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## AUSTRIA AND ARCHDUKE OTTO

THE PRESENT HEAD of the old reigning house of Austria, Hungary, and other bits of derelict Central European real estate, Archduke Otto, is a pleasant-appearing aristocrat in the middle forties. Grave, intelligent, well mannered, and modest, he presents a pleasant contrast to the bucolic types who are charged with the direction of most present-day nations. Educated at Louvain University in Belgium, where he took his Ph.D. in 1935, he speaks, reads, and writes with remarkable fluency German, Hungarian, English, Italian, and French. He also has a smattering of other tongues spoken by the several peoples over whom his forbears ruled. For the doctorate he offered a dissertation entitled "The Right, Born of Usage, and of the Peasant Law of Inheritance, of the Indivisibility of Rural Land Ownership in Austria." The oral examination given him included questions on the closer economic co-operation of the Danubian states, the possibility of reconciling Austria's corporative constitution of 1934 with democratic development, the reafforestation of parts of the Hungarian plain, and other diverse topics.

Some "popular" writers, especially authors of German "democratic" origin or affiliation, have taken great pains to convey to the public as derogatory an impression of the Habsburg heir as is consonant with plausibility. In fact Otto has long been the victim of a clever slander campaign which takes care to deal only in generalities while avoiding libellous impropriety. The usual technique is to insinuate that the archduke is reactionary, or at least a pseudo-Fascist. As it happens, the Habsburg heir never has evinced any affection for dictatorship in any form, even when Austria was a semi-Fascist state (1934-38). On one occasion he did state in a public interview that he believed that in Austria the exclusion of the Nazi party from participation in the government was justified. In this sense he indicated that he felt that the dictatorship of Dr. Schuschnigg was a necessary defensive measure adopted to contain an extra-Austrian force — Nazism.

In similar fashion some of the prince's utterances have been twisted around

to support the accusation that his attitudes towards the Socialist workers' party in Austria is inimical. What Otto did say once was that modern social policy, especially in its Austrian version, is not the invention of the Social Democratic party. Its origins are to be found in Catholic social movements and in bourgeois liberalism. But the Habsburg heir has at all times stressed the fact that the so-called "bourgeois" parties ought to realize that the modern concept of social reform attained general recognition as a desirable objective only through the medium of the political action of the workers. On the other hand, Otto considers that the revolutionary spirit that characterizes Austrian Social Democracy is a consequence of the "*laissez-faire*" period of capitalistic exploitation. He has not failed to point out either that "the revolutionary spirit almost always has caused injury to the workers themselves. On the other hand their ideas of social reform outlive even their party structure and formation."

Often enough the archduke has put himself on record as approving the provision of security for workingmen. He believes that there exists a great value for every state in a free, social reforming, workers' movement. In his opinion this force is the best protection against radicalism from either left or right. When the Socialist movement was driven underground by the Schuschnigg régime the prince forecast its rebirth under new auspices, and he declared that many Socialists were good Austrians and that their technical skills and "moral dependability" were of value to their fellow citizens.

Perhaps his statement concerning the "good Austrianism" of "many" Austrian Social Democrats requires some elaboration. During the war of 1914-18 the Austrian Marxist leaders, if not the rank and file, flirted with the Entente powers, notably Italy. It was precisely these same elements who subsequently so bitterly criticized the pro-Italian affiliation of the conservative régimes that held power in Austria between 1920 and 1938. During the war, too, they and their press organs, notably the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, were enthusiastically pro-German though anti-Austrian. They extolled every victory of Hindenburg, Mackensen, and the Prussian military clique, while endeavouring to minimize the triumphs of the Austrian commanders, von Hötendorff, Borovic, *et al.* From 1918 on they strenuously advocated Anschluss—the inclusion of Austria in the German Reich. Socialist stalwarts such as Otto Bauer and the known murderer, Friedrich Adler, welcomed the Anschluss when it finally was accomplished under Hitler's auspices in 1938. Parenthetically it might be mentioned that the United States Government, although it shuts the door on the employment of domestic criminals even in wartime, saw fit to utilize Adler's

services. There surely were Austrian Social Democrats who were bitterly opposed to the realization of Hitler's program, but many of them nonetheless connived with the Czechs and other anti-Austrian elements against the interests of their own country. In view of these facts the archduke's judgment of his fellow countrymen seems anything but inimical.

Naturally enough Otto has no use for the classic Marxist doctrine of the class struggle. In a message that he addressed to the Catholic workers of Innsbruck, capital of that old stronghold of Habsburg sentiment, the Tyrol, he declared: "We don't want a class struggle, but class understanding and social justice. This understanding can be secured only through a proper evaluation of the worker and his work, and through insistence upon a just wage.... Our unemployed should not forget that at any time our highest endeavor must be to see that each Austrian has a sure livelihood. We can attain this great end only through confident co-operation with one another. May my call penetrate some day to all Austrian workers: 'Come with me, let's work together to secure for you in new construction that position to which you are entitled'."

Literary party hacks, whether Austrian Social Democrats, Hungarian expatriates, German "liberals", or simple hewers to the Communist party line, harp upon stereotyped themes in their endeavour to purvey to the public an unrealistic picture of the archduke. The basic arguments advanced by all of these elements are that, being a Habsburg, Otto (1) is the prisoner of his family's past, (2) commands the backing of only reactionary groups, (3) represents an anachronism, (4) and doesn't know what it is all about anyway.

To set the record straight on the first point, it ought to be remembered that the House of Austria in the past inspired the greatest devotion from its Slavic and Latin as well as from its Teutonic and some of its Magyar subjects. It is doubtful that any other dynasty (or elected government either) has been shown such loyalty. There never was a popular revolt of any kind against the Habsburgs as such, not even in 1848 or 1918. In the autumn of this last mentioned year the imminence of German military collapse on the Western Front coincided with the doctrine of national self-determination proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson and by his tool, the Creel Committee, to inspire a frantic scramble on the part of the Habsburg nationalities to get on the winning side. It was the Austrian Social Democrats who took the lead in this undignified "*sauve-qui-peut*". As early as October 4, when the Austro-Hungarian armed forces, although suffering terribly from lack of food, air cover, and munitions, were still in solid possession of their positions in Italy, the

Balkans, and Russia, the Viennese Socialist leaders signified their intention to unite the German-speaking parts of the empire with the German Reich even though there was no certainty at this time that the Hohenzollern dynasty would be replaced by a republic. The Social Democratic leadership preached the necessity of *Anschluss*—union with Germany—as the only alternative to starvation, and as a fulfillment of President Wilson's program. The non-Germanic nationalities then were stampeded by the announcement of the Hungarian government on October 16 that it was separating from Austria—although there was hardly a Hungarian at this time who did not continue to recognize the sovereignty of the reigning house. But the Croats, Rumanians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, and other nationalities decided that they had better follow the lead of the Czechs, who had important spokesmen abroad, notably Thomas Masaryk and Eduard Benes, who enjoyed the confidence of the victorious Entente powers.

This political "*sauve-qui-peut*" brought about the dissolution of the army in the wholly unnecessary battle of Vittori Veneto (Oct. 24 - Nov. 2, 1918). For weeks past the army authorities had been trying to find someone to surrender to, but the Italians needed a victory to efface the depressing memory of their successive defeats. Most of the Hungarian troops left the trenches in compliance with the orders of their government before the Entente offensive ever began, and the other nationalities, particularly the reserves, refused to substitute for the Magyars. Even the Germanic regiments were affected. When von Schilhawsky, colonel of the crack 59th infantry, called for volunteers to follow him up the Barricata, the lofty plateau south of Grigno in the Val Sugana, it was only NCO's who sprang forward with the traditional "*Zu Befehl!*" At that it is downright surprising that so many of the front line troops of all the Habsburg nationalities stayed and fought when they no longer had a country to fight for. But in Austria the end of the international army enabled the Social Democrats to rule the street and to intimidate their opponents in the rump parliament that was left from the old imperial legislature.

Still there was no revolution, although the flight of the German Kaiser removed the last Socialistic objections to the consummation of the *Anschluss* with Germany. Still the Austrian Marxists and pro-Germans waited politely until Otto's father, Emperor Karl VII, announced that he would withdraw from the government in order to give all parties a free hand in the work of reconstruction made necessary by the secession of the non-Germanic nationalities. Only then was the republic proclaimed in response to Social Democratic promptings and threats. It was thanks to this element, too, that the new republic was declared to be a "constituent part of the German Reich."

Karl continued to live quietly in Austria until March 1919 when the Socialists, afraid of a popular reaction in his favour that would upset their *Anschluss* plans, induced the English to get him out of the country. Later on the former emperor made two attempts to recover his Hungarian throne. Although poorly planned, these efforts would have succeeded owing to the lack of opposition to his cause in Hungary itself had not Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and the Serb-Croat-Slovene state threatened a joint invasion of the Magyar country. They were deathly afraid of a Habsburg restoration because each of them had included within its frontiers all the former Habsburg subjects that they could and they knew that the greater part of these people preferred their old regime to the new ones. The Horthy government yielded to the threats of the three Little Entente powers just as it was to do twenty years later when faced by Nazi menaces of similar character. Karl went into exile on the island of Madeira and died soon afterwards (1922).

Since his departure from the Austrian scene it has been the frantic concern of the republicans, the advocates of Austro-German union whether they are Nazis, Socialists or something else, to keep an eligible Habsburg from returning to the land of his forebears. They are afraid to allow the fickle and politically bored Austrian public to meet one of their old reigning house face to face. The Austrian tradition is Habsburgian, and without tradition Austria really is nothing at all.

Even the younger generations, who are less sensible to tradition than their elders, know that in Habsburg days the Austrians had more prosperity, a higher culture, and greater freedom than nine tenths of the world's population. Even animals were better off than their fellows in most other lands. In Austria proper the estates of the crown and of the nobility consisted largely of forest and mountain land on which the peasants had for centuries past possessed grazing and timber rights. The serfs of Alpine Austria were freed long before this emancipation was effected in most other parts of Europe. Hence it was as a nation of free individual farmers that Habsburg Austria achieved the material prosperity which still today is reflected in the general character of the countryside. Substantially built, often inimitably picturesque houses, rudely but comfortably appointed and not infrequently with touches of elegance, give the Austrian countryside a charm that is lacking in equally beautiful but less civilized lands. Even the sleekness of the cattle tells its story of an old, paternally administered civilization, for a certain indication of the state of culture of any people is the way in which it treats and keeps its domestic animals. And the fact is undeniable that the Austrian peasant was ac-

customed to eating (not to mention drinking) far better than his contemporaries in other lands at almost any period of Habsburg history.

But the Habsburg position in Austria was complicated by the coming of the Industrial Revolution, which brought with it the growth of an urban proletariat for whose appearance no one was prepared. Since mass production arrived in Austria somewhat later than in England, France, or Belgium, its less desirable aspects with regard to worker employment, housing, and so on, were rendered obvious to a degree unknown in the aforementioned nations because social conscience was in its infancy when they went through their initial periods of industrialization. Yet the dynasty never was indifferent to the workers' welfare. Franz I (1792-1835), whom historians usually depict as a reactionary *par excellence*, insisted that the factory workers should have higher wages, better living standards, and improved conditions of labor. The noted economist, Frederick Austin Ogg, in his classic work, *The Economic Development of Modern Europe*, declares:

It is interesting to observe that in a country so backward in industrial matters as Austria there were feeble attempts at labour regulation before the close of the eighteenth century, and that in the Habsburg dominion in 1914 there were in operation labour laws which were very nearly as advanced as those which have been enacted in Great Britain, France, or Germany.

Owing to the greater extent of their industrialization, the working classes were stronger in these nations and able to achieve more by their own efforts. The Austrian proletariat received as a virtual donation from its dynasty what the British, French, and German workers had to wring by threats from their respective regimes. In Austria effective legislation for the protection of factory workers dates from 1853. Six years later an attempt was made through the medium of an industrial code to organize workers and employers in common guilds for co-operative ends. Women received limited rights of industrial combination in 1869. Socialist trade unionism was allowed to establish itself on a firm footing. A national factory inspection service was inaugurated in 1883, while in 1907 a consolidation of a long series of separately enacted measures was promulgated in the form of an industrial code. In it were included regulations concerning the employment of children and young people, night work, length of the working day, and provisions relating to sanitation and safety protection. In this year there existed 49 central unions, 77 district unions, and 5030 local bodies. Their total membership was 501,094. All of this occurred under Habsburg rule at a time when the union idea was being fought tooth and nail in the United States, where armed force often was employed with the utmost severity to curb the demands of labor.

Nevertheless some Socialist politicians and press organs have seen fit to repeat verbatim the rantings of Nazi mouthpieces such as the *Völkischer Beobachter*, which assured its readers that "Habsburg bases itself on the blackest reaction, on the anti-social nobility, on anti-cultural unenlightened individuals and courts lackeys." Julius Deutsch, for twenty years an ardent advocate of *Anschluss*, even echoed the Nazi claim that most Habsburg partisans are Jews.

Efforts have been made to establish in the minds of the workers the conviction that Otto approved the liquidation of the Social Democratic party in the civil war of February, 1934. Actually the archduke referred publicly to this episode on only one occasion and then he said that both sides had fought in the belief that they were fighting for Austria.

It was a major disaster for Europe and a direct cause of the war of 1939 that the monarchy was not restored in Austria in time to prevent the *Anschluss* of 1938. Without possession of this key country Germany could not have tried to dominate Europe and would not have absorbed Czechoslovakia or attacked Poland. In an acute analysis of the fall of Austria, an astute commentator noted:

Surprisingly enough in his struggle against his most dangerous opponent, the monarchist idea in Austria, Herr Hitler found powerful allies in France and the Little Entente . . . .

Herr Hitler, too, in recent years had feared nothing so much as the monarchist question acquiring activity in Austria. For the proclamation of the monarchy had become, during these last years, an ever more favored idea with the Austrians than the *Anschluss*. A recall of Archduke Otto to his fatherland, would, in fact, have brought all Herr Hitler's aspirations to a sudden end.\*

It is a fact that Hitler never would have dared to invade Austria in 1938 if he had expected organized opposition. Even without it the German forces got so tangled in their own armour that from a military point of view the whole affair was a tremendous fiasco. The German chief of intelligence berated his Austrian counterpart soundly for failing to impress upon the Schuschnigg regime the conviction that successful military resistance to the German colossus was possible and even probable. There is much reason to believe that if it had possessed determined leadership in March, 1938, the small but efficient Austrian army could have astonished the world in general and the German nation in particular—although possibly not the German general staff—by its ability to punish Hitler's legions.

Owing to Dr. Schuschnigg's inability to forget that he, too, was of Germanic

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\*Oswald Dutch, *Thus Died Austria* (London, 1938).

stock, this unique opportunity to forge a new and glorious link in the Austrian military tradition was allowed to slip by unutilized. Although the *Anschluss* was achieved under the aegis of the swastika rather than of the hammer and sickle, most proletarian leaders welcomed it. They viewed it as a desirable alternative to Habsburg restoration. This feeling provided them with a common bond with the Nazis, who had long regarded Otto as Public Enemy No. 1 because they feared that he could be a symbol of Austrian nationalism and that he might succeed in solidifying the opposition to *Anschluss*.

Today, few Austrians, even of the Socialist persuasion, are inclined to subscribe to the idea that Otto represents an anachronism. Country and dynasty grew up together after all, and if the first is not an anachronism neither is the latter. Most Austrians who lived through the *Anschluss* years (1938-1945) are sure that an independent Austria is anything but anachronistic.

The question remains if Austria, without the Habsburgs, can survive as an independent state. It needs a positive reason for existence, not merely the negative faculty of representing a disassociation from the German political complex that has wrought so much harm to Austria through the centuries. Although the British had promised in the last war to get Otto to Vienna—not, of course, in an official capacity—the Russians beat them to the punch. The Muscovites dusted off the moth-eaten figure of septuagenarian Karl Renner and made him provisional ruler of Austria. Renner had good ideas before 1914, but from 1918 on had advocated *Anschluss*. He was one of the first to give vent to the prescribed “*Heil Hitler!*” in March, 1938. Neither the British, French, nor Americans had the nerve or the intelligence to return either Otto or Schuschnigg to Austria as competition for the Soviet’s nominee. After Renner the best executive the Socialists could come up with was an octogenarian general who died in office. Since 1945 there has been a precarious balance of parties in Austria, and it is a moot question how long the conservative People’s Party can continue the working agreement that it has with the Social Democrats unless there is found some synthesizing force that is above party bickering.

In this epoch, when there is such fawning adulation of “youth” almost everywhere in the western world, it is a real tragedy that a young and vital leader with ideas and objectives was passed over in favor of two semi-senile party politicians. In his own way Otto is a “new dealer.” He has a program and an ideal—the federalization of Europe under moderately bourgeois and monarchic auspices—a sort of Charlemagnian revival of the best traditions of the Holy Roman Empire. Of



course the best place to start the snowball rolling is in Austria and the best means is through a restoration of the monarchy.

Forty years ago the Social Democratic and other pro-*Anschluss* elements in Austria inserted a provision into the national statutes that in effect exiled the Habsburg family from Austria. Constitutional lawyers who have studied this article are in general agreement that it would not be held valid in a court of law if brought to a test. At the present time the fact is apparent that, entirely apart from political considerations, Otto's presence in Austria is a necessity because the family properties there need looking after. Even most Austrian Marxists now concede, privately at least, that the archduke has a right to return if he insists upon doing so.

Naturally the majority of this element views the idea of a restored monarchy with something less than enthusiasm. It is not so much the opposition to Habsburg *per se* that induces this feeling as the fear of bourgeois predominance and a sort of new Catholic counter-reformation directed against Marxist principles. Yet what a Swedish commentator noted during the late war is not without significance:

I have met Social Democrats who declared themselves monarchists, and asked me how the Swedish Social Democrats felt about it. Monarchism . . . has taken wide hold of the middle classes, especially the tradespeople. Then, too, there are many monarchists among the industrial workers and their womenfolk. There is at least one powerful independent monarchist organization, and possibly there are several. All opposition to the Nazis seems to gravitate towards monarchist thought, even though the progress is sometimes devious—Austrians have a kindlier feeling for Archduke Otto than formerly.

There is little doubt that if American military "experts", including General Eisenhower, had not wantonly thrown away the opportunity to invade Europe by way of the Balkans instead of France, the Russian influence in Central Europe would have been incapable of bolstering up the local Marxists in Austria and elsewhere. That the Social Democrats subsequently have turned against the Russians does not alter the fact that they needed an assist from the Muscovites in 1945.

The incumbency of two aged counterparts of Hindenburg and Pétain while the Russians were looting the nation wholesale during the four-power period of occupation probably did not worsen Otto's prospects for leadership in the country of his ancestors. Certainly it is a major crime that talent, which often is so lacking in the sphere of government, should not be used when it is available. If the archduke returns in a private capacity to Austria it will be a measure of the intelligence of the Austrian people to see how long he remains among the aristocratic unemployed.

The recent fuss over the revival of anti-Semitism was a lightning flash on the Austrian political horizon. It disclosed that there are only two really dynamic groups in Austria that are ready to get out on the street to express their faith in their ideals. These are the so-called "neo"-Nazis and the Socialists. And these two elements have a connecting link in their traditions—the idea of union with Germany—although they differ as to the auspices under which it is to be achieved. The third major political force in the country, political Catholicism as represented by the Peoples' Party, the Austrian counterpart of the Christian Democratic groups found elsewhere in Europe, has no positive or vital program. What can a bourgeois republic offer that a Socialist one cannot as long as the latter agrees to tolerate the Church and the existence of private property?

Unless in the very near future the *Volkspartei* decides to hitch its wagon to Otto's star it is going to become a permanent and increasingly impotent minority in the country, simply because it lacks any kind of symbol or active principle. If, however, this predominantly clerical organization should come out openly and frankly for the restoration of the monarchy it will draw many adherents both from the Social Democratic and from the "neo"-Nazi camps. Many pseudo-Fascists are attracted to the latter only because they want to prevent the evolution of a fully Marxist state. They realize that political Catholicism with its stuffy middle-class capitalistic background and "*Geist*" is too flabby a force to contain present and future Marxist aggression. They would rally wholeheartedly to an avowedly monarchist cause which would bring the reality of Austria's existence as an independent nation into harmony with the force of its historic position and which, by placing the executive power above the strife of party politics would at least put limits to the further progress of socialization.

Indubitably die-hard party "Comrades", especially in the higher echelons of the Social Democratic hierarchy, would oppose inflexibly the realization of legitimist hopes, but it is to be doubted that they would draw much support from their own rank and file if the idea of Otto's restoration gains much headway.

As a matter of fact it would seem that all that the archduke really needs is a good campaign manager to put his personality across to the Austrian people. After all, even in this much vaunted era of the common man, there seems to be no inherent reason why the direction of political affairs should not be confided to qualified aristocrats rather than becoming the exclusive prerogative of upstart generals, restless millionaires, and painfully plebeian figures.