical Sciences. The meeting was headed by an elderly gentleman who seemed to me somewhat senile. I mentioned this. The girl again cleared her throat and quietly said that the man was her father. Oddly enough, we remained good friends. Unfortunately, I still sometimes talk ill-timed about my views of other people.

Another area was especially difficult for me. Several green organizations began to manifest themselves in the late 1960s. The Anglers' Association especially opposed our work on the planning of wastewater discharges. They claimed that in all cases and regardless of the cost, wastewater should be cleaned as much as possible and that no one should believe that wastewater can be sufficiently diluted so as to be harmless in the ocean.

The Anglers' Association had a man who acted as their environmental consultant - master painter Borge Christensen. He was also a master at public relations and started a press campaign against our work. At that time, we had a major undertaking for the Aarhus municipality in which the Conservative councilor for Technology and Environment was named Olaf Christensen.

Christensen had a bad relationship with the newspaper Aarhus Stiftstidende, a publication which had originally also been conservative, but now wanted to show that it was independent. This it demonstrated with a very critical attitude towards Olaf Christensen. Since he also was responsible for choosing us to study the wastewater conditions, the Isotope Centre and especially I became the target of the paper.

The journalist who spearheaded the campaign against us was called Herdis Wiene. She united with Borge Christensen, and almost every day they published something against us. Most of what was written were lies, but only a few could see this. It was also impossible for us to reply, since any rebuttal made by us was distorted before it was published in the paper. Inga's parents lived in Aarhus and although my father-in-law Edwin personally supported me, I have a strong feeling that we no longer were invited along with others, because I was a dubious guy, whom you hardly could ask others to associate with. The campaign reduced the demand for our work.



*Edwin Noergaard, my father-in-law, professor at teacher's college, biologist, world-known for his studies of spider ecology*

Eventually I began to feel fatigued and would sometimes wonder if I should not change jobs.

The government decided in the early 1970s to establish a Ministry of Environment and within it an Environmental Protection Agency. We did not have much to do with these organizations, but they had noticed that I was at that time perhaps one of those in the country who knew the most about water pollution. I sat on some committees the EPA had set up.

At such a committee meeting in the latter half of 1973, I was asked by the then deputy director of the EPA - Niels Ole Hansen - if I would like to become head of the EPA's water division. I did not take his approach seriously, but when the position was advertised, I applied for it. I did this not so much to get the job, but to show

through my application what we at the Isotope Centre could do for the EPA.

In early 1974 when I had just come home in the late afternoon, the doorbell rang. Outside stood a messenger from a wine company with a beautifully wrapped box. It contained a large bottle De Luze Cognac with a letter from the Environment Ministry's Permanent Secretary Holger Lavesen who congratulated me with the fact that the Queen had appointed me chief engineer in the EPA!

Until 1973 I was still an Austrian citizen. Inga and I agreed that we wanted another child and this time we thought that we would get married before. It was necessary that I obtain Danish citizenship

because otherwise our child would automatically become Austrian, as Lone and Steffen still were. Fortunately my application for Danish citizenship was approved before I applied for the post in the EPA, because I could not become a civil servant without being a Danish citizen.



On 22 December 1973, Inga and I married at the Gladsaxe Townhall. Only my mother and Fräuli were present. No, that is wrong - Eva was there too. During the ceremony she got a seat between Inga and me. The day after she was in the kindergarten, where she very proudly told of her experiences: "Yesterday, I was married to my Dad and Mom." From the Townhall we went to the five star Soelleroed Inn, where we enjoyed a lovely wedding dinner.

Christmas Eve we celebrated at Inga's parents. Over New Year we went to Gran Canaria on our honeymoon trip. By this time, Inga was already pregnant again.

*Newspaper picture from our wedding.*

## The Environmental Protection Agency.

The day after I had received the cognac from Permanent Secretary Holger Lavesen, I phoned him to arrange a meeting where I could introduce myself. During the meeting I told him I was glad to get a job where I could make decisions based on good scientific and economic background instead of being an advisor to others who did not always followed my counsel. He looked surprised at me and said - Yes, but Somer, you have to administrate. Yes, Mr. Secretary, I replied without really knowing what I was saying yes to, but I would certainly discover.

At the Isotope Centre there was great surprise that I was resigning. The first one I spoke to was my colleague Torben Sevel whom I wanted to recommend as my successor. Then I called the Chairman of the Board, Professor Per Soeltoft, and briefed him. Finally, I gathered everyone in the canteen where I told them about my new job. I had agreed with Lavesen that I first would join the the Agency on April 1, as I had to complete some tasks that I could hardly leave to others.

I also introduced myself to the EPA's Director Helge Odel. He told me that I would lead a staff of 17 employees and that my portfolio would be the whole water sector, comprising drinking water, groundwater, water in rivers, lakes and ocean, urban and industrial wastewater, and solid waste. He also mentioned that there was a desire among the employees to split the department, but he asked me to do everything to keep it together. It proved to be the beginning of the many problems that I ran into. For it was like holding together a bag of fleas. Several of the employees saw themselves as heads of divisions dealing with parts of the complex, and they proved not to be very positive to my attempts to hold together the troops.

As I said, I joined April 1 - on Inga's birthday - after taking a tender Farewell of the Board and staff at the Isotope Centre, where I had my workplace through 20 mostly good years, and which I had brought from a one-person institution to a company whose 30 employees worked all over the world.

In 1990 the Isotope Centre merged with three other applied research institutes – the Welding Centre, the Corrosion Centre and Medicotechnique Centre – to establish FORCE Technology (from **FOuR**



Centres). FORCE Technology has now (2013) a staff of 1100 and divisions in Sweden, Norway, USA (Houston), Russia, China and Singapore.

When I arrived at the Environmental Protection Agency, I was besieged by journalists and photographers. It was quite a sensation that I was appointed as the new head of the water sector. What I did not know was that in the two years the EPA had existed, there had been 7 others who had served as chief of this department. It says something about how difficult were the challenges of cooperation. It did not take long before I came into trouble. I used the early days to talk with individual employees in order to get information about their tasks and working procedures. I found that all work was carried out in incredibly bureaucratic fashion. While I would have liked to change that by simplifying procedures, this was certainly difficult to interfere with.

The first, who rebelled, was a Norwegian Gunnar Sagen. He had previously been head of the pesticide company Cheminova and was now working with industrial wastewater. He was two-faced. On one hand, he seemed to appear environmentally conscious, but in fact operated in collusion with his old colleagues in the chemical industry. It led to very arbitrary decisions on his part, and it was obvious that we quickly would get in trouble both in relation to the political system and with media and special interest groups. When I tried to intervene, he asked the Director to be transferred to the Industrial division who hitherto had nothing to do with industrial wastewater. Helge Odel, who was found to be a very weak director, let him move without discussion with me and only informed me afterwards.

That whetted the appetite of others. An employee who was in charge of groundwater and drinking water was the next to grumble. He had the ambitions to lead a department with these tasks. He gathered several employees with the same activities and went to Odel, who without discussing it with me and despite his wish that I should try to keep all activities together, let him establish a new division. A year after I took office an employee was assigned to my division without discussing this with me in advance. He had been technical director of a municipality near Copenhagen. He lost this job due to cooperation problems. As a public high level employee, he continued to get his salary from the municipality and was therefore very cheaply available to the EPA. He was placed in my office without normal recruitment procedures. He very soon created problems. He had been accustomed to be the boss and had difficulty coming to terms with being a subordinate employee. Together with other employees he worked for the establishment of a new department for sewage. Again, this group was established behind my back. To his great disappointment, the troublemaker did not become boss of this section. He thought it was my influence, and therefore caused me troubles even after separation.

The result of all these maneuvers was that after a couple of years I only was responsible for surface waters, namely rivers, lakes and sea. My office was then renamed the water quality office and I had only a staff of 6 or 7.

It was not difficult to get employees because it was very popular among young people to get a job at the Environmental Protection Agency. Once when I had to hire a biologist with special knowledge of freshwater biology we received more than 150 applications. Our personnel office sorted out those who clearly lacked the required qualifications and the rest were evaluated by a committee with me as head. After we had employed a suitable biologist, all the candidates got a letter from the personnel office where they were thanked for applying and advised that the post was not vacant any more. Soon after I got a very angry letter from Jorgen Kronborg, the technical assistant, whom I had to sack from the Isotope Centre because of being drunk. It turned out that he had been among the applicants, but was sorted out by the personnel office because he did not have the required skills. Thus, I did not

know at all that he had applied for the position. He wrote that he was hospitalized with a nervous breakdown due to the refusal. He claimed that we had agreed to part as gentlemen, why he felt that it was despicable that he did not get the job. It was not easy to convince him about the facts.

## **Bo.**

Going slightly back in time, on 9 August 1974, my fourth and Inga's and my second child was born at the Gentofte Hospital. The birth was smooth, but immediately after the birth the doctors found that Bo, as our son was called, had a congenital dislocation of the hip. This was a defect in the hip joint where the femoral head and acetabulum fit badly together. Already in the delivery room Bo received a special harness-like device so that his legs were forced apart. We were obviously concerned about



*Inga and just born Bo*

this, and it hampered his daily care. Inga went many times with him for therapy at the hospital, often to get the harness expanded as Bo was growing. After six months he was healed and subsequently Bo has not had any hip problems.

Inga worked at this time at the August Krogh Institute of Zoophysiology at the University of Copenhagen. When Eva was born in 1969, Inga left the Nuclear Research Center at Risoe. She stayed at home until 1971, when she applied and got a position as a laboratory technician at the August Krogh Institute. She has had a good job there until she went on early retirement in 2003.



*Inga, Bo and I Christmas 1975*

## **Portugal.**

My work entailed many trips around the country. An essential part of my work was to guide the county environmental departments to perform proper surveillance of water bodies. I missed those long trips abroad, which I had at the Isotope Centre. We took revenge in our holidays.

We went to Portugal several times and it became one of my favorite destinations. Once when we were there with Lone, she all but disappeared on the first day. Lone had spent a long time in the United States and there she dated an American ballet dancer, Jonathan. His ballet troupe was on tour in

Portugal, while we were there. The troupe stayed in a former royal palace, Busaco, now a luxury hotel, where several years later I stayed a few days. And there was Lone as well; we were not to see her again until it was time to go back home.

*The Port Wine Institute.*

In Lisbon, I liked to visit the Port Wine Institute, which is housed in an old nobleman's palace with a beautiful view over the city. At the institute there was a bar where you could get all the port wines produced in Portugal. One could sample them by the glass and also buy them in bottles. Inga and I went there with our children one morning. Bo was still in the stroller. We met up at the opening at 10 and sat at the bar, leaving the children for themselves.

In the room there were many tables where people could sit and enjoy their port. At each table there was a bowl with different nuts. We were the only guests in the bar. We did not notice that the children went from table to table and everywhere emptied the bowls with nuts. The waiters who were dressed in old fashioned livery were so polite that they did not interfere with the childrens' activity.

Before this trip, Inga and I knew nothing about port. We were given a thick catalog and found out that there are basically three types of port - ruby, tawny and white - which come in different price ranges. Sampling of a nice large glass of about 0.2 liter would cost in contemporary monetary equivalent approximately 1, 2 or 3 Danish crowns. We ordered a glass of each type in the middle range. We enjoyed in particular the white port, because it was not so sweet. To see what difference there is in quality, we then bought an expensive and a cheap glass of white port. We could not taste any difference. We then bought a bottle of the cheap white port and got ready to go. We retrieved the children who looked somewhat overfed. They told us about all the delicious nuts they had eaten. Somewhat wobbly after the great tasting, we left the room. We liked the Port Wine Institute so much that we went there again the next morning. We had to walk through a long gallery in order to get into the large room with the bar. The first thing we saw was that all the waiters went around and removed the small bowls of nuts from the tables. The children were very disappointed and we left after a further brief tasting, where we tried the really expensive types - vintage port and late bottled port. Personally, I fell for late bottled port. It comes from a particular year, is then stored in barrels for many years and finally bottled. It has deposited its precipitate in the barrel, so that there is not so much precipitate in the bottle as in an ordinary old port.



### **More Environmental Protection Agency.**

The EPA was undergoing significant changes. At last the Ministry found out how weak Helge Odel was. For a brief time, he became permanent secretary of the Ministry for Interior Affairs, from where he originally had come, but was then appointed Prefect, a position most often used for older, higher officials, who now should have a job where they could take it easy before retirement. The Prefect is the state representative in a certain district. He has only few powers mainly related to church administration, including probably divorce cases.

Odel was followed in 1977 by Ejler Koch, a parliamentarian who was strongly involved in the formation of the Ministry of Environment in 1972. He was an excellent director and I had a very good relationship with him. He is the only one who has supported me in my struggle with often unruly personnel. Unfortunately, he had a brain tumor and died after only a year on the job. He was succeeded by Jens Kampmann, who had been Minister of the Environment in the Ministry's first year. Kampmann was more a politician than a civil servant. When something went wrong in the environment, he immediately saw a chance to get more funds for the Agency, even if it was not really justified. In our weekly meetings of division heads, I once expressed that the EPA was led by a management principle, which I called "management by catastrophes." This opinion did not increase my status with Kampmann. Worse yet was when at the establishment of the first environmental water plan where the cost of fighting a greatly exaggerated pollution reached amazing heights, I said that we had changed our management principle to "management by pseudo catastrophes".

### **The EU and the Paris Commission.**

My life in the EPA was not always gloomy. By and by I received a number of international assignments, both in the EU, which led to numerous visits to Brussels and also in the Paris Commission, which had the task of combating pollution of the Northeast Atlantic including the Kattegat. Member states were all Western European countries from Iceland in the north to Portugal in the south. Three to four times a year I went for meetings of this commission or its working groups. I made many friends from the participating countries and some of them I consider to be my best friends to this day.

The trips to the EU were often day trips where I flew on one of the government's 9-passenger jets.

*En route to Brussels*



*Landing at Zaventem*



We landed at Zaventem airport in Brussels outside the normal landing area. A minibus came to the plane and took us directly to the European Commission building, where we had our meetings.



Sometimes when the meetings lasted for a few days, I would stay at a nice hotel after eating a wonderful meal with "red meat" in the old town or lobster in one of the many lobster restaurants on the Quai des Briques close to Catherine's Church. Before I went home, I bought a box of chocolates at the many "Leonidas" outlets where one shopped through an opening in the display window. This was appreciated when I returned home.

*The initial meetings took place in the Commission.(right). Final meetings in the Council(left).*



Each year the Paris Commission held a meeting, usually in June. One month before there would be a meeting of a working group to prepare the commission meeting, where the delegations often were headed by the Minister of Environment. Early in spring and during fall, special groups met to discuss the monitoring or action programs which member states should implement. I must confess that there was much talk and little action.

*At a Paris Commission meeting in Dublin the Irish Government invited us to a party in Dublin Castle. Here we are in the throne hall.*



At my request a working group specifically met to assess the nutrient load of the sea and any action plans needed to mitigate the adverse effects of this load. The first meeting took place in Copenhagen. I was for many years Chairman of this group.

In 1976 I was knighted by the Queen in an audience with her. First I had to rent a tailcoat with all its accessories. At the appointed time, I met up at Christiansborg Palace, where already some others were waiting to be received. The Royal Steward informed me how I should behave when entering the audience room. I had to walk slowly toward the queen, shake hands with her with gloves on and briefly introduce myself. I did so with the words: "Your Majesty, I am Your Majesty's garbage man." At that time I was also responsible for solid waste problems at the EPA. After a few sentences, where the Queen said something about her passion for the environment, I retreated. It had to walk backwards, which was quite difficult, because I was careful not to bump into the door to the audience hall. On the way out, I stepped on my shoelace, so I was just about to fall.



*My order as knight of the Dannebrog.*

## The Soviet Union.

I also had some interesting assignments in connection with the Soviet Union. I had several visits from Russian colleagues, with whom I went on a tour to show them how we handled environmental problems. In general, I concentrated on Copenhagen and environs. Once there came a delegation of senior officials whom I decided to take on a longer trip. We went to Odense, where they visited the Funen county environmental department. But we also showed them the Hans Christian Andersen's house and the city as such. I asked them if they had any special requests. Yes, said the head of the delegation, on our trips abroad, we tend to place a wreath on the unknown soldier's tomb, and we would also like to do this here. I thought that such a thing probably is not found in Odense.

However, I informed the County Mayor Jens Peder Fisker, who hosted us while we were in Odense. He considered this for a moment and then said that he could easily fix it. After a lunch at the County Building, he took us on a road trip with a minibus. In the group there was also a young man from the Russian embassy. He had arranged for a wreath. We stopped in Noere Lyndelse by a sculpture of a flute-playing boy. I could see immediately that it was a monument to the composer Carl Nielsen, who had spent his childhood there. "Here we are," said Jens Peder Fisker. The Russians stood right in front of the monument. One of them went forward with the wreath and laid it on the steps to the monument. The Russian embassy man went to Jens Peder Fisker and said, "Tell me, is this not a monument to the famous Danish composer Carl Nielsen. "Well" Fisker said, "He was famous as a composer, but unknown as soldier." The Russian said no more, and we went peacefully back to Odense.



Some time after, the Russians would retaliate. They invited a 3-man delegation on a tour of the Soviet Union. I was one of the three. In October 1976 we flew to Moscow where we were received at the airport and driven to our hotel. It was close to the Red Square, and should have been one of the Soviet-style skyscrapers typical of the Stalin period. However, approximately twenty stories up the building ended with a flat roof. I was informed that it was due to a weak foundation. The building began to sink, when it came up to the present height. At the reception I received no room key, but just a note with the number of the floor, where my room was. It surprised me, but when I came up on the floor with the elevator I was met by a terrifying woman at a desk across from the elevator. She gave me the key with an angry look, and to her it should be returned whenever I wanted to leave the hotel.

The room was incredibly cheerless. All craft work was of poor quality, not least the installations of the bathroom. I packed out quickly and then went on a little tour of the city. It had begun to snow. Everywhere there were babushkas, wrapped in shawls sweeping the snow away from sidewalks with a besom. I went for a walk on the Red Square, found the huge GUM department store and tried to see what one could buy there. It was certainly not much. What surprised me most was how they could fill a large department





store. I solved the riddle by walking along a long corridor. I

*The GUM department store*

discovered that the same product exhibition, which I had seen when I started my walk was repeated farther along the corridor. And the same was also true on the next floor. The same goods and the same presentation of those recurred again and again through the building.

I had to hurry back to the hotel because we were invited to dinner by our hosts. They took us to a restaurant which should be the city's best. We also got an awesome meal, but the service was bad. The next day we went for negotiations at the Ministry to prepare the protocol which was signed at the end of our visit.

The next day we flew to Tallinn in Estonia. The hotel we stayed in was very modern. We were told that it was a Finnish organization that had built it and was now also in charge of its operation.

We went to the technical university to visit its environmental department. I knew the professor from meetings of the Baltic Sea Commission which he chaired for a period. We were to meet with his entire staff in a meeting room. However, I had to go to the rest room first. When I came into the room were all already sitting with a glass of Bloody Mary, which usually consists of vodka and tomato juice. I also got a glass and took a sip. It burned terribly in my mouth and throat. It proved that pure, undiluted laboratory alcohol was used instead of vodka. The others had been warned before I came into the room to drink it very carefully, but I did not know that coming too late. The laboratories of the department were neat and well equipped.

The next day we were out of town to visit a Fishery Kolkhoz, ie. a cooperative of fishermen who both had a fleet of fishing vessels, but also had a canning factory, a shipyard and other businesses.

Everything was very neatly and well maintained. The director received us in his office which could not have been nicer if it had belonged to an American multi-millionaire. The explanation was that a kolkhoz is self-governing and not subject to a bureaucratic ministry's whims. It was probably the closest you could get to a capitalist enterprise in the otherwise strictly communist regulated Soviet Union.

The Russians themselves were aware of the effectiveness of the kolkhoz as it was made responsible for organizing the sailing events in connection with the forthcoming Olympics, whose other disciplines took place in Moscow. Everywhere I got a very positive impression of Estonia, where people knew how to get the best possible out of the situation under Soviet domination.



I also walked around Tallinn on my own. The old town with its narrow streets is surrounded by old fortification towers. On a nearby hill is the Russian-Orthodox Alexander Nevsky Cathedral totally out of place amongst its medieval neighbors, but demonstrating who is the ruler. Another site I visited was the Danish king's garden. It is said, that King Valdemar II camped

here before he conquered the town in 1219. Estonian. All in all, Tallin was a wonderful experience.

Tallin actually means the Danish town in



*The Alexander Nevski cathedral*



*A memorial*

*plate at the Danish King's garden*

My impression was completely different, when we then flew to Riga in Latvia. Again we visited an institution at the university. Everything was in a state of disrepair. The scientists complained when we had them in private that they could not get any equipment nor permission and funds to travel abroad to get in contact with Western researchers. The hotel and the city seemed dilapidated and cheerless.

So we breathed a sigh of relief when we left Riga to fly to Leningrad, now St. Petersburg. It is a city with wonderful architecture, mostly in the Empire style. We visited the Hermitage Museum, where we were shown around by the Director. I told him that I was particularly interested in Scythian art. I have for many years been interested in the Scythians, a steppe people who lived about 2000 years ago. They made wonderful jewelry often with animal motifs, especially deer. It is my impression that they have inspired the Nordic art in the first millennium AD. This department was currently closed, but the director arranged that I along with an expert in the field were allowed to see this collection.

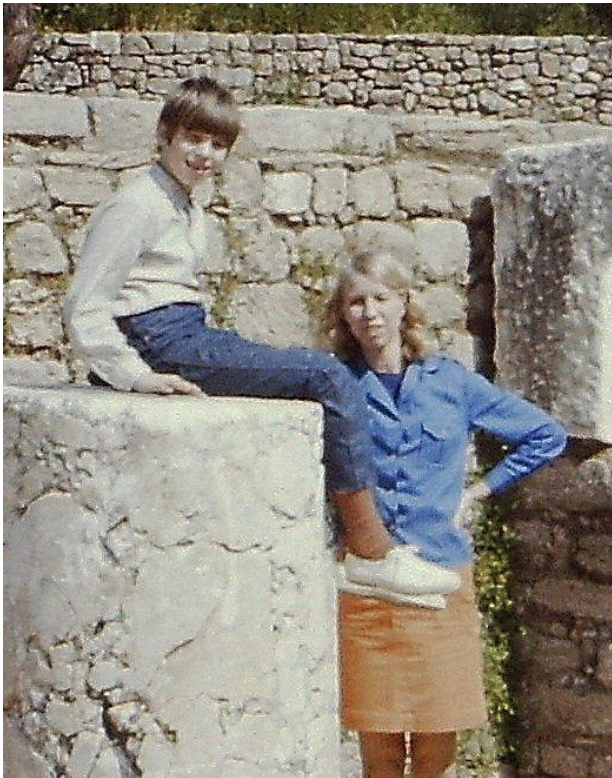


The last evening we were at the Kirov Opera where Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake was presented. I sat with a young official of the Ministry of Environment. He was born in Uzbekistan, which lies north of Afghanistan. The Uzbeks are a Turkish people. Although they had not been in direct contact with Turkey for more than 600 years, he readily understood my Turkish. We had fine orchestra seats. During the intermission I got up and looked around. I told the Uzbekian that if it had been at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, I could be sure to recognize someone in the audience, but here I could be sure of not knowing anyone. In the same moment I discovered the Danish TV art journalist Ejnar Johansson standing on the first row of the balcony. So even here I could not avoid knowing somebody. I walked up to the balcony, and introduced myself to Johansson and told him what I just had said to my neighbor. I did not know Johansson personally, but we had a nice talk. He had made a number of shows from the Soviet Union for Danish TV.

The next day we flew home. On the plane I came to sit beside Johansson. He told me about the incredible difficulties encountered by a Western team in making a TV show from the Soviet Union. Everything had to be approved in detail in advance. There were people present to verify that there was no discussion of anything controversial, while others controlled the camera angles, so there was nothing disadvantageous in the picture. Often recordings, which had been approved in advance, were rejected at the site.

## Steffen.

*Steffen and Inga in 1967*



At home, things progressed.

Steffen had graduated from Gladsaxe Gymnasium. We had a wonderful graduation reception at home. He started to study physics at the University and had some teaching jobs beside his studies. After about 6 months, he would rather become a schoolteacher. He was enrolled in the good Blaagaards Teachers College, but only a few days before he would start there, he came home and told me that he had signed up for the very unorthodox, very left wing Teachers College at Tvind in Jutland. Inga and I were quite disappointed about his choice, but we could not interfere with his wish. Shortly after he had started, we were invited to visit him at Tvind on a parents visiting day. I revised my views on Tvind at this opportunity and could see that the students got a completely different, but not bad education. Steffen had many interesting experiences during his Study: His class repaired an old bus and used it for a trip through the Middle East and Afghanistan to India. They spent a year of house building in Vejle and worked at various businesses in town. Finally they were asked to convert a lightship to a school ship

and sail with a team of juvenile delinquents to the Caribbean.

He continued after his graduation as a member of the Tvind teacher group, became teacher in Odense, but ended up saying goodbye to everything that had to do with Tvind. He found, however, his sweet wife Marianne in Tvind. He then studied business management and IT at the Aarhus Business School





and now works as a teacher and consultant on computer applications in Aarhus at the Aarhus Business College.

*Marianne , Steffen, their two children Amanda (in pink) and Anna Olivia with me in front of our tent in 2000.*

### The Azores.

My work for the Paris Commission was for me a bright spot in the EPA. In 1978 we had a working meeting in the Azores. The Portuguese delegate to the commission, a navy commander, was director of an acoustical oceanography center for use in antisubmarine warfare on the island Santa Maria, one of the smallest and most primitive of the archipelago. As there were talks to close down this station, he invited to the meeting in order to obtain agreement to transform the station to a center for marine exploration of the North Atlantic. During the last World War, the island had been an important base for transport across the Atlantic, but beyond the small antisubmarine station the only thing that remained from this time was an aerodrome. Once a week it was used as an intermediate landing ground for Concorde flights from Paris to South America. There in a dilapidated hangar, passengers would be offered champagne and snacks.

Some of the residential barracks from the war were available if the Concorde had to remain on the island overnight to make necessary repairs. There we were lodged and dinner took place in the aforementioned hangar. The serving staff was completely untrained, almost illiterate peasants from the island. One day when I wanted to pay for dinner, I tried to make it understandable to one of them that I wanted a bill. He looked gaping at me. I took my boarding card from the aircraft out of my pocket to show him that I would have a bill. I made some rotational writing movements with my finger on the paper, which is the international way to express that you want a bill. The expression on his face brightened; He took the boarding card and went over to the other end of the room, where there was a desk. He looked over at me and wanted confirmation of what I wanted by also doing some writing movements with a pencil across the paper. I nodded. He bent over the paper and wrote something and then he came radiant with joy back to me and handed me the paper. I looked at it. There were some round scribbles on it, like the ones I had shown with my finger.



As I had some days leave owing for me, I stayed with the commander for two days to consult with him on the lay out and equipment for an oceanographic laboratory; and then I just wanted to look around the Azores. From Santa Maria I flew with the local air company of the Azores to the island of Terceira, where I stayed at a good hotel in the very beautiful capital Angra do Heroismo. The town was sadly almost totally destroyed by an earthquake a few years later. I rented a car and drove around the island which like the other islands is volcanic. In the center of the island is a volcano with a large crater where there is a thermal power plant. I drove as far as I could and then climbed up to the crater rim. From here there was a beautiful view over the sea towards several of the other islands.



*En route to the crater on Terceira*

From Terceira I flew to the largest of the islands, where I stayed in the main town of the Azores, Ponta Delgada. Again, I rented a car. First, I visited a famous place on a crater rim, from where one could see two crater lakes close together, one with blue water and the other with green. Unfortunately, the fog at the crater rim was so dense that I could not see the lakes. I had to settle for assessing the area's beauty on an information board with pictures of the two lakes.



In another area of the island, I walked around among geysers, hot springs and fumaroles (holes in the ground from where hot vapors arose). The last evening on the island I returned the rented car. At the hotel I asked to be awakened and to order a taxi because I had to catch an early morning flights back to Lisbon. But the hotel forgot it and so I got up very late. I dressed in a snap and asked the hotel about the taxi. They also had forgotten to order it and now it could not be obtained. I called the receptionist names. He called the police, not to calm

me down, but for a patrol car to drive me to the airport. A few minutes later, the police arrived. With hooting sirens and flashing blue light I was taken to the airport. I got on the plane at the last moment.

## **Tenerife.**

I move forward in time to another wonderful trip to an island in the Atlantic. In February 1983 Kamma, Inga's mother, turned 70, and we decided that we would celebrate the birthday together in

Tenerife.

We stayed in a modern hotel area called Tenbel in the southernmost part of the island. As so often before, we rented a car, a Fiat Panda, which was a rather small four person and five-door car. I drove and had Inga's father Edwin in the front passenger seat, with the three girls (Kamma, Inga and Eva) in the rear seat and with Bo crouched in the trunk. It was cramped in the car, but still we saw the whole island within two weeks.

We went with a cable car up on Spain's highest mountain, the volcano Pico de Teide, 4000 meters high. The mountain station was some hundred meters below the top. Kamma and Edwin gave up trying to go up to the peak. They simply stayed at the mountain station and bought some Lumumbas there, a drink, we did not know in advance. It consists of cocoa and cognac and has since become Kamma's favorite beverage.

Inga, the kids and I climbed to the top. I had great difficulty accomplishing this in the thin air, while it apparently went much easier with the others. Up on top of the crater there were nasty sulfur fumes. The others went down quickly. I took a rest after the trip up and enjoyed the view over the sea to Gran Canary to the east and to Gomera to the south.

On Kamma's birthday we went to the northernmost part of the island. We passed a very rugged area – the Mercedes Forest, where the road went along steep precipices and came down to the island's northernmost village, a small fishing village called Punto Hidalgo. There we found a tiny inn with two tables. Surrounded by chickens, cats and dogs, we all had glorious fish dishes. Kamma talked about this meal for years.



We also took a trip by ferry to the small island of Gomera, where we went on an organized bus trip. We came up in almost 1000 meters altitude, where the central volcano is covered by a laurel forest. From the top of the volcano, deep gorges led down on all sides. This geography dictated that even on an island little more than 10 km in diameter, people had previously lived in isolation in several small communities, divided by the gorges.

I could tell of many other wonderful trips, which Inga, the kids and I went on in our holidays, or partly in connection with meetings. Several trips to Ireland, to Iceland, to London, Paris, the French Riviera, Normandy and Brittany, Vienna and elsewhere in Austria, Berlin, Rome, Florence and Naples. Inga has made very detailed scrap books from most of our tours. So I simply refer to them.

## Malaysia.

While I worked in the Isotope Centre, I collaborated often with the World Health Organization WHO, which was our client in several jobs abroad. We also organized several international courses on "Coastal Pollution Control" for the WHO.

WHO had not forgotten me after I moved to the Environmental Protection Agency. In 1985 I received a request to perform a task for them in Malaysia. WHO had an environmental planning institute in Malaysia. It was linked to Malaysia's University of Agriculture, just south of Kuala Lumpur. The Department needed somebody to advise the newly formed Malaysian Environmental Protection Agency on organization and practice.



I got leave from the Environmental Protection Agency, with the proviso that half of my salary from the WHO went to the Environmental Protection Agency. With some difficulty, it was accepted by WHO. It was still financially advantageous for me because the fees and expense reimbursements from WHO were quite high.

Before I went to Malaysia, I had to be briefed about the job at WHO's Department for Southeast Asia, which was in Manila in the Philippines. I flew via Bangkok to Manila, where the WHO welcomed me at the airport and drove me to the Hilton Hotel where there was reserved a room for me.

Manila was then plagued by terrorist attacks on major hotels. In the months before my arrival, ten hotels had been bombed, resulting in many fatalities. It was therefore not safe to stay at any hotel. WHO, however, had arranged for a room lying next to a swimming pool on a terrace one floor below my room. In the case of a bomb attack, I could jump out of the window directly into the pool. It reassured me.

The Isotope Centre had previously had many assignments in Manila, so my old colleagues could tell me what there was to see. I had arranged to arrive on a Friday afternoon so that I had the weekend for sightseeing, before I was to meet with the WHO on Monday. Friday evening I went for a long walk around Manila, where there still are memories of the Spanish colonial period. Most of the vehicles in the streets were Jeepneys. After the war, the Americans had left a large number of jeeps on the islands. They were provided with a colorful tinplate body and used as taxis and mini buses. They are considered the Philippine National vehicle.

At a stop at the tourist office, tours were arranged for Saturday and Sunday, where I could get out in the country with small groups of other tourists to see some of the natural attractions in Luzon, the island where Manila is located. On Saturday we drove along Pasig River which flows into Manila Bay, went along the giant lake Laguna de Bay which was completely filled with fish and shrimp farms and arrived at Pagsanjan. There we came to a river that flows into the Laguna. The river runs through a narrow gorge. There are plenty of rapids and small water falls in the river but it did not seem to bother the boat people who now had to take us up the river in long narrow boats that were carved out of tree trunks. Each boat had two boat people and two passengers. I came to sit with a Singalese from Sri



Lanka. We were in a dry period, so the river was pretty shallow. When we came to a very shallow place, the boat people jumped into the water and lifted the boat with us



two passengers up over the obstacle. We went on like this for several kilometers until the river widened into a small lake where we went ashore. We only had trunks on as we

had left our clothes at a small open-air restaurant at the start. A 50 meter high waterfall plunged into the lake. We jumped into the water, swam around, including behind and through the waterfall. I had my cine camera in a plastic bag and filmed the entire trip. Then we got up in the boat again, and now it went literally head over heels back to the starting spot. It was an incredibly exciting experience. I



shivered for a long time – not because I felt cold, for it was very hot, but simply because of the excitement. After a wonderful meal in the open-air restaurant, we went back to Manila. On Sunday we drove south. The first stopping place was the small town of Las Pinas. The church was built by a missionary Padre Diego Cerra. He wanted an organ in the church, but lacked all the traditional materials so in 1816 he built the organ of bamboo with approximately a thousand pipes. The organ is still in use and has a very beautiful tone and I have a tape of music recorded on this organ.

We then went to Taal Lake which has an active volcano at its center. Violent outbreaks which took many lives have occurred here as late as 1966. The very active volcano is situated in a crater lake from an older Volcano. There was a wonderful view over the lake with the volcanic island. We bathed in the lake and then went home again.

*Taal volcano is at the center right*



On Monday I went for briefings at the WHO office. It was a thin soup. I learned nothing of importance and it played no role for my work. But I got an exciting trip to the Philippines out of it. Tuesday morning I flew from Manila. We had a stopover in Kota Kinabalu, a city in the Malaysian part of Borneo. Near the town is Southeast Asia's highest mountain Kinabalu (4100 meter). It is a giant granite block. There was no snow on the top. We were only 2 degrees south of the equator. Then I went on to Kuala Lumpur. At the airport I was received by Paul Guo, a Canadian, originally a refugee from China. He was my closest colleague in the WHO's planning institute. He took me to the Holiday Inn where I lived during my stay.

The next day I was picked up and driven to the WHO Institute, situated in Serdang, a town about 20 km from Kuala Lumpur. The director was Chinese. I got an office and was introduced to the other staff who were a motley crew of many nationalities. My secretary was an English lady. During my stay I

was only rarely out at the institute, as my daily job was in Kuala Lumpur at the Malaysian Environmental Protection Agency. Only in conjunction with ongoing reporting and writing the final report, I was out at WHO. However, I spent much time with Paul Guo. He visited me often in the evening and took me out on the town.

Just over half of Malaysia's population are Malays or related peoples. Approximately 30% are of Chinese descent who control a significant portion of trade and industry. There are approximately 15% Indians, and finally there are approximately 1% so-called Orang Asli, which means the aboriginals. They are very primitive people who live close to Neolithic levels deep in the primeval forests. The common language is called Bahasa Malaysia and is virtually the same language spoken in Indonesia. The majority, at least in the cities, speak English, which like Chinese is also an official language. Therefore, it is easy getting around the country, because one can use English mostly everywhere. The Malays have a privileged position in the country and are called Bumi Putra, sons of the soil. Other ethnic groups are discriminated against, especially the Chinese, but the country is very dependent on these other groups because much of their intelligence lies with them.

At the Environmental Protection Agency, the director was Indian, his deputy Malay and the department head I had to work with was Chinese. On the first day, a man came up to me and hugged me and told me how happy he was to meet me again. At first I could not recognize him. It proved to be one of my students at the international course on "Coastal Pollution Control" which the Isotope Centre in Copenhagen organized for the WHO. He was now the Environmental Protection Agency representative at the southernmost part of the peninsular Malaysia in the town Johore Baru, located close to Singapore. I met him only once later on during my stay.

I got an office that I shared with a young Frenchman. He was conscientious objector, and performed his military service by working in a so called less developed country. He was utterly incompetent, did not bother working at all, but we had a pleasant time together.



*Daily activities at the Malaysian EPA.*

My task in the beginning was to review a number of drafts for legislation in the environmental field, assess how they could be implemented, and possibly come up with amendments. Malaysia has signed several international agreements on the environment, including an agreement on environmental protection of the Straits of Malacca between Malaysia and Sumatra. It is one of the world's busiest maritime areas since all

transportation between China and Japan and Europe travels through these straits. Here it was my task to describe how this agreement could be administered in Malaysia. My experience from the marine conventions that Denmark had signed was here of great importance for me. I would also describe how environmental protection should be implemented in the oil industry. I worked partly together with people from PETRONAS, the Malaysian state oil company, which is mostly known for being housed in the PETRONAS Twin Towers which were, for a time, the world's tallest skyscrapers. When I was there, they were still under construction.

Sometimes I had contact with the University of Kuala Lumpur, where I lectured on environmental protection of coastal waters. I gave a similar lecture to the local engineering association. I also took an official trip to the island of Penang where there in the city of Georgetown is a university with an



excellent marine biological department. The head Professor Sivalingam (that means god Sivas penis) had worked extensively with the assessment of marine pollution. He was very critical of the Malaysian Environmental Protection Agency, mostly because they did not make use of his experience. I tried to improve his contacts with them, but I do not know if I succeeded in the long term. But work was not my whole life. On weekends and some holidays I went on trips around the country. I had rented a car for the entire stay. It was a Suzuki and let me say at once that this car I intend never to put my legs into again. I drove one weekend south to Melaka, the old Malacca, which in the 15th century was conquered by the Portuguese, until it some hundred years later was taken by the Dutch for then to become English until independence after World War II. The city still has memories from these different periods.

When I came to the town, there was no power left in the car battery. To start the car, I had to stop on a hill, put it in neutral, and pop the clutch when I had speed enough down hill. It was a little tricky to do sightseeing in this way.

I visited medieval mosques, a

Portuguese fort and the town hall, called Stadthuis, because it was from the Dutch period.

Sunday evening I drove back to Kuala Lumpur. Heavy rain was pouring down and there was much traffic from people who were going home after a weekend trip. Amid the intense traffic on a highway, the car hopelessly came to a stand still. I tried to stagger about with it and got completely soaked, without much help. Then a motorcycle cop stopped, and he gave me a fantastic good help. I do not know how he got the car running again, and with him as a motorcade, I came back to the hotel.

The day after I exchanged the car for a Toyota, and with this car I was comfortable. However, I would once more need help. As mentioned earlier, I was visiting Penang. I flew there on an early morning flight. It was still dark when I left the hotel. So I had the lights on. Here at the equator, the transition from night to day is very abrupt and I arrived at the airport in brilliant sunshine. Of course, I forgot to turn off the car lights. When I returned back to Kuala Lumpur in late evening three days later, there was no more battery power. The place was deserted, because it was rather late. After fifteen minutes, a bus passed. The driver could see that I was in trouble. He stopped the bus. He had only few passengers, mostly airport staff going home. All went out of the bus to see what they could do for me. I had a start cable in my car, but It was not long enough to reach the bus battery. The bus driver removed the battery on his bus and gave me power so I could start. Again, an example of the great helpfulness that I have met everywhere in Malaysia.

On another trip I went to the Cameron Highlands in the north of the peninsula. It is a plateau at up to 2000 meters altitude. I was with the Frenchman with whom I shared an office. He and two of his French friends knew a French missionary who had his mission up there. They had agreed with him that we could stay with him over the weekend. On the way up we came through the jungle. We met

*The Dutch Square in Melaka*



a little group of Orang Asli, whom I have mentioned earlier, the indigenous people. They were almost naked and armed with long blowpipes. We could only communicate with them with gestures. We gave them some of the supplies we had with us, and in return

*My meeting with the Orang Asli. To the right a blowpipe.*

they gave me one of their blowpipes with a quiver full of arrows. They use poisoned arrows to hunt animals. They demonstrated the great accuracy with which they could hit a small bird very high up in a tree. The arrows that I got from them were not provided with poison. We walked around with them. What impressed me most were the enormous and very beautiful butterflies that flew around. We came to the mission station, where we were well received. There was attached a small guest house to the station, which got a little income by renting out rooms there. We ate with the missionary who was a nice older gentleman, dressed as a monk.



*Cameron Highlands. Vegetable are grown in the lower areas. Higher up there are tea plantations.*



On Sunday we attended the church service. The missionary officiated in the little church at the station. The church was completely full mainly with people of Indian descent, who came there. There is intensive tea growing up here in the highlands and it is the Indians who work there. We went to see the harvesting of tea leaves and also visited a tea factory where we could follow the entire manufacture from fermentation to drying and finally sieving. The sieves

are used to separate the fine material that is used in tea bags.

On another trip I went with Paul Guo to Kuantan, a great city that lies in the East at the South China Sea. We drove across the peninsula, where the road went through major jungle areas.

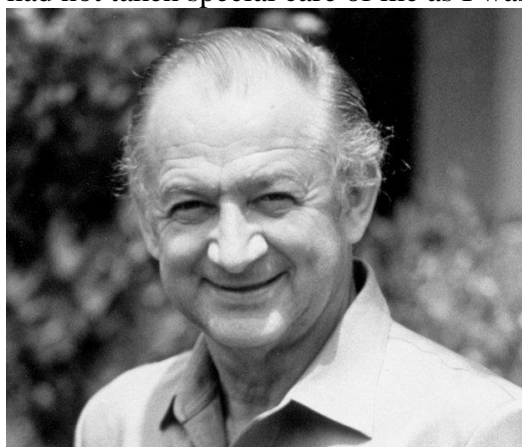


Near Kuantan, there are large vertical limestone cliffs with large caves where one can get up by means of steep ladders and stairs. Thousands of bats live in the caves. In some of them Buddhists or Hindus worship. We stayed over night in Kuantan and then drove to a small fishing village where we bathed in the sea at a glorious tropical beach with coconut palms. When I had finished my job, several farewell parties were held for me. The EPA invited me to a grand dinner at a restaurant in a state park outside the city. The WHO Institute held a farewell party for me at the agricultural



*The fishing village near Kuantan*

university's canteen for professors. My last job was to deliver my report to the local senior WHO representative who had his office in town. I was also on a farewell visit to the Danish embassy which had not taken special care of me as I was not an envoy from Denmark, but from WHO.



*Dato Bek-Nielsen*

I had also to say goodbye to some Danish families with whom I had contact. In particular I remember the family Bek-Nielsen. The old Bek-Nielsen, who is now a Malaysian national and entitled Dato, a Malaysian nobility title, which can be compared to an English Lord. He owns some of Malaysia's largest palm oil plantations and also Aarhus Oil Factory which processes

palm oil. His company is called United Plantations. They invited me to a farewell dinner in an area with street kitchens (in Malaysia called hawkers) in a suburb of Kuala Lumpur. Hawkers are very common in Kuala Lumpur's cityscape. I had most of my meals at such places. They are usually assembled in groups on a square. Each kitchen has its specialties. You sit in the open air at a table and get food from several different hawkers.



*Hawker street kitchen in Kuala Lumpur*

One can get some of the most refined dishes at some of the better hawker places. The hawker area to which the Bek-Nielsens invited me can not really be called street kitchens because the food was prepared in small permanent shops in a ring around an open area with tables and chairs. One starts to walk around to see what's on the menu at different locations. Then you go to any of these kitchens, order what you want from there and ask the cook to pick up the dishes and beverages from other kitchens, that you have singled out. In the end, you pay him and he settles with the others. From Kuala Lumpur I flew to Singapore to spend a few days there. I checked all my luggage. The



only thing that I could not put into it was the blowpipe that I had got from the Orang asli because it was 2 meters long. At the check-in desk they were terrified that I would take such a deadly weapon onto the plane. I had somebody escort me to the plane, where he ensured that the blowpipe was placed in the cockpit with the pilots. The same procedure was repeated when I had to fly from Singapore to Bangkok and then home.

Singapore is a very orderly metropolis. Everywhere there are beautiful parks. It is clean everywhere. Traffic is well organized. In the daytime only taxis and buses and a few with special permission are allowed to drive through the inner city. There is an extremely well-organized underground railway. Most of the old Singapore has disappeared. In a few streets one seeks to preserve the old Chinese architectural style. The city is characterized by the many beautiful skyscrapers. There are a myriad of giant department stores which mainly are collections of individual stores. Although prices have gone up with the rising standard of living, many things, such as electronics and photo equipment, can be bought cheaper than elsewhere. I bought myself a camera. Here, as in Kuala Lumpur, I ate mainly from hawkers. My favorite area was Newton Circus, which reminded me about the place Bek-Nielsen had invited me to in Kuala Lumpur.

Singapore, which itself is an island, is surrounded by other small islands. One of them, Sentosa, can be reached by cable car from Singapore. The entire island is a nature reserve which one can transverse with a monorail train, ie. a train which is suspended below a single rail. With it you can go to seaside resorts, to an amusement park, a wildlife park with lots of free-ranging monkeys and more. Here I spent a wonderful afternoon.

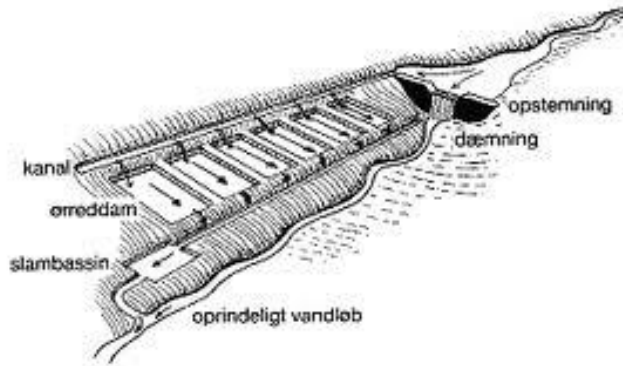
And then I flew home via Bangkok, Karachi, Dubai and Athens.

### **The Fish farming case.**

Right from the outset, regulation of pollution from fish farms was one of my important tasks in the Environmental Protection Agency. As other tasks went to other divisions, it became one of my main duties.

In Denmark there are approximately 300 fresh water fish farms, mainly producing rainbow trout in portion size. In 1970, production was around 20,000 tons, which was mainly exported. Denmark was and still is the largest producer of trout, at least in Europe. Almost all farms are in Jutland, partly because the rivers are better suited for this purpose, partly because the hitherto used feed - industrial fish - is mainly brought ashore in West Jutland ports. This feed must be used fresh, and therefore the transport distance plays a role. Trout are often exported alive in large tanks and the transport distance to Germany and France, which were the biggest buyers, were shorter from Jutland.

The first fish farms in Denmark were established more than 100 years ago in places where there had been water mills. Here the rivers had been dammed to establish the necessary head of water to power the mill wheel. A height of fall was also necessary for the fish farm, because it is necessary to have a fairly strong current of water through the ponds where the fish are reared.



### ***A traditional fish farm.***

*A fraction of the river water is allowed to pass the dam (opstemning). Water to the fish ponds (ørredam) enters through the common flume (kanal) and leaves through another flume with a sludge collecting basin (slambassin) before it returns to the watercourse.*

The ponds were usually arranged side by side perpendicular to the stream with a common inlet flume which takes the water above the dam and a common discharge flume that delivers the water back to the river downstream. Some farms had such a large water intake that there was not any water in the stream between the inlet and outlet in periods of drought. Thus there would be no possibility for fish to move upstream to the spawning area. (There was usually a fish ladder at the dam, allowing fish to get above the dam).

Among the first things I did was not to allow fish farms to use so much water that there was no natural flow of water throughout the whole river. The main pollution problem from fish farms was due to the feed residues and faeces from the fish, which flowed into the river from the farm. The traditional food was minced industrial fish. Even when the supply was fresh, there were always some liquid and fine material which the fish did not eat. Furthermore, it is difficult to control the feed amount, which merely was shoveled into the ponds. As it was possible to make pellets of industrial fish in fishmeal factories, I then prohibited the use of raw industrial fish as fish feed. But the pollution was still unacceptable.

There were many forces pulling in opposite directions with respect to solving the problems. The fish farms wanted, of course, to have the freedom to do anything that suited them. Completely on the other side stood the anglers who had a very keen representative in the previously mentioned master painter Borge Christensen. The anglers wanted to have all farms closed down, so that the watercourses alone were for their pleasure.

As the authorities improved the sewage effluent from municipalities and businesses, the pollution from fish farms became more visible and prevented the achievement of a satisfactory quality of the Jutland streams. So there was a need for a comprehensive program that could lead to acceptable conditions at fish farms.

I was commissioned by the Minister to prepare a legal notice which ordered fish farms to reduce the pollution to a much lower and acceptable level. I launched an investigation to identify the measures that could lead to the desired result. Hitherto the farms got an authorization to establish a certain number of ponds at each fish farm. As a result, the fish farmers increased the amount of fish in the individual ponds to increase production. But this increased the amount of fish faeces that ran out of the ponds and in addition there were more frequent disease outbreaks in the densely occupied ponds. This was counteracted by pouring medication in the ponds, which was also polluting.

Instead, I introduced a rule that limited the amount of food, which was permitted to be used in individual farms. It stimulated the fish farmers to use feed as efficiently as possible so that they could maintain a reasonable level of output. One result was that the factories that produced feed pellets changed the composition in order to make the feed more nutritious. Furthermore, feeders were introduced that allowed fish to feed themselves. From the feed container at the pond, a rod with a small disk at the lower end protruded into the water. When a fish pushed against the plate with its nose, a small amount of feed pellets was released. The fish learned quickly to use this device. So now fish were only fed when hungry and there was no more feed released than the fish could eat before it sank to the bottom. The dispute between fish farms and the Agency was now mainly on how much feed could be allowed for each farm.



*An automatic fish feeder*

On the basis of many measurements downstream of fish farms, we

established a basis which showed the relationship between feed consumption and pollution of the watercourse. And on this basis we established a limit.

In negotiations with the fish farms organization, they did not accept this limit, arguing that they by additional measures could reduce the pollution further. I agreed and for this reason the draft order, which I worked on, introduced the possibility that the county, which had the oversight of fish farms, could provide authorization to use a greater feed consumption, if further action in the farm made it possible to increase the permitted feed amount without an increase or rather a decline with respect to pollution. It took several years to establish the basis for this Order and to negotiate it with the fish farmers, the fisheries ministry, which supported the fish farmers, county councils and environmental organizations. I had a great help in these negotiations by the then deputy director of the EPA Jorgen Henningsen, who followed my and my staff's work on this issue and even led the negotiations when it was appropriate.

The Minister reminded me several times to get the job completed. Finally, in the latter half of the 1980s, the draft was ready to be sent to the Minister for approval and signature. As is often the case, this draft was not ideal. Neither party was totally happy with it, but it was a compromise which I and Jorgen Henningsen thought that all parties could live with.

Just then something very serious happened. I can not remember the details of what I must now recount, but roughly this was the sequence of events. In a politically very difficult case, Jorgen Henningsen made a public statement, but only after receiving the approval by the Director of the EPA Jens Kampmann and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry Bundgaard-Nielsen. The opinion made public furor, and the then Prime Minister Schlüter dissociated himself from the statement and expressed strong dissatisfaction with the official of the EPA, who had come with it. Jorgen Henningsen expected that Kampmann and Bundgaard-Nielsen would take responsibility for what happened, but they did not. Therefore Jorgen Henningsen left the EPA with very short notice. He got a job as director of the EU Commission's Environment section.

Here I now was without my ally when I handed over the draft to Kampmann for approval and

forwarding to the Minister. Kampmann had until then not at all been involved in its preparation. He was disappointed that the notice gave opportunity for individual decisions. He wanted a notice which did not contain any possibility to deviate from a fixed scheme. He did not go immediately to me with his desire, but took it up with another division head, who so far had nothing to do with this case. This somewhat disloyal gentleman told Kampmann that he easily could make the necessary changes in the notice. Only then did Kampmann come to me. He gave me a completely impossible deadline to change the notice. Furthermore, I did not find that it was appropriate to establish a legal notice for a whole industry with completely solid inflexible standards. It would not motivate the fish farmers to develop more environmentally friendly forms of production with which they could increase output, while decreasing the pollution. Knowing the parties' position, I knew that the matter now was lost. I refused to do as requested by Kampmann and would rather leave the whole matter to my colleague. I had a nervous breakdown and had to take sick leave for a fortnight.

My position in the Environmental Protection Agency was now very painful. I turned to my organization – the Danish Engineers' Association – and asked that they assist me in my negotiations with Kampmann about my future. The result was that I had no division to head and instead became known as Principal Administrator. However, I kept my previous salary and remained a member of the board of division heads.

The only tasks left to me were my international activities. And this I had to deal with alone with some secretarial assistance. That was my lot in the remaining time in the Environmental Protection Agency. However, I must add that my colleague failed to develop the revised notice. When I left the EPA several years after, the work was still ongoing. In fact it led to a lawsuit by the fish farmers brought against the EPA. Only approximately ten years later came a notice, and it provided – just as my draft did – for opportunities for individual decisions. In all that time the farms were able to continue undisturbed to pollute the rivers. In 2005, twenty years later, I hear that there is still no control on the environmental regulations due to an inappropriate notice.

#### **Added in 2014.**

Now, in 2014, the situation for the fish farms is the following: Thanks to the possibility to increase production if advanced methods to reduce the pollution are applied, the production has grown from 20.000 tons annually when I started to work on the notice to 30.000 tons. At the same time the pollution of the rivers has gone down very



*A modernized fish farm*

substantially. The latest notice from 2012 states in its preamble that its aim is to induce the fish farmers to improve their methods of production. Just what I aimed at. In spite of all my troubles with the fish farms, I also had some funny experiences. I had some friends in the industry whom I visited regularly in our studies to improve the conditions with respect to pollution. I could buy freshly caught and gutted trout from them to bring home. Before going there I asked colleagues if I should buy trout for them. Once I bought 40 trout and took them in a large plastic bag to the nearby airport from where I took a domestic flight back to Copenhagen. Fish, even after being gutted for a considerable time, still retain an active nervous system. When I passed the bag through the security X-ray check, the lady at the monitoring screen went up with a loud scream. Somehow, the fish had started to sprawl in the bag. It took a while before the security staff settled down.

### **Good-bye to the Environmental Agency.**

In August 1992 I was 66 years. Kampmann had meanwhile stepped down as director as he had fallen out with the prime minister. He had shares in some of the companies, whose regulation he was responsible for. The Prime Minister considered this to be unacceptable. Kampmann would not give up these shares and handed in his resignation.

The new director was Erik Lindegaard. He was a friendly man, and that is the best thing I can say about him. Once I indicated to him that I would not continue at the EPA beyond my normal retirement age. That meant that I wanted to retire in August 1993. In the autumn of 1992, the government introduced tough austerity measures in the public sector. Lindegaard called me and said that "He had pain in the payroll". This meant that he had to reduce staff so that the agency could keep within the permitted sum of salaries. He reminded me that I had said I was not interested in working in the EPA longer than necessary. He preferred that the cutbacks take place not just among subordinate staff and asked me if I would accept to leave at New Year 92/93, 8 months ahead of schedule. I answered him that it depended on what offer he could give me for retiring earlier. I must say that his offer gilded me. I received a much improved pension scheme and, a tax-free cash award for retiring earlier than required. In fact, my income after retirement was significantly larger than it had been a while I worked, partly because I also received a pension from my earlier employment at the Isotope Centre.

I left the EPA without festivities. I was offered a farewell reception; but I did not want it. On my last day, a number of my colleagues brought a box of wine and their best wishes for my future. I also got a nice farewell letter from the Minister. And now I finally felt myself to be a free man.

While my relationship with the EPA mainly had been poor, I have had a very good cooperation with several of the counties. Vejle county in Jutland wanted to hire me as head of the environmental division, but I refused, because I was very attached to our house in Bagsvaerd, and because Inga had a very good job at the University of Copenhagen.

I also had a good relationship with the Southern Jutland county. I had for many years been the state representative in the Flensburg Fjord Commission, where regional officials and politicians from Denmark and Germany worked together to solve the Flensburg Fjord's large environmental problems. When I left the EPA, I received a very touching farewell gift - a box of wine - from the Southern Jutland County, which simultaneously asked me if I could be available to them on a consulting basis. I accepted, and I then got the task of preparing an exhibition on the Wadden Sea. To solve this task I registered as a consulting engineer. The exhibition, which came to consist of ten large panels and a

video show was translated into German, English and Dutch. It was presented at a ministerial meeting of the North Sea Commission, and established at Hoejer lock in an exhibition building. It also circulated in schools in Southern Jutland and Ribe counties. I later had a short-term task for the Danish- Swedish Öresound Committee, but when this developed into a struggle against the Barsebäk nuclear plant from the Danish representatives, I stopped, because I did not agree with the power plant opponents.

### **Eva's wedding.**

Moving back somewhat in my story, the participants in the Paris commission's work were like a large family. When we held conferences in various cities in the member states, we also met privately. In this way we also learned to know the participants' families, and spouses and older children often participated as guests in parties during the meetings. So most of the members also knew Inga, Bo and Eva.

At a conference in Berlin in November 1990, I had Eva with me. Eva had graduated from Gladsaxe High School in 1988. One year earlier, before she entered the last grade, she spent the summer in Iceland, where she worked on a horse farm. There she met a Canadian, with whom she had a close relationship. After graduation she went to Canada to meet her friend. She also made a trip to the U.S. to meet some boys who had been on exchange visits in Denmark, where they lived with our neighbors. She visited two boys in Seattle and some others in Boston. On a bus station in Buffalo, she happened to meet a young Australian, who gave her his address and asked her to visit him. She came back again in December and took various jobs in nursing homes and kindergartens to earn money for her travels. In July 1989 she went back to Canada and from there she flew to Australia first to make a trip all around Australia with some Danish girls who had an old car, then to meet the Australian boy who lived in Melbourne. There she spent several months and came home in February 1990. After the summer holidays in 1990 she started studies at the Roskilde University.

In connection with the conference in Berlin, all of us were on one of the first evenings invited to a concert in Berlin's new concert hall. After the concert we went out to eat. We divided ourselves in two groups. I went with a group of somewhat older colleagues. Eva went with a group of young people. When she came home to our hotel late at night, she told me that she had met a rude guy who had slammed the door in a taxi before she could enter, as they went from the concert. I did not take notice of this happening. The next day she spent with this guy. He was an environmental engineer from the U.S., who was on a one-year study in Germany where he worked in the German Environmental Protection Agency. He had been invited to the conference as a member of the German delegation.

His name was Peter Belle. Eva must have revised her first impression of Peter, because they became very warm friends. Shortly after, Peter visited us in Denmark and Eva was several times in Germany to meet with Peter and some of his family since Peter's mother was German. Soon it became evident that Eva and Peter's relationship was more than a short-term date. For Christmas 1991, she visited Peter in Atlanta in order to meet his family there, and early in July 1992, Peter's parents Hilke and Frits Belle visited us. Eva was back in Atlanta late in July and it was now agreed that the two should marry on 5 September here in Denmark. Inga and I went around to find a place where we could hold the wedding dinner. Eva and Peter wanted to invite many of his and our family and friends to the wedding. In total we had 45 guests for the wedding dinner which took place in the old traditional



country inn at Bregnerød. We lodged our foreign guests in Vaerebro. We rented a bus to take all the guests to the Gladsaxe Town Hall where the ceremony took place in the beautiful council chamber. Eva had been a sport diver. Outside the town hall we had agreed with her diving friends that they should line the route dressed in diving suits and armed with harpoons. Next, the bus drove to the jetty at Lyngby, from where we sailed across Lyngby and Bagsvaerd lakes. Along the route we had placed a box of champagne on



the lake bottom marked with a buoy. Eva's sport divers went underwater when the boat approached and showed up at the boat with the champagne. We all touched glasses. We sailed to the jetty at the Regatta Pavilion in Bagsvaerd, to which the bus had gone in the meantime, and then the bus took us to Bregnerød Inn. It was agreed that the bus should wait for us during the meal, which was formidable. Peters father thought that it was too bad that we did not put the leftovers in a "doggy bag," which is not

a Danish custom. The guests had wedding gifts and other luggage left in the bus, as it was agreed that the driver should take care of these things. After the meal we went back to the bus, and with horror we discovered that several of the bags had disappeared.



*Bregnerød Inn is one of Denmark's oldest traditional inns, founded in 1705.*

The driver claimed initially that he had been in the bus waiting for us all the time, but eventually he admitted that the bus company had asked him to make another trip, while we ate. It was a party of drunk Swedish anglers, who should be picked up somewhere and brought to their hotel. They may accidentally have taken some of our luggage. Steffen complained to the bus company. The next morning a man from the company came to us and delivered the baggage to us with a bottle of schnapps as an excuse. People now had their luggage. It was somewhat devastating for the evening party, that a part of the wedding gifts could not be presented, so we arranged another party the next morning, where this matter could be settled.

Among the guests was one of Peter's good friends from the U.S. While in Copenhagen he purchased some postcards with pornographic content. When Peter's aunt from Munich wanted to take her gift out of her bag, she and all others were surprised when she took a number of pornographic images out of the bag. Some days after the wedding Eva traveled to Atlanta, where she and Peter moved in with Hilke and Frits until they could obtain their own place to live.

In subsequent years, we have at least once a year visited them, and they also have been nice to come over to us. In our travels to the U.S., we have always used the opportunity to make a trip of approximately a week to other places in the U.S. and Mexico partly by air and partly with a rented car.

## **Bo.**

Bo took his own life in late April 1993. He was then nearly 19 years old. Inga and I have not yet overcome our great sadness and it is with great difficulty that I write this section.

First let me write something about Bo's development. I have already mentioned his birth. He also shows up here and there in this report in conjunction when participating in our travels. But here I will try to describe his life more systematically. For many years, Inga has kept diaries. Much of the following information I have been able to date through her diaries and photo albums.

As mentioned before, Bo was born on 9 August 1974. By that November, he started day nursery at Vaevergaarden. Because of his congenital luxation of the hip, he had to wear a splint. The first vehicle we used for him was Eva's superfine doll's pram. When he was 3 weeks old, we went to Tivoli with him. People were surprised that we had a little live baby in a doll's pram, but we did not care. The doll's pram was large enough for him and it was easier to have it in a car than a regular



pram. He developed well. At 5 weeks, we had good eye contact with him. Inga writes that he smiled and squealed as if he were about to burst with laughter. When he was 3 months old, he got his splint off. It was a great relief because it was difficult to change his diapers and wash him while he wore it.

*Bo, one year old.*

At the age of 3 he started kindergarten. He went for the first time on a holiday camp with the kindergarten when he was 4 years old.

He was a little late in starting to talk. Therefore, he had an auditory test when he was 4 years old which detected a slight hearing impairment for high tones. He may have inherited this from me. It makes it difficult to understand speech. He also went to speech and hearing training. He soon totally overcame this problem. Inga's parents had a cottage in Mols Mountains. Bo loved to go there and to have dip in the sea. In the summer of 1976, we took Bo for the first time on a trip abroad, summer holiday in Portugal. It was on this occasion that he and Eva emptied bowls of nuts in the Port Wine Institute, which I have related earlier.

In December 1977 Bo, together with Inga and Eva, went with me to an environmental conference in Paris, where I was the head of the Danish delegation. We all decided to go there by car and subsequently to celebrate the Christmas holiday in southern France. The French government, which hosted the conference, invited participants with family for a dinner on a Bateau Mouche, one of the major tourist ships



*Bo's first day at school*

sailing on the Seine. There was a very grand buffet with among other things platters of canapés with real caviar. Little Bo fell for the caviar, and before we had noticed, he had emptied all the platters with caviar. He has had an early taste for exquisite food.

We spent Christmas in Avignon, then went to Marseille and on the way home visited Pouilly - Fuissé, where I had picked grapes in a vineyard in 1947.

In 1981, Bo started school at Bagsvaerd school and in the afternoon at the youth center Holmegaard. By October of that year, he went with the youth center on a bus trip to the Harz in Germany. It was with some hesitation that we let him go on the first longer trip without parents. But Bo did fine. There were no homesickness problems.

*Bo and Rosa*



Just before Christmas that year, Lone gave birth to Rosa. Bo has always been strongly linked to her.

In 1983 Bo became a boy scout. Bo has been a vigorous boy scout all his life. He became patrol leader in 1988 and scoutmaster in 1991. He took part in all scout camps. An early significant



experience in this regard was his participation in "Blue Summer," a common camp for all Danish boy scouts, which takes place every four years. Bo was 11 at this occasion. The camp was held in Haderslev in Southern Jutland. A few days after it had started, we went there to visit him. It had rained heavily in the days before we arrived. Haderslev had been renamed Mudplace.

We looked for Bo at the site. It was hard to recognize him, as he was covered in mud. Before we drove on, we got him cleared of the worst dirt. Inga, Eva and I continued south, where we spent some good days with our tent on both sides of the German border.

One of the great annual scouting experiences was the Mill River Run. The scouts working together in small teams, receive the day before a tarpaulin, brushwood and branches and twine. With this material they must build a vessel capable of transporting them from Bagsvaerd lake through Lyngby to Raadvad, a trip of almost 10 km. Along the way a series of locks had to be passed by transporting their vessel over land.

Bo was 15-16 years old when he first took part in this race. He did not get far. Just a few meters from the start, the vessel sunk miserably to the bottom, and poor Bo waded ashore completely drenched. A few years later he and his comrades did better. They finished the long run in just over 4 hours. He participated 3 times in this race.

Inga also got involved in scouting. She became a member of the Scout group's Board and often took part as an assistant when the wolf cubs went on camping trips.



At the EPA, I worked, as mentioned earlier, in aquaculture and mariculture which also included oyster production. In October 1984 there was an inauguration party for a new oyster farm in the Isefjord. We were invited for this occasion, which took place the day after the first oysters from the farm were for sale on the Danish market. We had at that time a visit by the Dutch oyster expert Bram Drinkwaard and his wife, who were our good friends. Together with them we drove to the Isefjord. On the way we passed Williams Hotel in Farum, where large posters advertised for 6 Danish oysters for 75 Danish Kroner. When we got to the farm, there was a tasting. Guests stood in line to get an oyster opened right in front of them. After we had our oysters, which tasted great, we and our Dutch guests had a lengthy conversation with the leader of the oyster farm. We did not notice what Bo was



doing. After a while he came to us and said -. Oh, how wonderful these oysters are. I have already eaten for 300 Kroner. Whenever he had an oyster, he had gone back to the line again, and in this way, he had scooped the fresh live oysters into his mouth. Again, an example of Bo's sense for truly exquisite food.

Unfortunately the oyster farm was not to be long lived. The oysters were grown on lines, which were suspended from buoys. During a storm all the buoys went adrift and disappeared out into the fiord. Since it takes oysters two years to develop to a marketable size, two years of work disappeared with the oysters. The oyster farm went bankrupt.



Bo was also active in sport. Early on he learned to swim. He became a member of Gladsaxe Sport Association's swimming group in 1985 and participated frequently in swimming competitions. He was not a winning type. He also tried other sports. For short periods, he played basketball and badminton; but later on kayaking became his great sporting interest. From 1987 on, he was a member of a local Kayak Club.

Bo was found to be particularly musical. It started when I gave him a small musical instrument. It was a strange cross between a keyboard and a mouth organ. Through a tube one blew into the side of the little instrument. It had approximately a two octave piano keyboard and one depressed its keys while blowing. Bo soon began to play tunes on it and wanted a real keyboard. He then got a Yamaha instrument. It was still quite primitive, but it had several octaves.



Bo taught himself notes and more songs were added to his repertoire. Upon his own request when he was 14, he started piano lessons in Bagsvaerd School's voluntary music school. His piano teacher made us aware of his talent. It meant that we bought a more professional electronic piano. He spent every free moment playing on it. His repertoire was quite diverse. But he was perhaps particularly keen to play Scot Joplin's ragtime tunes. In February 1991 he participated at his teacher's instigation in a public piano competition in the great concert hall of the Odd Fellows palace. It was the Steinway Piano Festival. He played Joplin's "Entertainer." It went well, although he did not win a

prize.

In the late 1980s we got our first computer. Formally, it was Inga who got it, but it was probably mostly because she should not make a fuss that I had used money for such a useless thing.

It was Bo who soon took over. He taught himself programming and managed quite difficult tasks. He was very interested in chaos theory, and created the strangest characters on the computer screen.

In 1991 he joined Gladsaxe High School in the mathematics and science line. He did well in school and was undoubtedly one of the best in the class. He had a quickness in perception and did not have to spend too much time on his homework. He was quite reserved, spent most of his time with his interests. He did not have many close friends. Usually it was just a single boy, who became his close pal. He had a large positive network through his Scouting activities. He loved to socialize with young children, especially his younger cousins looked up to him.

I think he was bullied a little in his class. The long, lanky boy with the long neck might well be teased for his appearance. While he still attending Bagsvaerd School, he was subjected to a nasty case of bullying. He came one day home somewhat battered. At first he would not tell what had happened, but gradually it became clear to us that he had been mugged on the way home from school by two boys from his class. We spoke with the class teacher about the matter, and as far as we know it did not occur again. In his attitude he was always very peaceful. He tried to avoid violence. Even at home he did not bawl. If he was scolded for something, he put up with it.

Bo had for years supplemented his pocket money with various jobs. For a time he went around with morning newspapers. It was a pretty big load for Inga and me because we often had to take over his job, when he was at a scout camp or not could not get up early after a party. Later he worked in nursing homes, mostly at Hareskovbo, where he assisted in the kitchen and took care of serving and cleanup in the dining rooms.

When I retired in early 1993 he went to the last grade in High School and had to prepare for the entrance exam to the university. We did not notice any nervousness in him. He seemed to be convinced that he could make the exam without any problems. He had registered for military service and chose the telegraph troops, because there he would get an education in electronics, which he was most interested in. Only then would he begin a university study in a technical-scientific field. Thus, he had organized his future several years ahead without a hitch.

When Inga and I were on travel, he had several times been alone at home. When we came home everything was tidy. We were very confident leaving him alone at home. In early spring 1993 Inga and I went on a trip to Sicily. Again Bo was alone at home, and it went fine.

We had decided that all of us would go to the USA to visit Eva and Peter when Bo had got his High School Diploma. In connection with this trip Inga and I wanted also to make a trip to the southwest United States by plane and car. Bo would rather take a similar trip together with other young people.



Through a student travel agency we booked a trip for Bo, which would take him across the United States with a minibus together with a small group of other young people.

*This is probably the last picture we have of Bo. It was taken at the wedding party for Eva and Peter in September 1992. He is sitting together with his cousin Anne (Inga's niece)*



In late April Inga and I went on a trip again. This time to the south of France. Bo had to prepare for his exam and so could stay at home without being disturbed. Just before we left, his class went to a camp for an event called the “Blue Book”. Here they should make some sort of description of each student conducted by the others. As it was described to me, it sounded as though it could easily evolve into a tough game. I remember that my last word to Bo before we were leaving, was that this camp probably was not a very good mental hygienic event.

We left immediately after and would never again see Bo. On 24 April 1993 we flew to Barcelona, where we rented a car and drove to Annecy- les-Bains, southwest of Montpellier, where we had rented an apartment. In the next day we drove around in Languedoc, where we climbed to a number of inaccessible castles, built in medieval times by the Cathars, a persecuted sect. We were also in the Dali Museum in Figueres, north of Barcelona and on a long trip in the Pyrenees, including in Andorra.

On the morning of 6 May, we received a call from Denmark. It was Steffen, who said that Bo was dead. We were told that he had taken his own life. He had been found by his scout comrades, who had missed him the last two weekly scouting evenings. They had phoned to our home, but nobody answered. They then went out to our home. It was dark in the house, but through an opening in the curtain in Bo's room, they could see him lying on his bed. There was some blood. They rang immediately to the police who came with a locksmith. The police had found Steffen's address in our home and called him the same evening. Steffen understood that it looked terrible in the house. The police recommended that he get a cleaning company to remove the worst traces and would have our

consent, so that it looked better when we got home. Inga and I were of course horrified. We wanted to go straight home, but could not arrange it from the hotel.

Steffen booked a flight for us from Barcelona. We packed in a hurry and then drove to Barcelona. We arrived several hours before our flight and made a trip towards the Montserrat mountain to distract our thoughts. In Kastrup, we were picked up by Steffen and Lone. Eva came from the U.S. a few days later.

Inga and I went to the police, where we were briefed on the circumstances of Bo's suicide. It became clear to us that it was a spontaneous reaction. In the refrigerator was found food that would last for several days. He had rented a Video presumably the day before his death. In the mailbox there was a reminder from Blockbuster to return the video. It also proved that Bo must have been dead for about ten days before he was found.

There was no suicide note from him. We spoke with the school to inquire whether in connection with the "Blue Book" anyone had bullied Bo. The school denied this. The police also confirmed that it could not be a crime committed against Bo. Both the police and our doctor thought that Bo must have been seized by an immediate severe psychosis, which led him to this tragic act. However, there was nothing in the Bo's life, which might have indicated to us that there was such a latent danger.

The only possible farewell from Bo to us was a sheet of music for one of his favorite tunes, which was on his piano. It was Andrew Lloyd Webber "Don't cry for me Argentina."

Bo was in the medico-legal institute. We wanted to see him before the funeral and went there when he was to be laid in the coffin. Both the undertaker and the staff at the institute advised us strongly not to see him. We could only touch him, as he lay in an opaque plastic bag in the coffin.

Besides his family at the funeral in the small chapel at the Gladsaxe cemetery were also his high school mates and their teacher and Bo's scout comrades. There was no sort of religious ceremony. I said a few words and then we played a tape with "Don't cry for me Argentina." Bo's urn is buried in this cemetery. Our children stayed with us a few more days after the funeral service. We canceled our U.S. trip because we were too upset to go there. Inga and I received counseling in a grief group at Copenhagen county's psychiatric institution Stolpegaard. After 5-6 meetings I thought I now could handle the situation myself. Inga continued for quite a long time and when the organized meetings stopped, continued to meet regularly with some of the others from the grief group and still is befriended with one of them.

## USA.

In September 1993 we had recovered so much that we were able to make the USA-trip which we had to cancel earlier that year. It was delightful to visit Eva and Peter in their house with large garden and a view of Atlanta's skyscrapers, when you went a few steps down the road.



*Eva and Peter took us too see an old Indian site at Etowah north of Atlanta. Here they are in front of an Indian mound.*



*Inga and  
Eva's  
welsh corgi Tintin*

After having spent a week there, we flew to Las Vegas, where we picked up the Hertz car, which we had booked in advance.

Here, as well as many times later on, we got a much better car, than the one we had booked. We enjoyed the many catchpenny shows in this town. We had decided in advance not to gamble at all and we kept this decision. However, we went to a number of casinos, partly to enjoy the cheap but enormous buffets, partly to wonder at the many hundred gambling machines, where people with an expressionless face put one coin after the other into a slot.



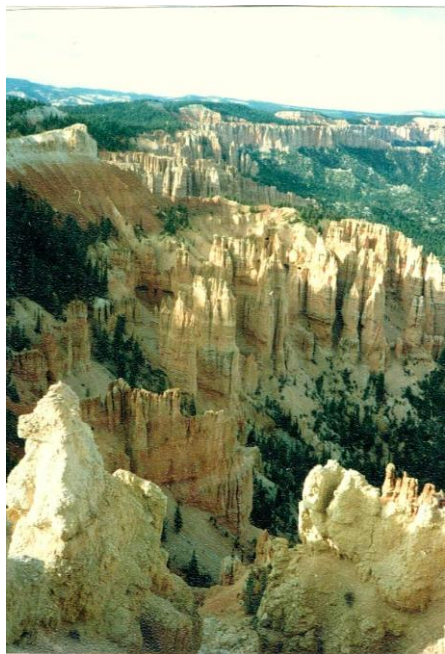
From there we drove over the gigantic Hoover dam to Falstaff, as starting point for visits to Grand Canyon and other National Parks.

We were impressed by the many ruins of more than 1000 year old Native American towns. We also spent a couple of days in the Navajo reservation, where we visited Monument valley with the huge stone pillars, resulting from millions of years erosion. We drove along to artificial Lake Powell where people sailed around in house boats between the many islands and deep bays.



*Monument valley*

Then we went to Bryce Canyon, Zion National Park and Death Valley, the lowest place on earth with a lush oasis in the middle of a hot desert. Then along Sierra Nevada to Mono Lake, where raising mineral rich groundwater has formed meter high tufa columns. Then into Yosemite National Park with granite



*Bryce Canyon*

mountains and forests with giant trees. Here something unpleasant happened to us. While driving through Death Valley we were hit by a sand storm. Sand had penetrated into the bearing of the cooler fan, which had stopped to function. When driving over the high mountains in the park the cooling water began to boil. Several times we had to fill up with more water, but it evaporated faster than we could replace it. Late in the afternoon we came to the only gas station in the park, but they could not assist us. We called Hertz' emergency phone. Hertz arranged for a wrecking car towing a new car to come from Fresno 250 km from where we were. At midnight we got our new car, and in the dark night we drove along narrow mountain roads through the park and to the small town, where we had booked a room at a motel.

The next day we went to San Francisco, where I had been before. I enjoyed to revisit this lovely town and to take Inga around there. Finally, we flew back to Atlanta, where we spent one more week before going to New York for three days and then back home.

## Eddie.

Since then we have visited USA every year once or twice. Inga has been in Atlanta on her own twice, when Eva and Peter in 2000 had their first child, Eddie, named after Inga's father Edward. He was Inga's first grandchild. ■

Our first trip to the US was the pattern for all the later trips. First a period in Atlanta, then to other parts of the US (or Mexico or Canada) and finally again in Atlanta for a couple of days before we return home. So far we have been to more than 30 of the 50 states of the US.



*Inga and Eddie in 2001*

Our Atlanta family visits us in Denmark every year.



*Eddie loves the veteran cars in Tivoli.*



## Mexico.

For many years, I have been interested in Mexican art. I think it started with an exhibition that I saw in Stockholm in 1952. In 1963 the museum Louisiana had two major exhibitions, one covering Mexico's Pre-Columbian art and the other newer Mexican art and folk art which I viewed several times. Previously at Charlottenborg, Mexican exhibitions were staged at least twice. The last in 1992 was entitled "Mexico - Myth and Magic - 100 years of Mexican Art." Again in 1987 there was a Mexican exhibition at Louisiana. I have exhibition catalogs from most of these events, just as the periodical "Louisiana Revy" has given a thorough review of the topic.

In light of this interest it was obvious that we would make trips to Mexico in connection with our visits to Atlanta. So far we have visited Mexico in 1996, 1997 and 1998. These trips exceeded all of our expectations.

On the first trip, we were mainly in Mexico City, a city with approximately 25 million inhabitants. The city is built on the remnants of the pre-Columbian Aztec Capital - Tenochtitlan, lying on an island in a very large lake - Lake Texcoco.

*On our 3<sup>rd</sup> visit to Mexico, Eva came with us. Here we are at Xochimilco south of Mexico City punting on the remnants of Lake Texcoco.*



It was connected by a causeway with the surrounding country - a plateau at a height of nearly 2000 meters. The city had many large temples and beautiful buildings, but the Spaniard Cortez razed it all to the ground after the conquest in 1521 and used the remnants as building materials for churches, monasteries and palaces.

In recent years many remnants of Aztec temples have been unearthed. Gradually, much of the ancient lake dried up, but most of the city today rests on shaky ground. The city's large cathedral is sinking year by year into the muddy substratum. Many violent earthquakes have also contributed to the destruction of valuable architecture. Yet there are still many beautiful buildings from the Spanish colonial period, which lasted until 1810, when Mexico freed itself from the colonial power. Modern Mexico has several very good architects and their work has left its mark on the city. Something unique is the decoration of buildings: Lavish sculptural details of colonial churches and palaces and huge frescoes and mosaics on the outside of buildings and in archways, which face the inner yards. Or houses lined with beautiful tiles. The city has a very modern archaeological and ethnographic museum which highlights the art of the various ancient Mexican Indian people and also



these groups' later folk art. There are several art museums, all well structured, but much art can also be found in accessible public and private buildings.

Approximately 50 km from the town are the well preserved remains of a city and a temple area. It is called Teotihuacan and dates from the period shortly before our era and until around year 900. We do not know much about the people who lived there and then disappeared without leaving much of a trace. There are two pyramids, commensurate with the old Egyptian ones, beautifully decorated temples and a large residential area where the interior walls were covered with colorful frescoes.

In Mexico City, you meet today's Indians both in markets and on pilgrimage to churches. Each tribe has its own folk costume, which is still used. In the markets one can find their folk art - textiles, ceramics, jewelry and if you are lucky, you can see them perform their traditional dances. This we saw on several occasions around the city.

In the city's culture palace - Palacio de Bellas Artes, we have seen a theater performance where traditional dances from various ethnic groups were presented by professional dancers.

Mexican folk music is also something special. In the middle of town is the Garibaldi square. It is filled every night with countless music groups, all dressed in Mexican Ranchero-costumes - gigantic sombreros, pants fitted with gold buttons down the seam and ponchos slung over the shoulder. They are called Mariachis and are professional musicians who appear on the square in the expectation of being hired for weddings (hence the name, akin to marriage) or other festive occasions. The main instruments are guitars of different sizes, trumpets and violins.

My interest focused on four major painters: Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo. The first three are mainly known due to their frescos painted mainly between 1922 and 1960 in and on public buildings, while Tamayo painted on canvas in a semi-abstract style.

Inga and I walked around in Mexico City to study the frescoes and took a large number of photographs. Tamayo has its own wonderful museum in the outskirts of the town. However, there were relatively few of his pictures, with most of his work in private ownership.

Among those artists I have placed an emphasis on the study of Diego Rivera and his wife Frida Kahlo, who was also a great painter mainly of self-portraits in a symbolist style.

In 1997, Inga and I were again in Mexico. This time we concentrated on the fantastic world of the Mayas. We spent 14 days in Yucatan, where we lived in the main town of Mérida and from there by rented car visited a dozen of the Mayan temple regions.

On our third trip in 1998 we had Eva with us. Eva went mostly on her own, while Inga and I systematically photographed works of the mentioned artists, again with emphasis on Diego Rivera. One of Diego Rivera's major works in Mexico City is a 16 meters long and 5 meter high mural titled "A Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in the Alameda." (Alameda meaning poplar grove, is the name of the city park in Mexico City's center. Here people stroll around on Sundays). The fresco was originally created in 1947 for a hotel on a street close to the Alameda. The hotel was destroyed by the great earthquake in 1985, but the fresco was rescued and moved across the street to a museum that was built only for this picture. The fresco shows historical figures from the Mexican Spanish conquest to the present day. In addition, Diego Rivera depicts himself (as a child) and his family. They are all strolling around in the park. Among the members of his family is his daughter Guadalupe Rivera Marin with her young son Juan Pablo on her arm.

Shortly after our return from Mexico and the U.S. in 1996, I happened to read that Guadalupe Rivera Marin, Rivera's daughter, would give a lecture on Diego Rivera at the Mexican Cultural Institute in Hellerup. Inga and I signed up for the lecture, which was excellent. Guadalupe is a well known

writer, politician and diplomat in Mexico. After the lecture there was an opportunity to ask questions. I was interested to know if contemporary people in the mural, I have just mentioned, were painted from life. I introduced my question as follows: "I have met you before." Guadalupe looked inquiringly at me without being able to recognize me. "It was in a dream of a Sunday afternoon in the Alameda. You were carrying your young son Juan Pablo. Do you remember this?" Guadalupe replied: "Yes, I remember." Addressing the audience, I continued: "There you see, I have met Guadalupe Rivera in a dream, and she does remember". Laughter from the audience. Then I explained that it was a mural by Diego Rivera, I alluded to, and that I wanted to know if she was painted from life or whether it was from a photograph. She replied that she has actually been standing as model for the picture.



*A detail of Rivera's mural "Dream of a Sunday Afternoon at the Alameda".*

*The young lady holding a baby is Guadalupe with her son Juan Pablo.*

Afterwards, we talked together. She was surprised that somebody in Denmark knew the picture so closely. There are a total of 75 people in the picture. She wrote a beautiful dedication in a book by her that I had purchased at the Cultural Institute at the same time. It is called "Frida's Parties" and is actually a cookbook that describes the meals at Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera's home when they held a party.

That evening I became aware that there was a Danish-Mexican Society, which held a number of events throughout the year. Inga and I enrolled immediately. I have spent quite a bit of time with this Society over the following years. It began at a general meeting where I offered to hold a lecture

about Diego Rivera. It was accepted and in June 1999 I gave the lecture "Diego Rivera -- paradoxes and contradictions." I showed about 50 slides, taken from my collection of more than 400 slides of Mexican art. I got credit for the lecture. This lecture, translated into English, is now on my home page. In late 1999, a great Diego Rivera exhibition opened at the Art Association in Copenhagen in its building on Gammel Strand. I participated on several occasions as a guide for parties, held a lecture tour for the Danish Engineers' Association and the Danish-Mexican Society – both times to a full house.

In 2001, Inga and I went on a tour of the oldest part of the Copenhagen University, where we looked at and heard about the art in the University's old headquarters. It was organized by the University's Art Association ZOOM, where Inga is a member. Afterwards we had a little night snack, where we sat together with members of the Board of ZOOM. I mentioned that we indeed had seen great art at the University, but it was nothing compared to art at the University of Mexico City, where Inga and I had spent a lot of time and from where I had many slides. They asked me to prepare a proposal for an evening lecture. I sent ZOOM copies of some of my photographs, asked the Mexican Embassy for

permission to use the Cultural Institute lecture hall and to be allowed to arrange a modest Mexican buffet after the lecture. It was OK. The Embassy referred me to a local Mexican caterer who would provide food and service. Everything was accepted by ZOOM.

My lecture was held in October 2002. It was entitled "Art and Artists at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM) and other higher educational institutions in Mexico City." The Mexican Ambassador Hector Vasconcelos opened the session. The embassy had also arranged for Mexican drinks for the buffet.

In March 2003 I presented the same lecture to the Danish-Mexican Society. The lecture in English is also on my home page.

In 2003 I was elected to the Society Board. The Board appointed me subsequently as its vice-chairman. I was also editor of a newsletter which the organization, at my request, agreed to issue to members.

Inga and I have had much pleasure from our membership in the Danish-Mexican Society. We have been to many good events, especially while Walter Astié-Burgos was ambassador. He was the former cultural attaché at the Mexican Embassy in Washington, USA. He was even an active artist as a painter and was the one who had established the cultural institute in Copenhagen. In his time, there were events almost every month and we were very frequent evening guests at the ambassador's residence.

He was succeeded in 2000 by Hector Vasconcelos, who was somewhat of a dead parrot. He was not interested particularly in culture and in the Danish-Mexican Society. At the same time, the Society's chairman was somewhat inactive. In 2004 Vasconcelos resigned as ambassador, probably after having hit another car while driving while drunk. A new ambassador was expected in early 2005.

Incidentally, I had in late 2004 quarrels with the chairman due to his inactivity. As a consequence I resigned from the board, but Inga and I are still members of the society.

#### **Added in 2014:**

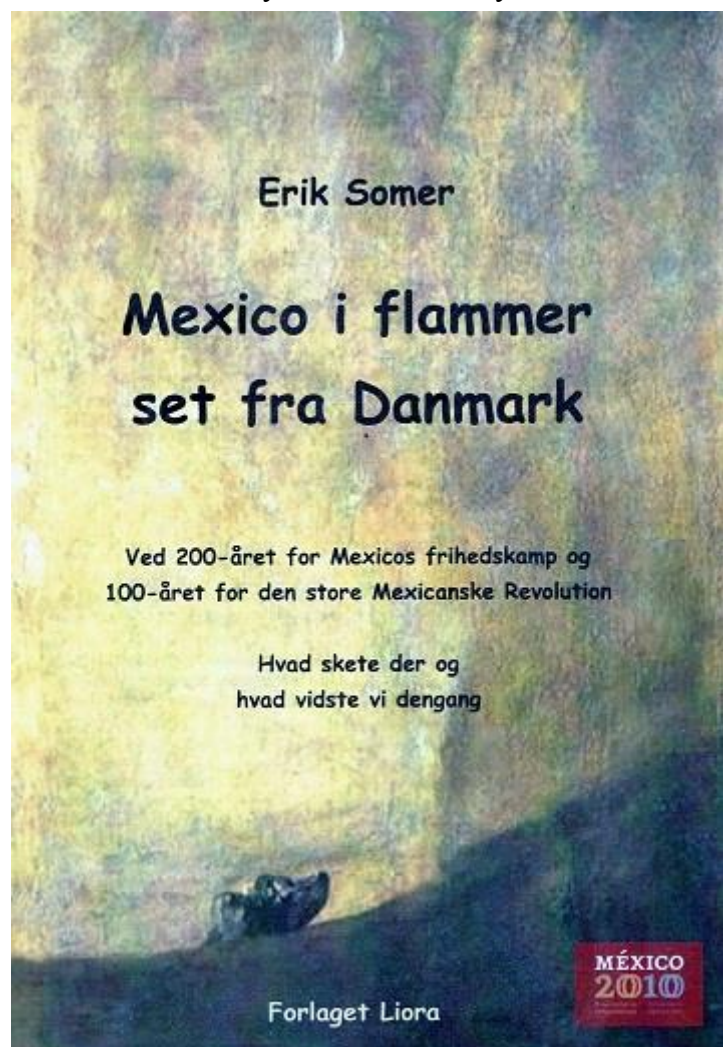
The new Mexican ambassador Martha Bárcena Coqui turned out to be very nice and active with respect to cultural activities. We became good friends. She invited me to give a lecture on the Italian born photographer Tina Modotti, who spent many years in Mexico. This lecture (in Danish) is on my homepage. Tina came to Mexico with the American photographer Edward Weston as his student, assistant and lover and made many wonderful photos in Mexico. She also had a love affair with Diego Rivera, who used her as model in several murals. She was an ardent communist, took part in the Spanish civil war and died probably at the hands of her last lover, a Stalinist agent.

When the Danish-Mexican Society got a new chairman, I was again asked to give a lecture for them. This time on the Mexican writer and Nobel Prize winner Octavio Paz and his writing on Mexican art. This lecture (in English) is also available on my home page).

In 2009 a new cultural attaché Dr. Edgardo Bermeja Mora joined the Mexican Embassy. Soon after his arrival, I invited him and his wife Pilar for dinner in our home. At this occasion he told me that 2010 would be a year full of celebration for the 200 year anniversary of the beginning of the Mexican fight for Independence and also the 100 year anniversary of the beginning of the great Mexican revolution. He told me that the Ambassador would like to know, what the Danes knew about these two events at the time they took place. My first thought was to ask my grandchild Anna Olivia to find out. At that time she studied history at the University of Aarhus, but she declined. Edgardo then mentioned to me that he had approached several professional historians for this job, but they had all

told him that there was hardly anything in the Danish newspapers of the early 1800s because Denmark was in war with England who had blocked Danish crossings of the Atlantic and thus most contact with Mexico.

I decided to test this view. I went to the Royal Library where all Danish Newspapers from the very beginning of the 17th century are found on microfilm. I let the microfilm of the year 1811 volume of the main Danish Newspaper pass through a microfilm reader. To my great surprise, I found three interesting articles about the Mexican fight for Independence. Then I undertook to carry out this exercise. The story "How I wrote my book" is detailed on my homepage.



My book "Mexico in Flames, Viewed from Denmark" was published in late 2009 as an official publication approved by the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Committee for the celebration of "Mexico 2010." The Mexican embassy bought about 50 copies. An equal number was bought by Danish public libraries, and it also sold well in book shops, in museum shops in connection with Mexican exhibitions, to members of the Danish-Mexican Society and in connection with lectures held by me.

When the first edition was sold out, a second edition was printed. This edition is also out of print now. As I don't expect any significant further sale, the whole book was put on my home page. The sale of the book paid for all the direct expenses I have had, but hardly paid for the year I have spent in researching, writing and marketing the book. For me the best result of writing this book was that it led to two important friendships with people whom I approached to get the copyright for pictures I wanted to include in the book. Dick Schmitt, who lives in Houston, Texas and is an extremely good photographer let me use two of his pictures and referred me to Jim Cook, an American expat living in Mexico for other pictures in

which I was interested. I have used four of his pictures. I am in close contact with both of these friends. Dick and his lovely wife Jane have visited us in Denmark and we have been Jane and Dick's guests in Paris and Houston (see homepage) and have also met them in London. Dick has undertaken to ensure that this English version of my memoirs does not reveal too many examples of my shortcomings with that language.

We have visited Jim Cook and his wife Carole in Ajijic, when Inga and I spent two weeks in Guadalajara in 2011.

We have also been in Mexico the year before, in 2010, shortly after publishing the book. We were on



a roundtrip to Southern Mexico. We spent a couple of days in San Christobal de las Casas in Chiapas. My book contains a chapter of a book written by Frans Blom, a Danish adventurer and archaeologist who lived there and founded a cultural organization in his home, called Na Bolom. I had to present some copies of the book to Na Bolom, because they gave me the copyright to make use of this chapter, which describes Frans Blom's experiences during the Mexican Revolution. We had an excellent guide on this trip - Allan If Jensen, we are still in contact with him.

I continued to study Mexican Art and history. In 2011 I gave a lecture in the Women Museum in Aarhus about las Soldaderas, the female soldiers who have been active from pre-Columbian time to the present. In 2012 I guided and lectured at the Museum for Art in Public Spaces in Koege in connection with an exhibition of sketches for Mexican Murals on loan from the Museum of Sketches in Lund, Sweden. (See my homepage).

Every year we take part in parties at the Mexican Embassy on the Day of Independence in September and sometimes also at a traditional Mexican Christmas party, a so called Posada, with song, gifts, food and a tilting of a piñata, an artistic container filled with small gifts for the children.

Martha Bárcena Coqui, the Mexican ambassador left Denmark in 2013. The new ambassador José Ignacio Madrazo Bolivar has so far not shown any interest with respect to cultural activities and good relations with the Danish-Mexican Society, which seems to have a precarious future.

However, the latest I have heard that our guide in Mexico, Allan If Jensen has been appointed as the new chairman of the Society, so there still is hope.

## **Added in 2014.**

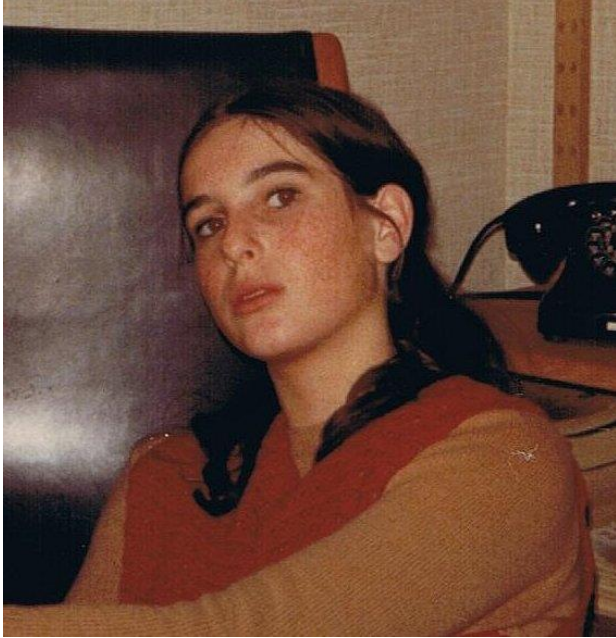
### **Lone.**



My oldest child, Lone, died 26 November 2010 from pancreas cancer at age of 59 and even now it is difficult for me to write about it. Her disease was diagnosed in April 2010, after she had complained about a pain in her stomach for some time. She underwent treatment by the country's best specialists at the Odense University Hospital. While she could not be operated upon, she received both radiological and medical treatment, both chemotherapy and analgesic. But she had no real chance for survival.



Her only daughter Rosa was then 28 years old. She was in Australia with her boyfriend Lasse when Lone got ill. She immediately returned and took care of Lone day and night until her death. After my divorce in 1965 from Nete, Lone's mother, both of us agreed that Lone should be under Nete's care, while Steffen, my son with Nete, should be taken care of by me. Even if we met



*Lone in 1967 in Nete's flat after our divorce.*

regularly and also spent several holidays together, my contact with Lone was not as close as with Steffen.

After leaving high school, Lone spent several years traveling around the world, mainly with boyfriends. She lived for a while in Lindos on the island of Rhodes, was in a kibbutz in Israel, spent more than a year in San Francisco with a boyfriend. In his van they travelled to Mexico and Guatemala buying local art and textiles which they then sold in San Francisco. For a period she lived in a collective in Denmark. She got an education as teacher in relaxation and gave courses at municipal and private institutions. In her later years, she also took care of mentally handicapped persons. She lived in Tisvildeleje, a fishing village and summer resort at the coast about 50 km North of Copenhagen.



*Inga, Nete and Lone in 2008*

Rosa's father John Larsen is a musician. Lone lived with him for many years, but they separated in 1999. Lone was very active in the local community, worked part time in the local cinema and its café and arranged cultural activities. In her last years she wanted to establish a seminar abroad for people suffering from skin diseases and stress related illnesses. Her first intention was to do this on the island of Crete in Greece, but found that the

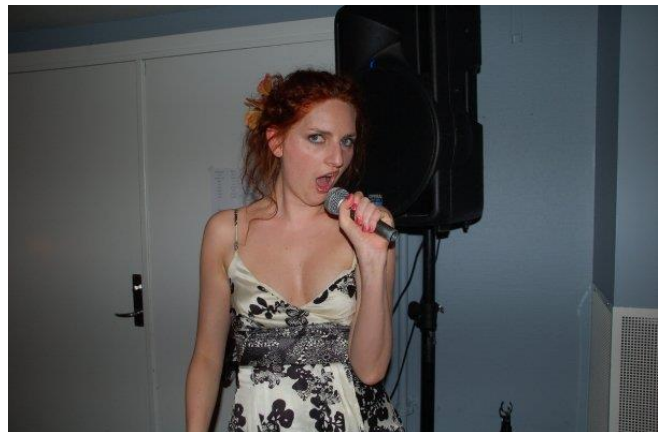


climate would be better in Goa, the former Portuguese colony in India, but now a province there. She managed to arrange a very successful seminar there. However, her illness came before a second session was arranged. She was fully aware of her situation and prepared in advance her death and burial. In church, John Larsen played one of her favorite songs on his guitar. After her burial a huge farewell party was held for more than 50 friends and members of the family. The party took place in a local hall. Her friends baked and cooked for the party and all sang her favorite tunes, accompanied by her old friend Bo on the piano.

*Lone in September 2009. Her disease has left its mark on her.*

## Rosa

Lone's daughter Rosa is an attractive, clever and very active girl. She is now 32 years old and mother to Jasper, my first and only great grandchild, who was born on 14 February 2013. She lives together with Jasper's father, Lasse Nielsen in a nice flat in Copenhagen. Since her childhood Rosa has been interested in the performing arts. After high school she spent a year in a school for the performing arts. After working as a production assistant, she took a three year movie production education at







*Rosa at Grand Canyon.*



*Rosa and Jasper, 1 day old*



*Lasse and Rosa on Bali*



*Jasper 6 months old*



*Japer(left) on his one year birthday*

Nordisk Film Production. After that, she worked freelance for one year, before she got employment in an event management company where she mainly produced fashion shows, not only in Denmark, but also in London and New York. She loves to travel and is a certified scuba diver. She has been in Israel in 2008 together with Lone visiting my cousin Eli Somer. In 2011-12 she and Lasse travelled to Goa, Indonesia, New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji and Tuvalu taking thousands of pictures above and under water and befriending local people amongst whom she lived. She now works as a production manager at a TV production company in Copenhagen, of course with time off around Jasper's birth. Lasse has a job assisting a young man with a heavy handicap, who needs attention day and night. Lasse is at work for 24 hours every 3 or 4 days sharing this job with others. Jasper is at a day nursery during Rosa's working hours or when Lasse can not take care of him.

### **Our Family in Atlanta.**

On 14 March 2008 Eva gave birth to a fine, healthy boy, her second after Eddie, who was born in 2000.



He was called Allister Ethan Somer Belle. The first name is the American version of the Scottish Alistair, meaning Alexander, Ethan is for me of unknown origin. Inga seems to remember that Eddie wanted him to have this as his second name. The Scottish name was chosen by his father, Peter, who thinks that he is of Scottish extraction. However, everybody calls him Alex. He is a charming fellow. His favorite activity is to work with Lego. Even if he is only six, he can without any assistance construct structures meant to be built by 10 year old children. He now goes to

*Peter, Eddie Eva, Alex visiting us in 2008. Inga to the right.*



Kindergarten, which in the US, distinct from other countries, is the first year of formal education fully integrated into the school system, mainly for children starting around age five.

*Alex and I playing with Lego.*

Eva is a professional ceramist and has a fully equipped workshop. For a number of years she has also been active as a textile artist. All her production is based on the use of second hand material, which she mainly buys in thrift stores. She produces scarfs, handbags, pillows and other similar items and sells them partly over the internet

(<http://www.etsy.com/people/EvasArtcessories>), partly in shops or at exhibitions.

Peter, Eva's husband is an industrial health and environmental engineer who works for a large US based international company with production all over the world. He has to travel a lot in order to supervise the plants in Europe, South America, China, Australia and elsewhere and to report back to top management. Sometimes he is able to take Eva and the kids with him on his trips. They usually visit us every year sometimes in connection with Peter's business trips in Europe. We also have so far also paid annual visits to them. Eddie is now fourteen. He will start high school this year. He spends a lot of time on his computer, often using Skype to talk with his friends.

*Inga, Eddie, Alex, Eva in Atlanta 2013.*





## Steffen and his family.



My son Steffen, who is 60 years old, has been mentioned several times earlier in my memoirs. He is a lecturer in computer applications at the Aarhus Business College, and has also private consulting jobs.

*In 2009 Steffen's daughter Amanda graduated from high school with the right to wear the Danish student cap. Here from the right: Marianne, Steffen, Amanda, Anna Olivia, Inga and I, also with my old student cap.*

His wife Marianne is teacher in a school for multi-handicapped children. They live in a lovely wooden villa with a splendid garden in a suburb of Aarhus. Marianne loves to work in the garden and Steffen has done a lot of construction and refitting in and around the house. Steffen is an active long distance runner. He has taken part in half marathons and also plans to do this now in 2014. Inga and I are close to him and his family.



Steffen's oldest daughter, Anna Olivia, is a professional dancer and Pilates teacher. After finishing high school, she studied history for a year at Aarhus University. Then she took part in an audition to be accepted as student at the Iwanson International School for contemporary dance in Munich, Germany, one of the most recognized academies in Europe. She graduated after three years there, and stayed on in Munich to become a Pilates teacher. She worked as such for a year in Munich and returned last year. She now works at a Pilates institute in Copenhagen, where she lives in her own flat. She is now 27 years old and is, as far as I know, single.■

*Anna Olivia 2014*

*Amanda and Sebastian 2014.*



Steffen's youngest daughter Amanda now is 24 years old, studies medicine at the Aarhus University. After graduation from high school, where she finished with some of the best grades ever, she spent a year or two traveling. She



was in Nicaragua for three months with an NGO to assist poor farmers, then travelled in Mexico, where I got her accepted for a stay at the Na Bolom institute for archeological and ethnographic studies in San Christobal, Chiapas. She also spent some time in Cuba. She has a festive mood and loves to go to parties mainly together with her boyfriend Sebastian, a student in psychology.

Steffen's sixty years birthday party will take place in Copenhagen to-day (16 April, 2014) for his family and friends over here. It will be repeated in Aarhus for his and Marianne's relatives there. Nete, my first wife and Steffen's mother will host the Copenhagen party in her large flat in town. Inga and I are now on good terms with Nete, whom we meet quite often. A few years after our divorce, she married again. Her husband was a bank official. Nete is now a widow and takes good care of our common children and grandchildren and not the least little Jasper, our great grandchild, whose one year birthday also took place in Nete's flat.

### **Ruth and her family.**

My sister Ruth Malinowski is two years younger than I. She has assisted me in writing the early part of my memoirs, since she, in spite of her younger age, remembers more about our childhood in Vienna than I do. When we went to high school in Sweden as refugees during the war, she met Ivan

Malinowski, who went to a room below me and a room above her. Ivan and I shared a room for a period.



*Ruth and Steen at her 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*

The two fell in love with each other. Ivan had to flee to Sweden due to his activities in the resistance movement. We had a common friend Steen Langebaek who was in Ivan's room. Steen's mother was Jewish and this was the reason for his flight to Sweden. After our return to Denmark, Ivan started to write poetry and became the most read poet in Denmark



*Ruth receives the Danish Handicraft prize 1985*

during the second half of the 20th century. Ruth became a tapestry weaver and has received many prizes for her art. They married in 1949. Ivan died in 1989. Ruth has kept her friendship with Steen, who in the meantime became a very successful lawyer. Steen's wife died a few years ago.

Since then Ruth and Steen have met more frequently and last year they decided to move in together.

Ruth and Ivan's daughter Nina is also a poet and also writes librettos for operas. She is chairman of the Organization of Danish Dramatists. She has two sons from an earlier marriage, Milan and Pejck. Milan is manager in a company in the IT field, while Pejck is a poet and radio commentator. Milan is married to Sofie Willems, who is an architect. They have two children Joanna and Louis.



Nina is married to Ludo Leroy, who is of Belgian-Flemish origin and is an actor. They have a girl Marijke, who now studies law.



*Ruth is congratulated for the prize by her grandchildren Milan (left) and Pejk.(1985)*

*Ruth's handwoven carpet made for the Danish Embassy in Rome was exhibited in 1989. Here from the left: My mother and Fräuli, at the pillar: Inga.*



Ruth and Ivan have for many years owned a disused farm in the province of Smaaland in Sweden. It is situated deep in the forest and consists of several houses and a huge barn. They reconstructed the barn as a house where Nina and her family could live. One of the other houses was Ivan's studio, where he wrote his poems, in another one Ruth had her tapestry loom. Some years ago Ruth gave the whole farm to Nina, who now lives there most of the year.

*Nina and I.*

### **Mirjam, Dan and Nomi.**

Mario, the brother of my mother, who took care of us, when we came to Denmark from Austria, had 3 children, Mirjam, Dan and Nomi. Dan and Nomi live now in Israel, while Mirjam lives in Denmark with her husband Sally. They are both retired medical doctors.

Dan has earlier worked for the Israeli Secret Service and has taken part in a number of daring actions. One of them led to imprisonment in Norway, because he was part in an action against the killers of the Israeli Olympic team in Munich in 1972. His group killed by mistake an innocent Arab in Norway.



*Mirjam together with me at Ruth's 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*



Nomi, the youngest of the three, is professor in linguistics at the University of Beer Sheba in Israel.

All three have a number of children and grandchildren. Inga and I have only closer contact with Mirjam's youngest daughter Bina, who is a dancer. ■

*Bina dances at my 85 years birthday party in 2011*



Nomi visited us last year (2013) together with her friend Mike. It was actually the first time that we got in closer contact with each other. Inga and I find her a very nice person. I share her views about the Middle East situation. She is not too happy with the attitude of the present Israeli government, and has taken part in a number of activities looking for a more peaceful coexistence with the Palestinians.

*Nomi and Mike*



## New Family Contacts.



Since I wrote the original version of my memoirs I have met family members whom I did not know before or only had faint ideas about. I have told before about my visit to Israel in 1961. There I met my cousin Marcel ( now Moshe) Somer. I also mentioned his two sons Eli and Yossi. With both of

*Somer reunion 2007:Rear left:Lone, Amanda,Anna Olivia, Marianne Liora, Steffen, Eli*

them I now have close contact. I have never met the youngest son, Doron. Eli, the oldest of the three, visited us in Denmark late 2007 together with his lovely wife Liora. He is professor in psychology at the University of Haifa, Israel. His specialty is treatment of trauma. He also has a clinic, where he works together with Liora. He is a very open-minded person. He is, of course, strongly engaged in what happens in Israel and feels that it is of great importance to come to an understanding with the Palestinians. He has attempted at several occasions to demonstrate this necessity, which usually has not met with government approval. He is in the leadership of the European Society for Trauma and Dissociation, which had its annual conference in Copenhagen 2014. Here we met again and spent an evening and an afternoon with Eli, Liora and our Danish family at our home.



In 2008 Anna Olivia visited him in Israel and somewhat later also Lone and Rosa were the guests of Eli and Liora. There they met his children – two married girls Michal and Merav and Goor, who is male. There are at present four grandchildren.

*Moshe with one of his greatgrandchildren.*



Yossi or Josef is Eli's younger brother. He has two children with Ingeborg, from whom he now is divorced, the oldest Danielle and Youval, a boy whose Bar Mitzwa in Oslo in 2012 we took part in.

*Yossi with Youval and Danielle (2013).*

Ingeborg is Norwegian. She met Yossi when she was in Israel as professional ballet dancer. Ingeborg and Yossi moved to Norway in 2005. They divorced in 2013. Ingeborg works now as school teacher.

Yossi is a film producer, director and screen writer. He has made several films in Israel and

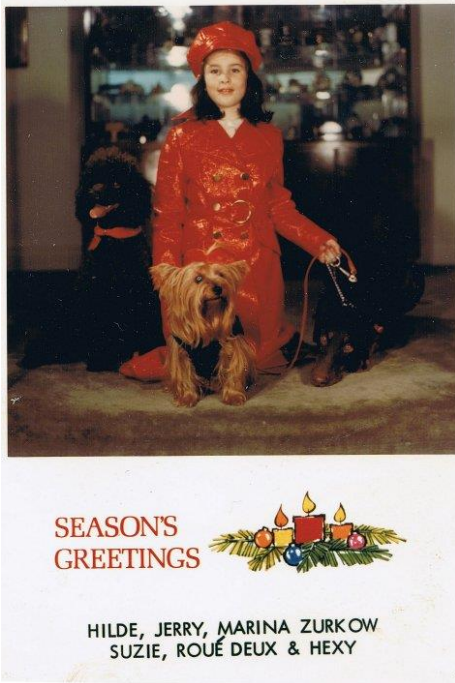
got a number of awards for them. In Norway he has made successful TV documentaries. He has started a company called Animaze, which makes use of an Israeli patent for automatic lip synchronizing with the spoken language in animated or dubbed films.

Ingeborg's father Dag Sundby adopted a young Vietnamese, Khan Thanh Nguyen, after the Vietnam war. Thus, he is Ingeborg's adopted brother. He came to Norway in 1968 in order to undergo hospital treatment. He is an invalid – lame from the chest downward – due to an incident when he fled from the war zone. He is now a senior employee in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is



married and has two beautiful girls. We met him in 2007 when the whole Sundby family, including Yossi and Ingeborg were in Denmark to see Soren Sundby, Ingeborg's brother, in his last performance as dancer, before he had to give up due to brain cancer. Soren died in 2008. Khan Than has had great influence on my writing. During a visit in Vietnam he sent travel letters back to Norway. He gave me copies of them before we went on a tour to Vietnam. There I began also to write travel letters in his style. This was the beginning of the many travel stories, I have put on my home page.

*Khan Thanh with wife and children in 2000.*



When Eli was here in 2007 we talked about that there still must be a member of our family with whom we did not have any contact. We were thinking of Marina, the daughter of my cousin Ruth Hilde in New York. When I visited her in 1971, Marina was in a youth camp with her school, so I did not meet her. Ruth Hilde often sent me New Year cards with a picture of Marina. Ruth Hilde had married a Zurkow. After Eli left, I looked through my archive of family pictures and found one of these greeting cards. I sent a copy to Eli and simultaneously searched for Marina Zurkow on Google.

There were many sites with this name all belonging to a lady who was a well known graphic and video artist and art professor at a University in New York. I also found her e-mail address. I sent her an e-mail with a copy of the greeting card and asked if she was the person on the picture. In a quick reply she confirmed this, and since then we have been in contact. Eli did more or less the same and also is in contact with her.

My sister Ruth has a grandchild Pejk, who just as his mother Nina and his grandfather Ivan is a poet and writer. He spends

much of his time in the US, working for public broadcasting stations and arranging public art shows. In 2007 he worked in New York. As he also is related to Marina, I told him about her and suggested that he should contact her. She lives in Brooklyn. After some hesitation he called her. It turned out that they lived close to each other and had many common friends. They also became good friends. In 2009 Marina spent a sabbatical year in England. As Pejk at that time was in Denmark she used the opportunity to spend some days here. Marina and Pejk visited us. We found her to be a wonderful person. Eli has visited her in New York.





*Marina Zurkow*

*Inga, Ruth, Marina, Pejka in 2009*



### **Inga, I and our friends.**

We are getting older, but still think that we have a high quality of life. We travel frequently. You can find many travel stories on my home page and more stories are likely to go there by and by.

So far we have been to the USA every year to visit our daughter Eva in Atlanta and to see other parts of North America.

Much of what has happened to us since the first version of these memoirs were written in 2005 can be read on the preceding pages.

Both of us are active in our garden. At the end of every year we think that this may have been the last year where we were able to keep the Garden neatly and to add new decorative plants, vegetables, herbs and fruit. And every year we are surprised that we have done it again.

Inga spends much of her time with handicraft. She is a master knitter, makes models for a yarn company and is "Knitting fairy" in a wool shop. Once or twice a week she is there in the afternoon or

In 2012 Inga and I visited our friend Dick Schmitt in Houston, Texas. Marina had an exhibition there, which we visited. In my story about our visit to Houston (part one), to be found on my home page, one can read more about it.

evening in order to assist customers with their knitting. This gives her an extra income which Inga mainly uses to buy yarn for her own needle work. In between her more advanced jobs she knits her own socks. It is a wonderful sight to see all these socks hanging on the clothes-line after being washed.



She also spends quite some time on her computer or Samsung tablet, corresponding via e-mail or Facebook, retrieving new knitting models, skypeing with our daughter Eva or finding information on subjects by googling. We share our household duties. Inga prepares an exquisite breakfast with lots of fruit, different types of yoghurt and cereals, takes care of washing clothes, cleaning the house, while I prepare lunch and dinner. We share the work in our

garden and the daily shopping.

Inga spends several afternoons away from home. Every week she spends a morning at a gymnastics class. She takes part in “knitting cafés”, meets friends. She seems to know almost anybody here in our community. There is a constant saying hello, exchanging a few words or just smiling to others when we are in town together.



*Georg Anxdrup and his wife Kirsten.*

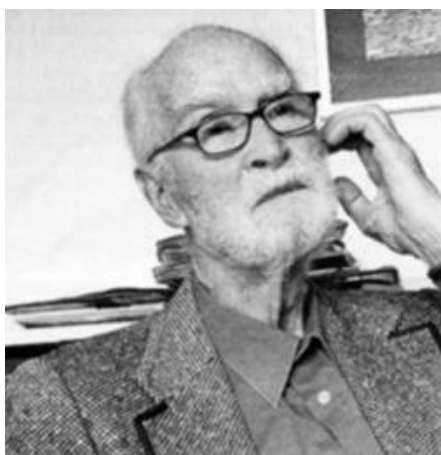
On the other side, I have only few friends. I use to say, that nowadays I more often find my friends when reading death columns in newspapers than in birthday announcements.

Amongst friends, who have left this world, I most mention two:

Georg Andrup, former director of Odense Waterworks, has been my friend since 1948, when I met him as chairman of the Odense “One World” division. He died in 1999. His motto was: “I have decided to be happy”. He kept this decision even during long periods of illness. In his later years he lived in the small, idyllic town



Kerteminde on the island of Funen. We have stayed with him many times and Kirsten and Georg have also been frequent guests at our place. Georg was active in Rotary and was once president for Danish Rotary. He always was full of more or less fantastic ideas, which all had the purpose to solve serious environmental or otherwise political questions. However, most of his ideas were unachievable or had drawbacks, which would cause larger problems than those he wanted to solve. I spent much time in friendly discussions with him. Mostly, he discarded the idea, but it did not last long before new ones popped up.



Johan Garde, who died in 2010, 92 years old, was another of my friends. His wife Tora, ceramist, was daughter of the Danish sculptor Adam Fischer, who around 1920 lived in Paris, where he was a close friend of the Mexican painter, Diego Rivera. She knew Rivera from her childhood. I approached her, when I wanted to prepare a lecture about Rivera around 1999. I got a lot of information from her. We became good friends and met regularly.

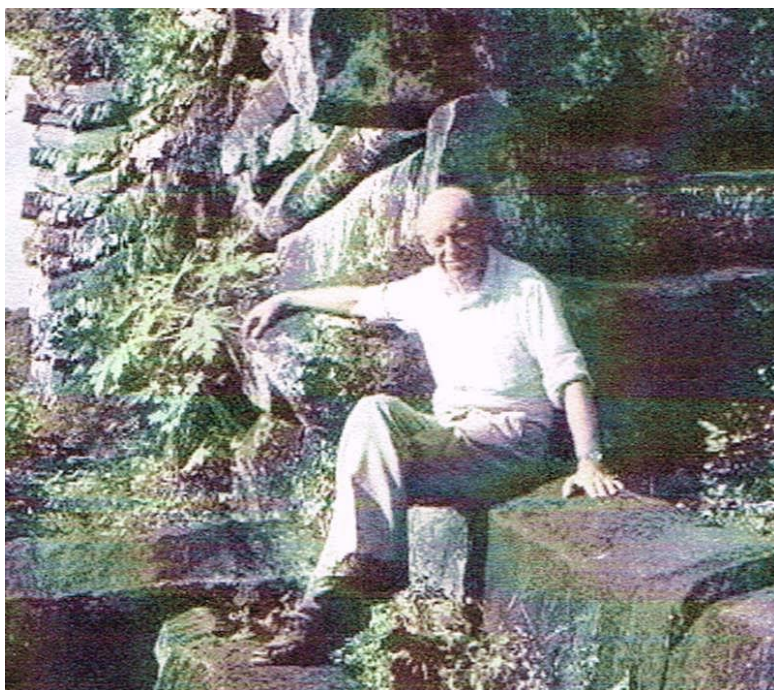
Several of my friends are people with whom I have had professional relations.

Ole Have Jørgensen has been my closest co-worker at the Environmental Agency. He is biologist and came to the agency from a job in the environmental division of the county in Vejle, Jutland, where his wife Else was teacher at the local high school. She remained there while Ole worked in Copenhagen.

After a few years he returned to Jutland, became owner of a fish farm, then head of the municipal chemical laboratory in Horsens and finally director of the Horsens Municipality. He retired a few years ago, while Else still is teaching. They have a wonderful house in Horsens with a fine collection of art, particularly paintings of the Danish painter Michael Kvium. They have a summer house in Sweden with a large forest, professionally cultivated by Ole.



*Ole, Else and Inga in front of their typical Swedish farm house..*



I have known Dr. techn. Kaj Hejdorn for nearly 60 years. He became head of the Isotope Division at the Risoe National Atomic Energy Research Establishment in 1956 and thus supplier of most of the radioactive isotopes used by us at the Danish Isotope Center. He is just as I member of the Danish Academy of Technical Sciences, where we meet regularly. He is a very adventurous traveler, and has seen most of the world. This picture is taken at Nan Madol in Micronesia.

Henrik Knudsen is a common friend of Heydorn and me. He is a historian, and has written several excellent books about scientists and scientific organizations. In a study about nuclear research in Denmark he has given a thorough account of both Heydorn's and my activities. Two years ago he wrote a book on the history of the



Danish Academy of Technical Sciences on the request by this organization, where he also mentions my activities.

Many years ago Inga took French lessons. About ten of the students of this course established a club which meets three times a year for a common dinner, where everybody contributes with delicious dishes. I was admitted to this club. The picture here shows a meeting of the club in our home.



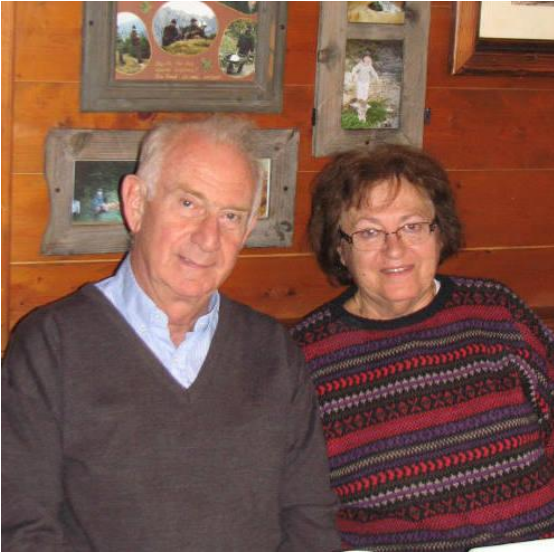


Besides these regular meetings we often meet members of the club at other occasions.

This is particularly the case with Birthe Rancke-Madsen, who just as Inga is a retired laboratory technician. Through her late husband who belonged to a family of well known chemists, she and I have many common friends. She is one of Inga's and my closest friends.



Jette Thyssen, whom I have mentioned several times earlier, I have known since 1942. She was one of the Thyssen daughters on the Sandal farm, where I worked during several of the war summers. She is a highly respected weaver. We see her regularly either in her or our home or at exhibitions where here Tapestry is exhibited.

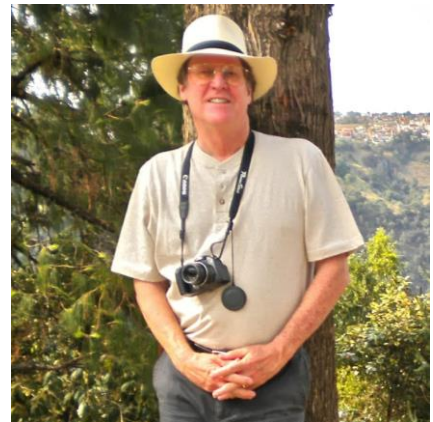


Also my Israeli friend Chaim Gilath and his wife Irith has been mentioned earlier. I have met them in 1961, when I worked as tutor for Chaim, who should direct the Isotope Division of the Israeli Atomic Energy Research Establishment. Since then we have met numerous times at conferences around the world and in their and our home. In the later part of his career Chaim worked with imaging for medical scanning devices.

In the chapter about Mexico I already have mentioned that to Americans have assisted me with pictures for my book.

They are Jim (James) Cook and Dick Schmitt.

Jim is an US expat living in Mexico with his lovely wife Carole. He gave up his 31- year career in the Air Force and as airport manager at the end of 2006 and went from Oregon to Ajijic, a nice little town situated at Lake Chapala, Mexico's largest lake. A large fraction of Ajijic's inhabitants are expats, mainly from the US and



from Canada. Jim is a magnificent photographer and has produced a multitude of blogs about places in Mexico with a deep insight of nature, history and art. He often makes daring mountain hikes with a group of other expats. Inga and I visited Jim and Carole in Ajijic in 2011. We have a regular correspondence.

*Carole and Inga in Ajijic*

Dick Schmitt's name appears already on the front page of this edition of my memoirs. He has carefully edited my writing and improved on my somewhat poor English. Actually, I have prepared this updated English version on his initiative. Dick lives in Houston, Texas with his wife Jane. He is a retired management expert who has worked for Exxon for many years. He has studied in Detroit and still has many relations with his university, where he also has taught. He and Jane love to travel both within the USA and abroad. Also he is a skilled photographer. This is what brought us together, when I asked him for copyright for some of his pictures, which I found on the internet. When I asked him for other particular pictures, he referred me to Jim Cook. This is how I got in contact with Jim. Just as Jim, Dick tells about his travels in pictures and text. He often analyzes artistic and historic architecture in detail and gives information demonstrating his scientific background.

Jane and Dick have visited us in Bagsvaerd. Later on we have been their guests, when Jane and Dick



for a period lived in Paris in a huge rented flat in a fashionable part of the town. In connection with one of our annual trips to the US we also spent a couple of days in their wonderful home in Houston. Our latest meeting was for lunch in London, when we happened to be there at the same time. We are in almost daily contact with each other, , partly over e-mail, partly via Facebook.

Both Dick and Jim have been of important inspiration for me in my preparation of blogs about travels and other happenings.

This is at present the end of my memoirs. You find Dick mentioned on the first and the last page of them.



## **Epilog (from the Danish version of the memoirs).**

I write this in December 2005, three years after I started writing these memoirs in 2002. I am now 79 years old and still going strong. However, I have been hospitalized several times: Twelve years ago. I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I had surgery three times and have not had any recurrence. Three years ago, I had an acute bleeding ulcer and was hospitalized several times. Medical treatment resolved this problem. I am overweight and have problems with the vision of my right eye. I am wearing hearing aids due to my hardness of hearing.

In the introduction, I mentioned that I follow the advice of my old friend, Georg Andrup to decide to be happy. I still follow his advice and have no troubles with it, as I think I still have a good quality of life and enjoy life very much. Inga and I still travel a lot. During the period of writing of these memoirs, we have visited the US four times, Vienna several times, as well as Madrid, Barcelona, Venice and Berlin. Next month we will return to Spain.

Inga and I meet frequently with several friends.

Can readers here know who I am? Am I an Austrian, Dane, Jew? Georg Brandes was once asked whether he was a Dane or a Jew. He answered: I am Georg Brandes. Similarly, I must say that I am Erik Somer. Let the opening poem by Piet Hein serve as a guide for these recollections: I feel as much loyalty to Denmark as any Dane, I acknowledge also my affiliation with the Jewish people, even if I no longer practice that religion; I still have a certain veneration towards Austria. I have traveled over much of the world and have stayed and worked in many different countries, and everywhere felt comfortable and tried to be loyal to the country in which I was working. Perhaps I can best be described as a world citizen which fits with my youthful engagement in the organization called One World.

What the coming years will bring me, I do not know. Nor how long I will be able to think and write clearly. Therefore, I cannot predict if I will add to these memories. In any case: That's all for now.

## **Added in 2014.**

Not much has changed since I wrote the above epilog. Even if 9 years have passed since I wrote that – and 9 years are a lot in my age, I am still able to travel, to work in the garden and I feel that I still can think clearly. Even if both Inga and I acknowledge that we are getting older, we both enjoy our quality of life. Again I say: That's all for now.