

CHAPTER 20
POLITICAL UNREST IN EUROPE.

But politically there was much unrest. On October 3rd, 1933, an attempt was made to assassinate chancellor Dollfuss. There followed in February 1934 a decree, dissolving all political parties except Dollfuss's Fatherland Front. Raids by government forces on socialist headquarters led to an uprising, quelled by military forces and by a bombardment with artillery of the Karl Marx Hof, an elaborate socialist housing complex, where the leaders had concentrated. These leaders were either captured or forced to flee. By this drastic action Dollfuss

and the Christian Socialists permanently antagonized the working classes of Vienna, and deprived themselves of what might have been the most effective support against the Nazi threat. Dollfuss announced a new constitution for Austria and set up a dictatorship on April 30th, 1934. This was shortly before we went again on our summer vacation in Unterach, when everything was relatively quiet in Austria. I had again invited my mother to come and be with us in Unterach.

But on July 25th, a band of Nazis seized the radio station in Vienna and forced the staff to broadcast Dollfuss's resignation. They then entered the chancellery in a surprise attack and shot and killed Dollfuss. The whole affair was badly mismanaged and the conspirators were caught. Action by Germany on behalf of the Nazis was made impossible by the strong stand of Italy and Yugoslavia, which concentrated large forces on the frontier. The Nazi coup had failed. Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg, close collaborator of Dollfuss, formed a new cabinet, committed to the same policies. After that, relations between Austria and Germany remained tense, especially on account of the hanging of some of the Nazis, who had killed Dollfuss.

All this happened, while we were on vacation and we did not feel the political tension there, only read about it in the newspapers. Our vacation was nevertheless most pleasant and peaceful, and we made many excursions by boat as well as by bus. Once we made an ascent of the Dachstein, one of the giants of that area, 9829 feet high. But the trip was not very well planned and we reached only the Upper Gosau Lake, and were satisfied to see the snow-covered top before us. On the way we passed through Ischl, the former summer residence

of emperor Franz Josef I.

Once I had an unpleasant experience, but it ended well. I had visited somebody in St. Wolfgang. I don't remember anymore, who it was, and Hedy was not with me. It was late in the evening, when I left and was supposed to take ^{a bus,} which went from St. Gilgen, which was at the western end of the Wolfgang Lake. I had to walk up a steep road to the main road and catch there the bus. But while I was on the way, running as fast as I could, I heard the tooting of the bus, and I knew that I had missed the bus, the last bus, and that I would have to walk home. My only hope was that a passing car would take me along. But I had no luck, many cars passed and none of them stopped. It was a dark night and I had to walk through the woods, which separated the Wolfgang Lake from the Mond Lake, then along the Mond Lake to a road, which connected the Mond Lake with the Attersee. It took about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours till I reached home at about midnight. Hedy was worrying and at the window.

Lisa had once an interesting and very funny experience. She often went out on fishing trips with a young man, Mr. Geiringer, who always went for pikes, of which there were many in the lake, equipped with a fine fishing rod with a spinning wheel. He was quite an expert in spinning, which meant throwing the metal fish as bait far out from the boat and turning the wheel fast, bringing the bait and sometimes the fish to the boat. He lived in a house, which was close to the house of the famous opera singer Maria Jeritza, and her garden had a stone wall, which was at the edge of the water. There was a kind of a feud between Mr. Geiringer and Mrs. Jeritza. But just there, where the wall was, he liked to fish. But once he

missed the water and the metal bait with the many hooks got caught in the ivy branches, which grew on the wall. He could not get it loose and had to come very close to the wall. But that was not enough, he had to climb up from the boat onto the wall, using some protruding stones as a hold for his hands and feet, in order to reach the metal fish. But it happened that the boat moved a little away from the wall, while he was clinging to the wall. He shouted to Lisa to take the oars and bring the boat back to the wall, which she finally managed, ending the ordeal in which he was. It was the most comical situation, making us laugh and bringing tears into our eyes, whenever we spoke about it.

I should not fail to mention again Franzerl, who brought joy and happiness to all of us. He showed already as a very little boy great intelligence, amazing everybody, was always very friendly, and as far as I remember, never naughty, all smiles and kindness. In general, it was again a most pleasant vacation and, at about the middle of September 1934, we all went home.

There was much tension in the world, caused by the Nazis. On August 2nd, 1934, president Hindenburg died and Hitler assumed the presidency, approved by a plebiscite, two weeks later, with 88% affirmative votes, which gave him also the sole executive power. Legislation against the Jews in Germany was greatly increased, step by step. Many of them arrived as refugees in Austria, and we heard horror stories. Concentration camps were overfilled in Germany, not only with Jews, but also with people, who were known to have belonged to the Socialist Party, also with many clergymen. There was a "blood purge" in Germany, in

which 77 persons, among them general Schleicher and leading Nazis like Ernst Roehm, Gregor Strasser and Erich Klausener, a prominent Catholic leader, summarily were executed, because of an alleged plot against Hitler. After the Nazi putsch in Vienna, many Austrians, who had sympathized with the Nazis, left for Germany and formed there an "Austrian Legion".

One had the feeling in Austria that a great part of the population, and especially the police, sympathized with the Nazis. There came in January 1935 a plebiscite in the Saar Basin, and 90% of the people there voted for the reunion of that territory with Germany. On March 16th, Hitler denounced the clauses of the Versailles Treaty, providing for German disarmament. There was a strong protest by France, England, and Italy, but no further action was taken. There was for us reason to worry, but life went on as before. The Austrians felt secure, since Mussolini had once already taken a strong stand against Germany.

For the summer vacation in 1935 we had this time a different plan, a trip to Italy to a place, which a friend of a cousin of Hedy knew and recommended highly. It was on the Adriatic Sea, south of Rimini, in a private house, where we got meals also. The name of the village was Gabbice al Mare, and that lady with her child stayed also there. To get to the shore, we had to walk downhill quite a distance, back to the house to climb uphill. But it was a nice sand beach and quiet. Next to it to the north was a very noisy village, Cattolica, and we walked sometimes over there along the water to the crowded beach. On the way from Vienna, we stayed for two days in Venice, which Franzerl enjoyed very much, especially the San

Marcus Place with the many pigeons. We stayed in the Hotel Marconi near the Rialto bridge, where we had stayed, 7 years before, on our honeymoon. When we had dinner there the same evening, they put fine crystal glasses with high stems on the table, and Francis took one, when it was filled with water, and when he put it down, he did it with too much force and the stem broke. He was very unhappy about it, but the waiter replaced it with another one, and Francis was happy that he did not say anything. From Venice we took the train to Ferrara, and passed then through Ravenna and Rimini to our destination, Gabbicce al Mare.

We enjoyed the beach enormously and Francis was happy too. Very often in the morning, when the sand was smooth and wet, near the water, he drew figures in the sand with a stick, often long and complicated stories, which he explained. But the new waves soon took care of his drawings. I had taken in Vienna a train ticket for myself for Rome, wanted to see that city, since I was not far from it, and one day I left. I had only 2 days to stay there, but with a Baedeker book in my hand, I covered an enormous program and saw about everything I had intended to see. From Gabbicce we made some special trips to Ravenna and Rimini, unfortunately not to San Marino, a little autonomous state, which was so close by. Altogether, I stayed only 3 weeks in Italy, left Hedy and Francis behind to stay for another 4 or 5 weeks. Unfortunately, Hedy got sick, got a facial palsy, a condition, which she had already had before 3 times. She had even to stay in bed for a few days, and Francis took very well care of her, brought the meals to her bed etc. She wanted to come home, when she got sick, but I urged

her to stay on and she followed my advice. When she came home, I took her to the clinic Wagner-Jauregg for treatments. It took a while, but she was cured, was treated with iontophoresis. It usually disappears, as we now know, with and without any treatment.

My photoalbum shows me that there was an enormous family gathering in Tyrnau in Tchechoslovakia for the celebration of the 80th birthday of Sali Goldschmied, a sister of Hedy's father. The picture, taken by me, shows 32 people including the aunt Sali in the center on and around a staircase, and myself. (16 of those in the picture were later killed by the Nazis). The album contains also a picture of Francis as an ice-skater.

In that same year 1935, on October 3rd, not long after we had returned from our vacation, Italian troops started the invasion of Ethiopia, which was relatively easy to do, since Italy had two colonies adjacent to Ethiopia, Erythrea in the North of Ethiopia, and Somalia in the East and South of Ethiopia. They started to march one day over the border and soon were deep inside of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian army was very poorly equipped and was unable to resist and had to retreat. The attack on Ethiopia caused, of course, great excitement in the whole world. The League of Nations immediately went into session, and Italy was asked to stop the invasion. Session followed session and an armistice was proposed. The emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, went to Geneva and tried to save his country, but Ethiopia was soon completely occupied and Mussolini proclaimed the incorporation of Ethiopia into the 'Imperium Romanum'. Italy was condemned by the League of Nations

and sanctioned with a complete trade embargo. All nations were supposed to cut off all connections with Italy and to stop shipments of any goods to that country. The idea was to bring Italy on her knees and force her to get out of Ethiopia. This seemed to work in the beginning. But the embargo was not tight, and Italy was not completely isolated from the rest of the world, and was soon out of difficulties. When the embargo was proclaimed by the League of Nations, Mussolini had said that that would lead to a change of the map of Europe.

Soon other great changes occurred on the world scene. On March 7th, 1936, the German government denounced the Locarno pacts and re-occupied the Rhineland. Acute danger of war with France blew over, since all the powers were deeply involved in the crisis of the Ethiopian war, and not even France was prepared to force the issue at that time. Soon afterwards, on July 18th, 1936, the great Spanish Civil War broke out, started by general Francisco Franco and supported by the army and the air force. Italian and German "volunteers" joined the insurgents, while Russia supplied the government with equipment and advisers. It was a terrible, bloody war, which lasted 3 years and ended on March 28th, 1939 with the victory of Franco.

Now back to the year 1936 and the continuation of the happenings in our family. There came the time when we thought that it would be nice for Francis to have a little brother or sister as a playmate. Hedy became pregnant at about the end of 1935, and our calculations told us that she will have her child at the beginning of September 1936. She felt quite uncomfortable, and we knew that she will this time not go on a

summer vacation, and will have to stay in Vienna. But we planned a vacation for Francis and Hedy's parents, who went to Ischl for about 6 weeks. And we invited my mother to come to Vienna at about the time, when Hedy will give birth, to help us with the baby, which later proved to be a good idea.

There is a story about Francis, which I want to insert here, a funny story which makes me laugh, each time I think of it. As a little boy of 3 or 4 years, he was often taken on a walk to the Prater, a park not far from where we lived, most of the time by Mitzi, our maid. He liked to go there on a merry-go-round and other rides like the Ferris-wheel. Once uncle Marcus, who had come to Vienna on a visit from the United States happened to be at our home and went with Mitzi and Francis for a walk to the Prater.

At the entrance to the park, on the Praterstern, there were many fruit-stands, which they had to pass and Francis slipped under one of them, which was heavily laden with fruits. There was a stick there to support the main board and he grabbed that stick to get it out. He succeeded and the result was that the board went down and all the fruits went down into the street, hundreds of them, rolling down in all directions. Uncle Marcus and Mitzi were horrified and ran away, Francis with them. The poor vendor must have had a difficult job to gather the fruits and put them back on the board. That is how uncle Marcus related the story, which had caused him much excitement.

Francis was in general rarely naughty and it was not naughtiness which caused that accident, but rather curiosity, when he pulled that stick away from under the table. He thought that it was not in order that that stick stood up vertically. Miracu-

lously, he was not hurt and he could crawl out from under that table completely intact, but probably terrified.