

9. RETURN TO EUROPE, 1945-46

Anyhow, end of '45 I went back to Europe. I gave my cats in the charge of some friend I knew, a very good man who was living at a barracks.⁶⁶ He told me, "I'll distribute them in the kitchens of the barracks. They'll have more than enough to eat and drink." Two of them, out of the twenty or thirty I had, Mr. Mukherji kept. And I left. Why did I leave? It was heartbreaking for me to leave my cats, and to leave Mr. Mukherji also. But I wanted to see Europe again, and I wanted to take part in whatever resistance there could be. I wanted to show my defiance against the victors at any cost. I'd scribble on the walls. I'd distribute papers. I'd do what I can. But I must go. But I couldn't go to Germany. I could've gone to Germany if I had been one of the followers of de Gaulle, for instance, or something like that. I could've worked with the Allies. But being what I am, I couldn't go. Directly anyhow. I said, "All right, I'll go to England, and from England I'll go. Or I'll go to France, and from there I'll go. I'll manage."

So I went to England. The first episode after my landing in England I told in my cat book, *Long-Whiskers and the Two-Legged Goddess*. It's a story. It's a true story. It's fifteen years of my life in connection with cats. It's called *The True Story of a "Most Objectionable Nazi" . . . and Half-a-Dozen Cats*. Anyhow, that episode I related in that book.⁶⁷ So I'll let it alone now. The second episode: I saw a streamer across Oxford Street: "Nazi Atrocities, 1½ shillings Entrance." They were showing photographs, so-called photographs, propaganda. I didn't go in, naturally. I wasn't going to spend 1½ shillings for nothing, to see nonsense. And even if it were true, I couldn't care less.

I lived in England. Wherever I went, the radio. I didn't listen to the radio. I never listened to it. I never had a radio or a television set. I don't want one. But when I went to people's houses I had to listen to the radio. I had to hear it, the same old stuff all the time, all the time.

⁶⁶ The name of the barracks is unintelligible.

⁶⁷ Savitri Devi, *Long-Whiskers and the Two-Legged Goddess: The True Story of a "Most Objectionable Nazi" . . . and Half-a-Dozen Cats* (Calcutta: Savitri Devi Mukherji, n.d.), ch. 7, "The Cat's Teaching." The episode in question is the encounter on a London street with a ginger-colored cat named Sandy. This encounter was very important to Savitri, for she apparently thought Sandy was the reincarnation of her cat Long-Whiskers, and she imagined their encounter was pivotal in the life of Sandy as well. See ch. 8, "Dreary Years" and ch. 9, "Sandy's Choice." It is very difficult to separate fact from fiction in *Long-Whiskers*, which is surely Savitri's strangest book, but also her best-written one.

And on my way back, on my way home, on the ship already, the “de-Nazification, the re-education of Germany, the re-integration of the German people into the community of Christian nations,” and all that. I hated it. If I had not felt that perhaps one day the victors would be in even a worse plight than I saw my comrades in, I would’ve thrown myself into the sea from the top deck. I couldn’t do it. Because I thought to myself, “One day you might see better. You might see the revenge.”⁶⁸ And ever since the end of the war, wherever I went, my two main occupations were feeding stray animals, especially cats, and gloating over any nasty thing that happened to any of the victors of 1945.

So I landed in England. And I got disgusted, and after a very short time, in February ’46, I said, “I must go to Europe, to France, at least to see my mother again.” I didn’t know anything about her, just a card, a word now and then. I went to France, only to learn my mother had been in the French resistance.⁶⁹ And that separated us. I loved her deeply, until then. But that separated us forever. That separated us completely. Although, I said to myself, “She has given me my Viking blood. She is a descendant of the Vikings of Jutland, North Denmark.” The first of our family came to England in the tenth century, according to her. They were not even Christians when they first came over. They were worshippers of Odin and Thor. And I have their blood. Why did she go into that nasty organization, the French resistance? Why did she allow herself to take pity on the poor Jews? And that put me against them even more.

It was always the same thing: “The poor Jews.” I said, “I couldn’t care less for the poor Jews.” She said, “Yes, but I do. They are human beings. They are living creatures.” I said, “I don’t care for all living creatures. I only care for the four-legged ones, the four-legged ones and the élite of the two-legged ones. The other two-legged ones, I don’t

⁶⁸ See *Long-Whiskers*, ch. 6, “Heliadora’s Homeward Journey.”

⁶⁹ Savitri’s mother was seventy-five in 1940, so it is unlikely that her role in the resistance went beyond complaining, in private, about the German occupation. According to Terry Cooper, who knew Savitri from 1966 to 1971, Savitri told him that her mother’s resistance activity consisted of a weekly tea party (Terry Cooper interview, 12 April 2002). According to Savitri’s nephew Sumanta Banerjee, “She [Savitri] once told me about her mother, who lived in France, and who, when in her eighties [sic] during the Nazi occupation of France, joined the Resistance movement. By then she had disowned her daughter. I asked Savitri-*maami* how she would have received her mother. Without batting an eyelid, she said: ‘I would have shot her dead’” (Sumanta Banerjee, “Memories of My Nazi *Maami* [aunt],” *Times of India*, 19 April 1999).

care for. They are not the élite.” In the works of a great painter, I will take the masterpieces. I don’t care for the small stuff, you see. When you make an anthology of poems or works of art, you take the best and leave the rest. And if God is a great artist, I’ll take the best of what he did. And I’d rather have a small picture, without any pretension, just a little *aquarelle*, a watercolor picture, done perfectly, than a big fresco with mistakes in it, that is to say, worth nothing. An animal is a small picture, God’s masterpiece on a smaller scale.

I’d rather have that. I’d rather have a perfect police dog—say, an Alsatian—than a man who’s not worth it. It’s much nearer the spirit of selection, of perfection. It’s perfect as a dog. A tiger is perfect as a feline. The best of the Aryans, say, Rudolf Hess.⁷⁰ Rudolf Hess is the top of the Aryans, to me. Top, absolutely. You have to look at his face, especially when he was young, and you see his career, to see him saying at Nuremberg, “I would follow him, as the greatest son of my country, even if there was a stake awaiting me at the end of the road.” He said that. And Otto Ohlendorf.⁷¹ To somebody I wanted to show my theory, I took the picture of Otto Ohlendorf and a picture of a tiger and said, “Look at this: the top of the feline race, the top of our Aryan race.”

Anyhow, I didn’t stay long, until August ’46. I went back to England. All my luggage was stolen in Paris, on the 16th of August ’46, in the *Gare Saint-Lazare*. I came back to England thinking the manuscript of my book *Impeachment of Man* was lost. I had another manuscript of it. It was printed in India fourteen years later because I couldn’t afford to print it before that.⁷² I printed five or six hundred.

⁷⁰ On the first tape, Savitri is asked why the Allies continue to hold Rudolf Hess in solitary confinement: “He must know things that if he came out he would say. They couldn’t keep him from saying them. He must know things. And another thing is the *rancune*, the resentment of the Russians. If he had succeeded, there would be no Communism today. Russia would’ve been finished. Suppose he had succeeded: England and Germany together against Russia. America wouldn’t have had time to come in. It would’ve been finished. The Russians cannot put up with that: the idea that, if that man had succeeded, they would have been finished, and well-deserved.”

⁷¹ Otto Ohlendorf (1907-1951) held a Ph.D. in sociology and was a professor at the University of Berlin. He rose to the rank of *SS-Standartenführer* and was the commander of *Einsatzgruppe D*. He was executed as a war criminal. For more on Ohlendorf, see ch. 3, §9 and ch. 4, §7 below and *Pilgrimage*, 251-58.

⁷² Savitri Devi, *Impeachment of Man* (Calcutta: Savitri Devi Mukherji, 1959). *Impeachment* was begun in Calcutta in July, 1945, shortly after Savitri’s return from her travels around India to avoid news of the Axis defeat. It was finished in Lyons on 29 March, 1946. The Preface was written in Calcutta on 22 June 1959.

In October '46, I was staying at 104 Grosvenor Road, in a very quiet room. It was a building for nurses, a kind of hostel for nurses. They used to sleep in the daytime. At night they were on duty. So it was perfectly quiet in the daytime and at night. And that's what I wanted. I liked physical peace. So I was there on the night of the 15th to 16th of October '46. And I never read the papers. I didn't want to read them. I didn't want to see the evolution of the trial at Nuremberg. I hated it. But I couldn't sleep. I couldn't. I couldn't detach my mind from the fact that I knew, without reading the papers—everybody knew it—that the eleven were to be killed on that night.

I was thinking about it. I was thinking about it. And then suddenly, I was not asleep, but I felt exactly as I used to feel after my exercises at Hatha yoga ten years before.⁷³ I was no longer in that room. I don't know how I went through the walls. I was in Göring's cell. And I saw Göring just as I see you. He was seated with his hands like this.⁷⁴ And suddenly he did like that. As though he saw me and was rather astonished. I had something in my right hand, a tiny little piece of I don't know what, something I held. And I said to him, "No fear"—"*keine Angst*." "No fear. I'm not an enemy. I'm one of your people. I wish I could save you all from this ignominy, but unfortunately the heavenly powers gave me permission to save one, and one only, up to my choice, and I chose you because of your kindness to creatures. Because of your solicitude to animals."

Göring had been a hunter in his youth. He had given it up. And he liked animals, that's true. But some hunters do at the same time they're hunters. He had a leopard for a pet. The leopard used to lie at his feet and purr, like a big cat. I knew that. What I knew also was that he contributed with the Führer to the setting up of the *Reichsjagdgesetz*,⁷⁵ a book thick like that. It is much more than a regulation of hunting. It's a protection of nature. Traps are forbidden. One man hunting by himself is forbidden. It must be two. If an animal is wounded the other one will shoot it. Mustn't kill females. Mustn't, mustn't, mustn't, mustn't. The Führer could not forbid hunting altogether. He did what he could to lessen the effect, and Göring had a part of that.

That I knew before I got into this kind of queer state. I said to him,

⁷³ See ch. 3, §9 below.

⁷⁴ According to Sven Hedin (1865-1952), diary entry of 6 June 1948, Savitri told him that, "Han satt med huvudet i händerna" ("He [Göring] sat with his head in his hands") (The papers of Sven Hedin, box 41, National Archives of Sweden).

⁷⁵ Reich Hunting Law.

“Take this,” and gave him what I had in my right hand. I said, “Take this, and don’t allow these people to kill you as a criminal. You are not one. Anything but. Now I must go. Good-bye. Heil Hitler!” And I vanished. And I didn’t see anything of the kind. I fell completely unconscious after that. I saw Göring, and I was unconscious. I gave him whatever I had to give him. I was unconscious.

I woke up. It was 10:00 in the morning. I never wake up at 10:00. I wake up at 6:00. I never sleep like that. I opened my eyes. I said, “What a queer experience I had. Where did I go last night?” Anyhow, I bathed quickly, and I went downstairs. It was a rainy day, drizzly. I never bought a paper as I told you. I wasn’t going to buy the paper on the 16th of October, anything but. But I couldn’t help seeing the headlines on the papers. There was a newspaper kiosk just opposite. Headlines like that. Eight centimeters high. “Göring found dead in his cell, half past two in the morning. Nobody knows who gave him the poison. Potassium cyanide.”

I’ll never forget it. And I felt cold all over my body. It seemed to me that I saw the Nataraja, the dancing Shiva, as he is presented in Hindu temples, dancing in the clouds. And I said, “If this has been done through me, use me in greater things still. If it’s me, that’s the best thing I did in my life.” I don’t know what really happened, to this day. I know what experience I had. I know what I felt. I know what I saw. I don’t know anything more. Is it a genuine experience? What is it? I just don’t know. I don’t pretend to know, and I don’t like to speak of what I don’t know.

Less than two years later, on June 6th, 1948, I met Sven Hedin, who is a scholar of Tibetology and has roamed all over Central Asia and seen things in Ladakh and Tibet. I asked him, “What would people in Ladakh or Tibet think of this?” He said, “My dear, they would find that the most natural thing in the world. That is no problem for a Tibetan or for a Ladakhi, for a Buddhist Lama. No problem at all. You went into the astral plane. You gave Göring some astral potassium cyanide, and it materialized in his hand. He took it and died, instead of being hanged.” I said, “I wish I could’ve done it for the eleven.” “Well, you could for one. Be thankful that you could for one.” That’s what Sven Hedin told me. I don’t know any more than that. I never had a psychic experience in my life. That’s the only one.