

4134 to 42134

Cunard R.M.S. "Aquitania"

To our friends:

Lilly Pickett and I are just returning from our five weeks in Europe and are writing this letter as a rather confidential note especially to those who will want some comments on political and social movements. We can only pretend to give impressions. And what we say here is not for publication. Europe is so sensitive especially in spots that statements which are published should be given most careful thought. One may easily do more harm than good.

In Paris we met only a few persons outside our own circle of Friends and near Friends. Mr. Emerick, an American who has practised law for thirty years in France, however, we found to be well informed. Then we met Joseph Rosen, an American Jew, who has colonized 100,000 Jewish families in Russia and is now in charge of a large farm in France where he is training fifty Jewish boys from Germany to farm with the plan to send them on to Palestine next year. France is ultra conservative politically now. This manifests itself in various ways:

1. They are afraid to take any positive move re peace and international commitments because they are a very weak government, likely to fall at any time.

2. France is almost paralyzed with fear; Hitler Germany is the chief cause. They have at times during the past six months quite definitely talked of a "preventive war" with Germany.

3. Pacifism has grown rapidly on the one hand and Communism on the other. Also France is now for the first time feeling rather seriously the unemployment problem. And to meet this she has no adequate social machinery.

4. She has grasped for assurances of security, but has only found them thru former enemies whom she still distrusts--Italy and Russia. England, also inactive and conservative thru her present government, remains aloof.

5. The currency matter is hard. She is on gold. Prices are very high anyway, but with American and British currency suffering 40% discount trade is tremendously curtailed. Paris Hotels are empty. Tourist trade is very low. And yet France once having suffered inflation is unwilling to inflate again.

6. French rationalism is inadequate to the present rapidly changing and irrational world. A new life of the spirit, very slowly emerging, is needed but is largely absent.

Whatever France does, she will for some time, I am afraid, be motivated by fear and people who are afraid often act unwisely. As the number of C.O.'s increases, the sentiment to lengthen the period of military drill from 11 months to two years grows.

As to Switzerland, only one or two comments. It shows very clearly the result of over 100 years guaranteed neutrality. It has a high standard of living--the highest in Europe. It is extremely independent--the cantons guard their sovereignty with a most jealous eye. The referendum and recall is exercised on almost every issue--elections occurring on at least half of the Sundays of the year. Now, French and German capital, afraid of security at home, has flooded Switzerland and all kinds of efforts are made to invest. To illustrate Lausanne and Geneva both have numerous new apartment houses being erected. Lausanne particularly is much overbuilt but still proceeds. The capital is largely French. And an association of real estate investors has established a plan for guaranteeing rent at modest rate even tho apartments are empty. Does this not look like a ride for a fall? I fear so.

As to Geneva, will the beautiful new League building be completed in time to entertain the funeral of the League? Or will it be the birthplace of a new and more realistic League? These questions Geneva freely asks. Geneva seems strangely aloof--far from the world of search for life, only living in the research-academic air. It has been drowned by words, parades, pageanty. Much sound work is being done by the Labor office and other special bureaus, but all seems very unreal - it is like visiting a feudal castle which is a dramatic reminder of a world that was once real. My own conviction is that the idea behind the League is inevitable but where and how its rebirth no one knows.

Austria makes one weep and laugh. Ever since the war is has suffered from economic paralysis. It could produce but could not sell. So it has taken refuge in two directions. First, it has sought for freedom of mind in academic pursuits. Against terrific odds, science, philosophy and the fine arts have flourished. No longer having Court patrons, still young men and women have delved into science, into painting and music and into psychology and philosophy. Where would one go for more penetrating and questioning youth. Poor as they are, we found the opera house filled to hear Carmen; and the opera is on every night for 10½ months of the year! For them music is life! The second outlet has been political. Under the Socialist Government in Vienna for fifteen years some of the best housing work anywhere in Europe has been done. In 1921 Friends loaned a considerable sum to a Cooperative building association for new housing. This was used in developing small holdings of ¼ acre with a house. Then the government took it up and built thousands of houses, - gradually decreasing the size of the plot in order to get more housing on the available land. Then they finally abandoned land entirely and built the famous apartment houses which were attacked in the battles in February 1934.

This change was partly to save land, but partly political. To build this new housing they had taxed very heavily the home owners. This had stirred up very bitter antagonism against the Socialist regime. They realized that security lay only in party solidarity and in training up a loyal party organization. And

this could best be done by having members close together and holding frequent meetings. The distraction of distance, and much time given to cultivation of soil was not good for party spirit. The accusation now is that the apartment houses were built as barracks or forts. This is twaddle. They were built by architects who were largely conservatives in politics, and have no characteristics of forts. But they do reflect the tendency to propagandize and flirt with force. And when the war came what actually happened was that the people living in the apartments did use them for protection, - hid. While the people who lived on small land holdings were not so well entrenched in Socialist doctrine but loved their homes and gardens and ran out to defend and fight for them. May I say in passing that Vienna is clear proof of the danger of using political force to win ends, even tho they are never so good ends. Four years ago I saw people showing their teeth because they disapproved of the Socialists drive to tax property so hard for building purposes that it was being lost, and now the retribution. But the return of the Nationalists to power under Dollfuss brings no hope. Politics is now used not for internal reconstruction but for outward security. Driven by German Nazis on one side and Italian Fascists on the other, Austria was hopeless and so she had, so she felt, to get an alliance somewhere. Dollfuss is a kind of religious fanatic, tho his religion is distinctly middle ages variety. And now the Pope really rules Austria, with Mussolini as a strong ally. And the war of February 1934 was a war against agnosticism, atheism, anti-Christ! At least so it was rationalized. There is now much talk about the revival in the church. While we were there, it was announced that 30,000 had joined the church in two months. (They neglected to say that as many had left Catholicism, many of whom had joined the Protestant churches. I should say instead of a religious revival, Austria is rapidly being brutalized - paganized. Friends, with Trade Union money, are feeding 8000 families, a large proportion of whom are victims of government atrocities--somewhere men were killed in the fighting, some hung, some imprisoned, other where men are exiled or driven out of work.

And the end is not yet, war and outside alliance have not brought prosperity and underneath all of this picture is the continued drive downward of the Austrian standard of living. One child per family is now the average. And while one doesn't regret so much the modest sized family, one does feel sure that the cause of the decrease is unsound - it is a bad world for children! No one can predict the future. But the Nazis grow in strength and are obviously hopeful of finally attaining power.

Two cheering words. One, Austrians have a fine sense of humor. They poke fun at their troubles, they are more than brave, they are often heroic. And there are many, many Austrians who are ready to live - even to die for the real soul of Austria. A school teacher came in 50 miles to bring me three articles which she hoped I could get published revealing the soul and heart of the great spiritual Austria. As one travels from end to end of this long, slim, country, church spires and shrines are its most prominent architecture. One place we saw the farmers preparing land for cultivation and the last act was in process as we passed - a procession across the field, headed by a man bearing a cross, this

to assure good crops. New images are being put up everywhere in the country and old ones repainted. But in talks with people, and in the Friends' Center, one saw also the deeper signs of rebirth of the life of love and service. To administer relief required help. And almost 200 youth volunteered in Vienna alone. The light is dawning that something beyond bread and housing is essential.

We saw several government officials in connection with the government policy of development of small land holding. Words and more words, but no wisdom one found. But in the non-political director down in the midst of the development of a new community of 416 new homes and land holdings, one found the love and intelligence of a Woolman or Penn. Altho Austria is small, Vienna is now the focal center of the great storm in Europe. Moscow, Rome, Paris, Berlin and the Balkans all focus in Vienna, and it is therefore sure to be the center of much political conflict for a long time. Fortunately we now have in Vienna a most able and helpful Consul General, Mr. Harris. He knows Friends well and has been exceedingly cooperative in Emma Cadbury's administration of relief. And I have hope that the new American Minister, Mr. Messersmith, may be also helpful. I had a good session with him in Berlin.

Czechoslovakia is a relief after Austria or Germany. The president, Thomas Masaryk, for 15 years now has kept his eye not on security, or military development, but on the needs of his people for land and homes, and freedom to live unfettered lives. Democracy is a strong tradition and freedom of thought, press, assembly and worship is sacred. There is some trend toward jitters now because of the Nazi bannings of Germans living in Czechoslovakia and because of refugees from Germany. But still the attention is wholesomely centered on giving meaning and hope to life and not on "a place in the sun". The president, now 84 years old, has just been re-elected for 7 years. One wonders if when he drops out the same direction can be maintained. After all, we were only part of a day in Prague, so we should not pretend to much knowledge. But Jaro Kose, our good friend there who is economic adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture, is well informed, and tho perhaps a little optimistic in spirit, gives one much information in a small compass.

Perhaps least of all does one feel dogmatic on Germany. Superficially one may call it the rule of the roughnecks. But there are certain great human motives at work - blindly to be sure - which we must recognize.

1. Germany has an inferiority complex, and is trying to recover. The allies gave her this complex and must put up with the result.
2. There is a largely unconscious recognition that any recovery of spirit and life in Germany must be in her own soul and by her own efforts and not by external political agreements.
3. She awkwardly is saying that our world is so involved and intricate that we must resign many of our government functions to direction by specially trained people and not depend on the democratic process. Their immediate result is a travesty on a deep seated truth but they sense the real discovery even so.

4. The youth which represents the chief backing of the Nazi Movement have not been in the war, neither have they had work. They resent a social order which offers no possibility for fullness of life but they think in military and power and domination patterns as a way of achieving opportunity.

* Old Germany - and to a lesser degree all countries - segregated learning and scholarship as well as politics from real life. Young Germany resents this. The governments since the war made, so they feel, no progress towards the release of life for achievement in terms of jobs, better housing, modern transportation, etc. Hence the break with the old. Strangely enough, however, the new movement is donning many of the outmoded patterns of pre-war days. Heel clicking, military training, uniforms, marching, badges - all of the trappings of force, regimentation and domination are in evidence.

But while there is idealism, there is gross ignorance and weakness. They are dealing with problems so involved and difficult that the wisest and most adventurous persons are needed, but in political life party loyalty comes first. The higher one goes in consulting persons in rank, the less one feels that there is ability and skill in dealing with inner problems. Unemployment has decreased, but by evicting Jews, throwing women out of jobs, trying to force people to employ more servants, etc. Doubtless some real improvement in employment has come, but not much.

Export trade has dropped ominously and now only 10% of the import quota is allowed because the gold reserve is practically exhausted. Land settlement schemes are held up, the agricultural policy of debt cancellation has not brought markets for farm products, municipalities have issued tax warrants for as much as 10 years in advance. The state of public finance is almost impossible. Either Germany must make borrowings outside (which may compel interference with internal policy) or she must tighten her belt and try to become self contained economically. Her political leaders know these facts, but divert attention from them internally by Jew persecution and violence to all complainers or non-cooperators. We feel that the situation is so difficult that concentration camps, and exile and persecution are likely to continue for a long time. It is conceivable that a government change might be forced by failure of the present government to meet expectations it has itself created. Many people become tired of parades, uniforms, etc., and if the cry for bread becomes loud enough they might go. But if they did, some similar dictatorship (probably not Communist) would rise. The Kaiser's folly, the Versailles treaty, and post war allies treatment all are bringing their tragic harvest.

Larger families is the cry. But why have larger families in such a hectic world say young fathers and mothers. Get out into the open, cultivate health, say the leaders. But how can we have health when our public health service has been practically confiscated by the drive on liberals say (inwardly and in a whisper) the objectors. We must have speedy and accurate justice, but the old school lawyer says where is justice when law is totally disregarded in favor of political expediency.

As to the Jew, he is again to suffer long and hard for his race and religion. I talked with one of the finest religious leaders I have ever met - a Rabbi, who said "I have to hold two, three or four services each Saturday to accommodate in my large synagogue the crowds who want to come. And always my message is the same - let no drop of bitterness enter your hearts no matter what comes." He called attention to a celebration recently in Worms, in the synagogue there, of its 900th year of consecutive service. Jews were in Germany before Christ's time. They love Germany. Most Jews will remain in Germany, will be driven in on themselves, but will suffer through. They have in the last year established 400 small private schools and maintain them by voluntary contributions amounting to about 10% of the income of German Jews. They are retraining lawyers and other professional people who have no use for their skills to be locksmiths and other hand workers.

Then there is the little band of Friends and friends of Friends. They too have grown in spirit and in numbers, and reveal a spirit of love and service which is invincible. But the tragedy goes deep. Let me reflect it thru a visit to a family. The father, a distinguished lawyer, mother a German-American of wealth, four boys. The father defended two Jews against what was obviously a travesty against justice and decency. For this he lost his right to practise. He is bewildered - his old friends shun him as tho he were a leper. Meanwhile, all four sons are Nazi. They parade, greet each other when they arrive at home by "Heil Hitler!", spurn English (which they formerly prided themselves on being able to speak) because German is superior, and youthfully hope for and believe in and work for the new Germany. The tragedy will kill the father and mother. What will it do to the boys?

X Is Germany a menace to world peace? I think so. Not primarily because she plans a war. But because she is implanting on a wide scale the conviction that force is the only way for Germany to get her former recognition. And in that she is but following other nations. Or perhaps she is reviving her past. Austria's sense of humor saves her somewhat - Germans are serious. Of course, life moves gaily on in cafes, and on the surface. But many people told us that there had never been in their lives so many anxious and troubled people in Germany. Above all Germany needs, and to some extent is finding, a spiritual basis of life which lifts above the nervousness and uncertainty of the now.

X In Holland we spent one day visiting the new school which Friends have established largely for refugee teachers and children. A Dutch baron has given his castle for the school grounds and house. The teachers number six and children twelve, but the numbers slowly increase. The students and teachers are both of the finest quality and there is almost none of the refugee psychology. It represents a departure in European education. Hand and head are being trained together. Children and teachers do all the work, including gardening, taking care of cows, chickens, rabbits, cooking, sewing, pottery making, etc. In fact Europe and all of us are in for again integrating life - hand and head. And the Nazi drive has brought it home. One needed only to pry just beneath the surface with either teachers

or pupils in this new school to discover a world of suffering and tragedy, but what one saw seemed to be a new world coming into being - a world of freedom, of discovery, of creativeness, and of love and joy in living. One wants to say thank God for Holland, land of quiet and at least toleration!

It is no easier to write of England than of the Continental countries. On the side of Social development one feels that the work of the past has been well enough done so that it has really hindered present day experiments. To illustrate, the dole for unemployment has been a godsend. It has maintained the dignity of home life, preserved health, and prevented political violence. I am for it. Comparing the coal fields of So. Wales with our own, the condition of people and families is infinitely better. Housing is better, education is better, the whole structure of society is more stable. But after all it is unemployment dole. And there has been until recently almost no experimenting with alternatives to unemployment. Any concession that unemployment is a normal or natural state for any able bodied persons is vicious. Ideas of transplanting populations, of developing new industries, of production for use units, etc., while now being born, have been very slow in coming. And even now the government is very stolid about any ventures. Voluntary agencies are beginning to work at these problems. Friends' Allotment work which provides about 1/16 acre for unemployed families to cultivate has over 100,000 such schemes working. They have also experiments with unemployed men's clubs for mutual aid, unemployed pig clubs for growing pigs - and some experiments with starting new hand industries. But where we expect England to lead, it goes slowly. The government seems very cautious and afraid. Some English people felt the Government had done pretty well in internal policy. I found not one defense of its international policy. It has balanced the budget, but had done so by reduced dole, non-payment of foreign debts, and few public works.

My own feeling after seeing people in government circles was that it was very casual and dull in its human interest and ventures, and that it must be due for a revamping soon. It is suffering from the stupidity which often follows a war. One generation of youth is gone, and the new generation is not yet quite in the saddle.

Dartington Hall in Devon, owned by Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst, is the most interesting social experiment I saw. They have taken a 12th century baronial estate of 1000 acres and are making it over-- buildings, people and all into what they hope will be a joyous and free society. They are experimenting with hand and power production of woollens, with hand done pottery, with hand and power furniture from standing tree to finished product - with all kinds of farm products, cattle breeding, sheep culture, poultry, with schools from 2½ to 25 years which educate head and hand.

But on the whole one found England not experimental-minded, slow - conformist. Whether an election impends no one knows. I hope so and soon. Any political move will be left tho not Communist. Fascism grows stronger. Two leading papers are supporting Sir Oswald Mosley, its leader. Many Englishmen I talked with look for some kind of Fascism. I don't know. But I should think some revival of the once vigorous political life of England must come. For the

present England seems prosperous. But more fundamental than immediate prosperity is the growing group of Pacifists and Christians seeking for a Christian social order in all groups. The vitality of the workers' education movement - much better than our own - and the lead of a younger group of philosophers, headed by John Murray of Oxford, all are hopeful. We proceed from experiment to theory usually, while England is more inclined to proceed from theory to practice, and so at any moment we may not well understand each other, but in the long run we can be supplementary. I have great respect for Englishmen as characters but I do want them to take a stronger lead than they are now doing. Frankly, in England I felt more ignorance of America, even more antagonism and aloofness than ever before. This was of course not apparent much among Friends but is very evident in British papers and often in public attitude. One feels that for many Englishmen the Boston Tea Party isn't yet over.

↗ The total effect of this hurried trip produces the sense that we are really in a period like the Thirty Years War, that we are seeing the death of an age of privilege and disparity of wealth, of separation between the hand and head, of the appearance of democracy - and of much that goes by the name of religion now. It is not inconceivable that a further war may be in the offing and a longer delay in the coming of a new day of honesty, freedom, work and faith. One of my best friends in England - a deeply spiritual Quaker - wants to move to the country to avoid the impending destruction of his city in the war air raid. We are seeing the prelude - to what?

The day before we sailed I talked with Lord Robert Cecil about moves that might be taken especially in the U.S. which would encourage peace. He agreed that one felt everywhere just emerging a cry of peoples for release from governments which thwart and hinder the interests of human life. Vision is coming of a planned order which shall bring us far forward in the realization of spiritual hopes. Lord Cecil felt we would achieve this and would not be delayed by a war. He does not think the disarmament conference will fail or has failed. Further participation in the League by the U.S. when it faces concrete, specific issues, would lend infinitely to its realism and to its strength. But I went from this interview directly to have dinner with Wickham Steed, the very brilliant former editor of the London Times. He, I felt, was much closer to the pulse of life today, and he was very gloomy. How war is to be averted he was unable to see, and if it comes it dooms European culture at least. He told of plans for this fatal day's coming recently turned up in correspondence in state papers - when the diabolical plots of brewing wars so pierced the conscience of one of the staff (the country I must keep to myself) that he made copies of the plans and escaped and revealed them outside. ↗ The peace and reconciliation forces seem so tiny and ineffective compared with those driving toward conflict. But they are deep and true. If only champions of clear thought and sacrificial devotion emerge we may be saved. It is no time for Friends to give up! In Paradise Regained, Milton makes Christ say as he emerged from the wilderness "by winning words to conquer willing hearts, and make persuasion do the work of fear." Milton's sentiments had hard sledding in his day as they have today. But it is only these convictions that are adequate to today.

Clarence E. & Lilly P. Pickett