

THE EUROPE I SAW IN 1935

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IN the summer of 1935 my wife and I were members of a party organized by the Anglo-Hungarian travel agency to tour the European continent. The countries to be visited were Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary and Austria. Our visit was to take the form of a "land cruise", as it was officially termed. The same train was utilized throughout the whole journey, and we retained the seats allotted to us on our arrival by steamer at Flushing in Holland. During the journey through Holland we had a fine view of the vast factories of the Phillips Co., specialists in the manufacture of radio and other electrical equipment. We could therefore well understand the motive of the R.A.F. in bombing this legitimate target in 1942, while it was working at full pressure for the German war machine.

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At the German frontier we soon found ourselves face to face with Hitlerism. A polite but very truculent official in full uniform entered our compartment, raised his right hand in the Nazi salute, and exclaimed *Heil Hitler*. The other occupants decided to remain silent. I therefore considered that something should be done to return the salutation, so I said *Guten Tag*. This appeared to satisfy him.

Our first stop was at Cologne, and we were given accommodation at the Dom, one of the city's finest hotels. It was of course appropriately situated in the Dom Platz facing the cathedral. At a recent R.A.F. exhibition I saw a large aerial photograph showing the devastation surrounding Cologne cathedral, and was able to identify the position of this hotel with ease. It had been almost completely gutted by fire.

It was evident that the Nazi regime, then in its infancy, had decided to make our visit an agreeable one, for they arranged official receptions at every city in our itinerary. On our return journey we visited Cologne a second time, and were received by the Deputy-Burgomaster in the famous Shell Room of the Town Hall. He made a very graceful speech in German, expressing the hope that we had enjoyed our visit to Germany. At the conclusion of his remarks there was a rather awkward pause, as no one seemed inclined to reply. My neighbour nudged me with his elbow, and begged me to say something. I therefore summoned up courage, and thanked him on behalf of the party as appro-

privately as possible. As a matter of fact, I felt very grateful afterwards for having had this privilege, as I was able to tell him that I prosecuted embryological research at the University of Leipzig during the summer semesters of 1901 and 1902, and that the investigations carried out there had earned a gold medal for my M.D. thesis at the University of Edinburgh. It thus afforded me a unique opportunity to thank the German Government for having placed laboratory accommodation at my disposal, with all apparatus and other essential materials absolutely free of charge. My impromptu reply evidently had his approval, for he edged his way through the crowd, and shook me warmly by the hand.

At the close of the proceedings my wife and I were surrounded by eight newspaper reporters, who asked if we would be good enough to remain behind, and grant them an interview. We had previously heard that an English lady had recently expressed herself rather freely to the Press regarding the Nazi regime, and had in consequence been imprisoned, so I hesitated. When I told them that I had been a professor of anatomy in a Canadian University, one reporter informed me that he also had spent some happy years in the Dominion. I therefore decided to accede to their request. They were evidently satisfied with what I had said, for one of them presented me later on behalf of his colleagues with an enlargement of a photograph of our party standing on the steps of the Town Hall. I am very glad to possess this souvenir, because the Nazis have reported the destruction of this building in one of the R.A.F. raids.

The morning after the interview, we were gratified to receive several complimentary copies of three Cologne newspapers. I will quote from the *Koelnische Zeitung*, the most important and influential of these. The following is a literal translation of part of the report:

John Cameron, from Bournemouth, a professor of anatomy, afterwards granted the Press an interview, and declared firstly, that he knew Germany well, as he had undertaken post-graduate research in the University of Leipzig. He said "Please write in your newspapers that it had impressed all of us to see how every square inch of soil in the Fatherland was being utilized, that we had marvelled at the fine discipline of the population, that we were astonished at the comprehensive organization of every phase of life in the Third Reich, and say also, please, that I had detected an unusually healthy physique throughout the population. On the Rhine steamer (from Bingen to Coblenz) we met a party of students from Aix-la-Chapelle. We felt attracted to them at once,

and a fine feeling of good fellowship prevailed. But I beg you specially to give expression to the fact that we thank you most cordially for the reception given to us everywhere, and finally in Cologne. We are of the opinion that more intimate intercourse between England and Germany would guarantee peace, not only in Europe, but also over the whole world. Our journey has come to a charming conclusion, and it is the wish of the whole party, that Germany may, in the Third Reich, attain a happy future." *Koel-nische Zeitung*, Aug. 30, 1935.

Alas for our fondest hopes of peace! Alas for our wishful thinking! Only six months after our visit, the Burgomaster of Cologne gave an official welcome to the Nazi hordes after they crossed the Rhine, in order to carry out their military occupation of the Rhineland. This grave step was a flagrant breach of the Treaty of Versailles, and in fact acted as the prelude to the Second World War. The photographs of this historic act of defiance were published in many of the British newspapers.

We had an odd experience in Frankfort-on-the-Main. One evening after dark, we decided to explore the older parts of the city which surround the cathedral, and gain some impression of its night life. Although the hour was not late, all traffic in the more ancient parts of the city had ceased. After a time we noticed that the inhabitants, all apparently in their teens, were dressed in very weird and diverse types of medieval costumes, and most of them were resting in doorways or on the edge of the kerb. We presently reached what was evidently an important street crossing, where two individuals were engaged in a lively altercation. One of them was evidently being castigated for having permitted us to wander about the neighbourhood. We found that we had unwittingly trespassed on a pageant representing the history of the city. Fortunately, we had arrived during an interval between the various episodes. We were not rebuked or molested in any way, and at once retraced our steps to our hotel.

In organizing this pageant the authorities no doubt argued that national prestige and tradition could best be inculcated by historical episodes, especially those which glorified the Germanic race. They therefore regarded history, particularly the brand approved by the Goebbels propaganda machine, as a potent factor in fostering the growth of a patriotic spirit among these young Nazis.

We found much liveliness in Nuremberg. The annual congress of the Nazi party was to be held there the following week, and the vanguard had already arrived. Their presence was made

manifest during the evenings by the boisterous singing of the notorious *Horst Wessel* and other party songs in the restaurants and beer gardens. The market place of the unspoilt inner or historic portion of the city has been known from medieval times as the Alt Markt. It has now been defiled by being renamed the Adolf Hitler Platz. In this, workmen were feverishly erecting many tiered wooden stands to accommodate these fanatics, while they listened enraptured to their beloved Fuehrer's blusterings. The Schoener Brunnen stood forlorn in the midst of these hideous wooden erections. This fountain is known throughout the world as a masterpiece of medieval art. The wrought iron railing surrounding it looks like delicate lacework. At one point there is interwoven in its texture a mysterious ring which all visitors are asked to touch. No one knows how it came to be placed there; some try to insist that it was by superhuman means. The Schoener Brunnen stood as a silent witness to exemplify the manner in which everything in Germany that had any artistic value was becoming polluted by the pagan touch of the Nazi regime.

We saw a characteristic example of anti-Semitic propaganda painted on the gable of a building facing the open-air fruit and vegetable market. A patriarchal Jew holding a pair of scales was represented bargaining with a huntsman holding a hare. Behind the Jewish gentleman was shown a fox stealing away surreptitiously. Underneath was the inscription—

*Treu, keinem Fuchs
auf gruener Heid'
und keinem Jud'
bei seinem Eid'**

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Prague, the capital city of Czechoslovakia, is charmingly situated on the river which has been immortalized by Smetana's melodious tone poem *Vlatava*. I prefer this to the German name Moldau, which, indeed, we all ought to try to forget. At Prague it is spanned by the Charles IV bridge, one of the oldest and most historic in Europe. The dissolute King Wenceslas IV, 1378-1419, son of Charles IV, demanded that his queen's confessor should communicate to him all the confidential statements that she had made to him. The priest naturally refused, and the king

* Truly, no fox
on a green meadow
and no Jew
Keeps his oath (free translation)

ordered him to be cast into the river from this bridge. He was canonized, and became the patron saint of Bohemia, and therefore of Czechoslovakia, as St. John of Nepomuk. One of the bloodiest battles of the Thirty Years War was fought on this bridge.

We were shown the window in the ancient palace of the Bohemian kings from which the Roman Catholic delegates were hurled in 1618, the historic act of *defenestration* which precipitated the Thirty Years War, 1618-1648. In 1619 the Bohemian crown was offered by the Protestant party to Frederick the son-in-law of James I of Great Britain. His acceptance was challenged by the Austrian Emperor, who ordered an invasion of the country, and Frederick was disastrously defeated at the battle of the White Mountain in 1620. He fled, leaving his partisans to their fate. Then there followed an orgy of slaughter. The emperor demanded the surrender of twenty-seven of the leading Protestants of the country. They were publicly beheaded in front of the Town Hall of Prague, and their heads were suspended from the ornamental tower at one end of the Charles IV bridge. When Czechoslovakia obtained its freedom after the First World War, a large bronze tablet was affixed to the wall of the Town Hall, commemorating this foul deed. I wonder if the Germans have permitted this tablet to remain *in situ*? The date 1621 (placed there of course since 1918), on the pavement in front of this, indicates the actual spot where the executions took place.

In the centre of the Town Hall Square a very elaborate monument has been erected to John Huss, the great Bohemian patriot and reformer. There he stands, lonely and dignified, while at his feet prostrate figures lie in diverse attitudes, symbolizing the brutal oppression of his country throughout the centuries. This memorial, also, could have been erected only since 1918. Is it still there? It is of interest to record the fact that the Czechs named the Central Station in Prague in honour of President Woodrow Wilson. Does this name still hold good? I doubt it.

I found the Czechs an interesting anthropological study. Three definite racial types could be identified. I noticed that the men with fair hair exhibited in the majority of cases a flattening of the posterior or occipital region of the skull, thus conforming to the broadheaded or brachycephalic racial group. This suggested an affinity with the blond type of German. For reference this will be called racial group No. 1. In contrast to these, the dark

haired and brown eyed Czechs, with well rounded occipital regions of their skulls, proclaimed their inclusion in the dolichocephalic or longheaded group and their affinity with Sergi's so-called Mediterranean Race (racial group No. 2). An intermediate type could also be identified, neither longheaded nor broadheaded, and therefore conforming to the mesaticephalic or middleheaded group. This type possessed varying shades of brown hair, accompanied by appropriate eye colouring. They represented the result of a blending of the two previous types, thus forming racial group No. 3. Is it little wonder, then, that Czechoslovakia was able to produce eminent anthropologists like Hrdlicka and Suk? They certainly had plenty of valuable material to work upon.

We were in Buda-Pest during the annual celebrations in honour of St. Stephen. He was the first Christian king of Hungary, was canonized, and became its Patron Saint. We saw his mummified hand, reposing in a lavishly decorated gold and crystal reliquary, being borne on the shoulders of four priests in solemn procession through the streets of Buda to the Coronation Church. Behind it walked the Prince-Primate of Hungary in his Cardinal's robes, his long train carried by acolytes. We also saw Horthy, Hitler's puppet, marching with the other members of the government. The most colourful part of the long procession was that provided by the peasantry, each district being represented by its own distinctive costumes, male and female.

We were given an official reception by the Hungarian government, and were welcomed on its behalf by an Ex-Minister of Justice. He made a striking speech in perfect English, and we were so much impressed by his remarks that I made a careful note of parts of it for future reference. He told us that he had carried out part of his legal training in London, and had developed the highest regard for British institutions and British ideals of justice and fair play. He frankly apologized for the fact that his country had taken up arms against us in the First World War, and explained that Hungary was "bound hand and foot to Austria" and "had backed the wrong horse on that occasion". He pointed out that Austria had helped Hungary to drive the Turks out of the country, and then proceeded to assume control of national affairs. Austrians had really come, not as liberators, but as usurpers, as the Kossuth rebellion of 1848 clearly showed. "In fact", he said, "we found we were out of the frying pan into the fire! Please remember, that I have not kissed the Blarney Stone, when I say this. I leave that to De Valera!" According

to newspaper reports, the Hungarians are beginning to recognize, at the time of writing this article, that they have backed the wrong horse in this war also. My wife offered him her personal thanks afterwards for his truly remarkable speech. He thanked her cordially, then bowed, and kissed her hand twice, showing that the age of chivalry was not yet dead! She evidently made a favourable impression, for she had the distinction of being the only lady he danced with.

Liberty Square in Buda-Pest is a unique example of national propaganda. One of its most prominent features is the statue presented by the late Lord Rothermere, an ardent friend of Hungary in its agitation for a revision of the Treaty of Trianon. This represents Hungaria mourning her lost territory. In the centre of the square is a marble platform supporting a flagstaff from which the national flag hangs at half mast. This platform contains handfuls of earth from each of the four lost areas—North, South, East and West. I found that the policeman on duty could speak German. I therefore asked him if he would allow me to mount the platform in order to photograph the remarkable propaganda flower bed in the form of maps showing Hungary before and after the war 1914-1918. It is in the centre of the square. To this he readily assented. He was wearing war ribbons, so I enquired in which fighting area he had seen service. When he mentioned that he was stationed on the Italian front, I asked if he had come into conflict with any of the British divisions which had to be sent to the rescue of the Italian army. He replied "*Ja wohl, und die Englaender waren immer die gentlemen!*" These were his exact words. By inference, one could gather that he had not been very favourably impressed by Italian chivalry.

The statuary group on the North Side of Liberty Square shows a fainting lady representing Hungaria, supported by an ancient Magyar warrior. A Slovak boy is clinging to her skirts. This is a sheer case of muddled thinking. The Slovaks have never exhibited any desire to cling to Hungary. Their language and national sentiments are more akin to those of the Czechs, and this, no doubt, influenced the inclusion of Slovakia in Czechoslovakia. The group on the South side represents the territory that was ceded to Jugo-Slavia. It shows two Hungarian peasants guarding their crops. In the group on the East side a Magyar warrior is seen supporting an exhausted youth who is still grasping the shield of Transylvania. The cession of

this province to Roumania was the severest blow of all. It should be handed back to Hungary.

The West statue symbolizes the small slice of territory granted to Austria. A Magyar warrior is shown guarding a fallen youth, still clinging to the Hungarian crown.

When the Hungarians gained their independence after the First World War, they erected a monument to their great patriot Kossuth. It is situated in the square in front of the Parliament Buildings. Kossuth, a heroic figure, is shown supported by his most prominent followers. Incidentally, my wife and I during a visit to Cleveland, Ohio, were very interested to find a statue to Kossuth in the public gardens there.

One of Kossuth's most enthusiastic supporters in the rising of 1848-1849 was Count Batthyany, the first premier of Hungary. He had the misfortune to be captured after the collapse of the insurrection, and was shot by the Austrians. The Hungarians have erected in his honour (also since 1918) an ever burning lamp at an important street junction. There is also a fine statue to Count Szechenyi, another of Kossuth's sympathisers. He went hopelessly insane after the rebellion.

As we walked through the streets of Buda-Pest one day, we noticed here and there small scraps of paper lying on the side walk. At first we regarded them as the products of some careless passers-by in an otherwise tidily kept city. On closer inspection they were all found to have a definite shape, and were very neatly cut from news print. They were in the form of a cross, each limb measuring an inch, and ending in an arrow point. On investigation, it was ascertained that they were the symbols of the Arrow Cross, Hungary's largest Nazi party, at that time an underground organization. We noticed particularly that they were most abundant in the public gardens surrounding the monument to the ill fated Empress Elizabeth, the underlying idea no doubt being to make a special appeal to the monarchist groups. The Arrow Cross is now busily engaged leading Hungary to perdition.

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We found Vienna a sad city. It was most depressing to have to pass women on their knees on the side walks, engaged in fervent prayer. Poverty and privation were stamped on their faces. One evening we emerged from our hotel on the Ringstrasse, Vienna's great boulevard, in order to study the expressions on the faces of the passers-by. We sat down beside a gentleman, and were soon engaged in conversation. He told us he

had been an Austrian officer during the last war, and gave us many harrowing details about post-war conditions in the country. As we had arranged to attend an evening concert in the Stadt Park, we invited him to accompany us. After he had been supplied with a mug of beer and a cigar, he became quite communicative. We were amazed when he informed us that the pension of a Captain was only sixteen schillings per month. At that time exchange value of the Austrian schilling was only twenty cents! We decided to walk back to the Hotel Bristol, and found the Ringstrasse deserted, although the hour was not late. The night life of "gay Vienna", the city of the great Johann Strauss, had apparently become merely a memory.

As our footsteps echoed through the empty rooms of Schoenbrunn, we gained an ever growing impression of faded imperial grandeur. The room in which the aged Emperor Francis Joseph died in 1916 has, however, been preserved in its original state, with its small iron bedstead, and the plain wash stand, with basin and ewer. He evidently believed in the simple life. His bath had to be brought in from another room. Although the palace is said to contain nearly 1400 rooms, it does not possess a single bathroom, strange to relate. At the time of our visit an art exhibition was being held in the palace illustrating the history of the emperor's reign. I noticed a portrait of a striking looking woman, which our guide was going to pass without comment. I therefore asked him who the lady was. He hesitated for a moment, and then said rather casually—"Oh, that was the emperor's fiancée"! I chuckled inwardly, for I had been told by chance a new, and indeed rather romantic name for a mistress. The later years of the emperor's life must have been saddened by the tragic death of his only son, and the senseless murder of the beautiful Empress Elizabeth. We got a faint glimpse of the hunting box at Mayerling in the Wiener Wald, where the suicide pact between the Crown Prince Rudolf and the Countess Vetsera was carried out in 1889. The building has been enclosed by a thick belt of trees, as if to shut off the shame, and try to obliterate the memory of this tragedy.

One of the most remarkable experiences in Vienna was a visit to the tombs of the Hapsburgs in the crypt of the Capuchin Church. We were shown round by a monk with all due reverence. He told us that there were 142 bronze coffins in all, ranging in size from small ones for children to great masses of bronze, weighing tons. The tomb of the Empress Maria Theresa has a chamber all to itself. She used to pay regular visits of inspection

during its preparation. The bronze effigies of her husband and herself are shown seated on the top of their tomb. Our guides told us that they were lying within 35 tons of bronze. Some of these coffins are veritable works of art. For example, that containing the remains of the father of the Empress Maria Theresa exhibits in the most remarkable detail a battle in which he participated.

Our guide knelt for a few moments in silent prayer at the tomb of the Emperor Francis Joseph. There he lies in peace at last, with the Empress Elizabeth on one side, and the Crown Prince Rudolph on the other.

The tomb of the father-in-law of Napoleon, and the latter's wife and son made a special appeal. The bronze coffin of the Emperor Francis is dignified, and not too ornate, and has his name clearly shown on its left side. His daughter, the Empress Marie Louise, lies to his right and Napoleon's son on his left. The coffin of the latter is rather plain and austere. It had chaplets of flowers resting on it, placed there no doubt by French visitors. There is a rumour that, as a sop to the Vichy French, this coffin has been removed to the chapel of the Invalides in Paris, so as to be near that of Napoleon.

We left Vienna with a certain feeling of anxiety regarding the future political outlook in Europe. In all the countries we visited we could recognize with no small degree of trepidation the growth of rampant nationalism. This in its turn, we felt was bound to lead to an inevitable struggle between the "have" and the "have-not" nations. The bullet splintered facade of the Houses of Parliament in Vienna was convincing testimony to the fact that post-war settlement by contending political parties had not been easy since the end of hostilities in 1918. Let us sincerely hope that our politicians and treaty drafters will make sure of a genuine lasting peace this time!