
Oxford

In October 1930 Fritz took up his place at New College, Oxford. He found his rooms excessively cold and uncomfortable but not enough to dampen his sense of humour. He wrote to his parents during his first week:

Oxford is the most funny place I ever knew. At 7.30 the 'scout' comes into my room, opens the blind and says 'Twenty-eight past seven, Sir,' then he brings in order the washing stand and turns out. I have to hurry to get up if I want to take my bath before 'roll-call' otherwise I can sleep until the bell begins to peal. I put on my flannels and my sports coat and wind a shawl round my neck (to cover the nightshirt), I get on my slippers and - most important - the gown, and rush over to the Hall, where a 'Don' is crossing my name. That is 'Roll-call'. After that, if I haven't before, I take my bath. Then I go to the J.C.R. for breakfast. (Porridge, Ham and 2 eggs, bread, butter and tea.) The morning from 9 to 1 is fairly free. One 'does some work', 'sees his Tutor', goes to a lecture (which are mostly very bad) and reads some newspapers in the J.C.R. After lunch one usually goes to the Playground to have some sports. I do 'athletics' i.e. running and jumping. There is not much tennis during winter so that I shall scarcely get a chance of playing it.

After I had tea with some friends, I will try to do something, but every half an hour somebody is knocking my door

- come in! - and wishes to see me. Mostly they try to persuade me for a Club, but I refused everything as far as that, except the Union Society. There are the most extraordinary Clubs in Oxford and it is one of the chief difficulties of a 'Fresher' to find out the right ones. 7.15 *pünktlich* Dinner. *Soweit ganz gut. Nachher: 'social life'*.

A fortnight later he was able to identify some strange habits among the students: one of these was 'talken', which he described to his parents as: 'a very strange function of the speech organs, and is essentially concerned with staring into the open fire', and concluded: 'An odd lot these English, most of them stiff as pokers but on particular occasions they become completely mad.' The famous English sense of humour was quite beyond him. 'The active humour consists of messing up people's rooms. Passive humour, certainly extraordinary, consists in not taking offence - more or less a condition of one's purse. The "sense of humour" is an amazing Folklore that works so well that you can do anything to anybody. But when they do it to you it is generally anything but humorous.'

Bemused as he was by the English sense of humour, as this letter home shows, some of it amused him enough to join in. In his fifties he still chortled over the memory of a rope slung across the quadrangle with a student at either end sliding their chamber pots down to smash together. He was less amused by pranks played on him. One evening he returned home to his rooms to find a group of students sitting in a pile of shredded economics periodicals, laughing drunkenly. Thirty months of useful backnumbers now lay scattered around his room. As far as he could see, the English students' idea of fun was merely drunken stupidity.

Fritz did not find much consolation in the female students either. 'Oh yes, the college girls here. It is no laughing matter,' he wrote to his parents at the start of his second term. He could not even find a decent dancing partner. One evening he risked a blind date only to discover that his partner was 'not quite one metre high ... she might still grow. Apart from that she was also somewhat underendowed with brains, but I fear that is unalterable.' The next time she invited him to dance, Fritz developed a limp. This low opinion of English girls did not

improve even in his second year at Oxford when he wrote home, 'In spite of my being a second-year man, there is absolutely nothing going here socially. It is because the old monk principles still hold good here . . . Last year there was at least a dance club in which the male and female students were allowed to dance together (a symptom of the collapse of custom). This has, however, gone under because of the increasing mediocrity of the female student.'

Oxford struck Fritz at once as a very unhealthy place. He was ill with boils immediately he arrived and felt tired and listless for most of his first year, frequently referring to the debilitating effect the atmosphere had on him both physically and mentally. Yet he also realized that he was amongst a physically privileged group. He had noticed with astonishment on his arrival in England that he seemed to tower above most Englishmen. In London, too, he had come to assume that the English were a rather small race. In Oxford he suddenly noticed that he no longer stood out in a crowd. He realized that he was now amongst people who had not suffered generations of poverty or lack of nourishment.

Aware that he was in a privileged group and with high expectations of the intellectual stimulation he would receive at Oxford, it was hardly surprising that Fritz should feel somewhat let down when he discovered that no real thought had been given to the German Rhodes Scholars' academic position. An Oxford degree took three years and he and Koelle had only two years for which no formal course existed. Yet they were told that it was not permitted to study without a formal qualification in mind. After lengthy discussions with his tutor and the Warden of New College, H. A. L. Fisher, Fritz decided that his ultimate goal would be a B.Litt., to be submitted at the end of his second year. In order to qualify for this he would have to sit examinations for a diploma in Economics and Political Science at the end of his first year. He was dismayed by this news. Much of the work for the diploma seemed irrelevant to his longer-term aims and yet he was required to pass the examination with distinction. It was just like a continuation of school, he complained. He little thought that this would turn out to be the only paper qualification he was ever to acquire.

It was not merely the seemingly irrelevant study of subjects

such as Latin and British Constitution that caused Fritz frustration in his first year at Oxford. The whole system of study, he found, prevented him from getting to grips with the real essentials of economics, a point which he put quite frankly to the German Rhodes Committee in his first report.

The Tutor was something totally new for me, a system to which I am quite unaccustomed. On the whole I cannot complain . . . but he has distracted me more in my studies than helped me in his suggestions. We have dealt with many different aspects of a great variety of big problems, but never with one complete problem. There is enough stimulation. The literature is not hard to find - but many small details do not amount to knowledge - and there is no time to go into it in depth. My tutor's programme is big. The list of books that I am supposed to read during the holidays (five weeks) amounts to thirty tomes. (I just ask myself, is this the English sense of humour?)¹

His judgment did not change. He produced the work required of him and his essays were returned with praise. He sat his exams and passed his diploma with distinction, qualifying him to begin work on a B.Litt. But as his real interests became clearer to him the work he was forced to do became more irksome. He had been right: the first year at Oxford had been little better than school.

The frustration Fritz felt in the generalized studies of his first year was increased by his growing sense of the importance of the speciality he had chosen to study for his B.Litt. His brief introduction to international economics by Professor Schumpeter in Bonn had led him to think in wider terms than the discipline of economic theory. He began to analyse and understand the whole unhappy post-war history of Germany in economic terms and saw in the post-war economic distortions a grave threat to the peace of Europe.

Arriving in Oxford in October 1930, soon after the September elections in Germany had shown the startling swing to right, he found he had plenty of opportunity to develop and express his views.

Many students in Oxford wanted to know why six million

voters had supported Hitler's National Socialist party. Fritz welcomed the opportunity to explain what he saw as Germany's predicament. He took his role as representative of Germany as seriously as his duty as a Rhodes Scholar to promote peace and understanding. He felt that anti-German feeling was growing in England and that either through ignorance or deliberate malice the British press were misrepresenting the truth about Germany. Not only was the 'war guilt lie' still being perpetrated, but there was also no understanding of the disastrous effects of the treaties ending the war. Fritz believed that the English were ignorant of the suffering in Germany and were therefore unable to understand how Germany's economic ills could pose a grave threat to world peace. His message in a nutshell was: Ignore the problem and you will open the door to the kind of fanatical nationalism which is preached by Hitler. Giving a talk in Oxford on November 9th, 1930, Fritz spoke candidly and with feeling:

When we speak on this day to you, sir, who consider this day as the cheerful day of victory, of the end of a terrible struggle, we do not want to open old wounds, but we do think we may try to give you an impression of our country, how it lives and starves and struggles for life.

November 1930 is perhaps a turning point in our history. Germany makes - I assure you - the last desperate effort to bring in order her finance and to diminish unemployment. If the Brüning programme fails, the last barrier will fall for Hitler and his followers and either Hitler will, as his programme indicates, try the most dangerous experiments, or he will break down, because if Hitler does not want to risk anything and everything - he will have to disappoint his followers as deeply as any other party leader did before. If this last effort fails, it will be proved that it is not a matter of governmental leadership if things go better or worse, that the underlying cause is Germany's political situation: reparations, inequality, outlawry.

Again and again Fritz pointed out that Germany was being crippled by the debts imposed on her by the war settlements; she was being ruined by the unreasonable attitude of the Allies towards her efforts to pay reparations which they demanded

in cash payments and would not accept in kind. When Germany attempted to put her own house in order by deflation she was severely criticized by the rest of her European trading partners because they were thus put into a trading disadvantage. How else was Germany to raise the cash? Fritz asked his audiences. Whatever Germany tried was condemned by the Allies. He tried to explain that many of Germany's economic problems were hidden and not immediately obvious to the casual observer or journalist. Border changes after the war had opened the doors to an influx of one and a quarter million refugees. The effect on the already overstrained housing stock and on the population was disastrous. Unemployment was increasing and the rate of inflation was again gathering speed.

Repeatedly Fritz pointed out that, as a result of the Treaty of Versailles and other post-war impositions, Hitler had, on the face of it, a valid and important contribution to make to German politics. Hitler confronted the German public on three sensitive issues: nationalism, anti-bolshevism and anti-semitism. These issues did not affect a country like Britain. In a debate in New College in his first term he expanded on these themes. The motion was 'This House believes that England needs a Hitler':

Nationalism has ... nothing to do with militarism. Hitler's nationalism means: national self-consciousness, concentration of feeling people, and the will to defend German country and German people against the attacks of unscrupulous neighbours. This nationalism needs no propaganda in this country [England]. You have full liberty in your armaments ... there is military training all over the country, at schools and universities, which fills the young people with the spirit of manlike self-consciousness and makes them ready to defend their country against any foreign attack.

You will not call that militarism. But that natural spirit is not allowed in a country which is ever so much more liable to foreign attack than England ... You can't realize how great the necessity is for Germany to be able to defend herself ... But you must realize that the helpless weakness of Germany is the greatest danger for peace in Europe. Six million voters felt that the present state of things is unbear-

able and disastrous. Hitler leads the way to a united and strong Germany which is necessary to keep up the balance of power in Europe. Hitler seeks to repair all the crimes committed against Germany since the war. He wants the rehabilitation of Germany as it concerns the war guilt lie. He wants to liberate Germany from her financial obligations, which put a cultured nation of 60 million people in economic slavery.

Fritz suggested that Hitler's anti-bolshevism was even less easy for the British to understand because they did not have the threat of communism on their doorstep as Germany did. Nor was there a Jewish problem in Britain. The British had to understand that there was a genuine problem in Germany, that many Germans believed that Jewish traders were threatening their commercial existence, and that Hitler had recognized these fears. Anti-semitism existed in Germany and it was not difficult for Hitler to whip it up into a potent force. Fritz concluded his comments: 'Hitler's party will become less extreme the more it grows. But there is no doubt that in this respect something has to be done.' In this same speech, in which Fritz had been asked to defend the motion: 'This House believes that England needs a Hitler', Fritz made some regrettable remarks which showed that some of the anti-semitic feeling that was rife in Germany had rubbed off on him. His main purpose was not, however, to defend Hitler (in his opening remarks he expressed quite clearly his reluctance to speak for a motion so much easier to oppose) but to point out once again that Germany's grievances were real and a danger to Europe. England, he argued, needed a Hitler, in order to show them that Germany's economic problems had to be taken seriously.

In all his talks on Germany that autumn of 1930 Fritz's argument was centred on Germany's economic problems. Politically he was a liberal, disliking extremism of any kind. He was not interested in day-to-day politics but in long-term policies. He was against Hitler from the very beginning, but not because of his methods, which were already visible in 1930 - in the street fighting between the S.A. and the communists, in the terrorizing tactics of the S.A., in the increasing public disorder

and in Hitler's extraordinary rabble-rousing demagoguery. Fritz barely mentions these facts although they were evident to all in Berlin. He was against Hitler because Hitler's solutions were in his view completely inappropriate to the real nature of the problem. Fritz was certain that the root cause of Germany's problems lay not in the Jews, nor in the communists, nor in the ailing Weimar Republic, but in the economic stranglehold which had been largely brought about by the policies of Britain and France.

It is one of the difficulties of our day that the economic relations and fluctuations of our day are to a very large extent disturbed by political events. A natural balance of trade or payments is made impossible by political payments from one country to another . . . If a durable peace can be established it is by economic means, by a thousandfold net of international co-operation in production, distribution and consumption of wealth. That, however, cannot be established as long as one of the leading industrial nations is tremendously handicapped, as long as political things - like reparations - bring the whole sensitive apparatus of international interrelationships into disorder and cause such severe economic world depressions as that from which we are suffering today.

The restoration of international order, in Fritz's opinion, had to begin with a 'sensible revision of the Young Plan and the Treaty of Versailles'. This, he pointed out, was, however, up to the allies. The German government was powerless to revise the Treaties and he warned that if a man like Hitler achieved power he would not be interested in economic solutions. Hitler had quite another way. As Alan Bullock put it many years later: 'To audiences weighed down with anxiety and a sense of helplessness Hitler cried: If the economic experts say this or that is impossible, to hell with economics. What counts is will.'² Fritz insisted that this kind of talk posed a grave threat to European peace. He believed that the prerequisite to peace was the free flow of trade and a smoothly working system of international financial relationships and it became clear to him

that it was this aspect of international economics in which he wanted eventually to concentrate his studies.

Fritz decided to spend his first Christmas holidays in England - for the sake of his English. He accepted an invitation from an Oxford friend, Charles Gould, to stay at his home in Somerset. During this holiday an outspoken and passionate defence of Germany finally caused him trouble and he decided thereafter to keep a lower profile. He had been invited to address the Rotary Club of Yeovil on 'Young Germany and why a Nationalist Hothead like Hitler finds millions of followers'. It was an ideal opportunity and Fritz spoke frankly. He considered his audience uninformed and he pulled no punches. He ended with the rallying and provocative cry: 'It is now the turn of other countries ... to do something for peace: to disarm, to abolish the unbearable tension and friction in Central Europe by playing a fair game and revising the treaties.' There was uproar and one of the Rotarians wrote to Professor Schumacher, who also happened to be a Rotarian, about his son's address. 'It is true that he hurt us,' he wrote, 'but with that we are pleased, for such wounds harden the skin of friendship.'

Fritz was furious when his father wrote asking him to explain what had happened. He replied:

S—is a completely ignorant man, who designs gardens and writes articles about jam ... I am intrigued to know what he will make of your German letter because, firstly he won't be able to read it and secondly, it will fill him with embarrassment when he has it translated.

S— also came to Mrs Gould and told her the rubbish about the skin of friendship and the wounds ... I hope you won't waste any more time on the gardener. I would send him some skin cream!

The Yeovil Rotary Club is a typical sentimental society. All they want to hear is how much one loves England and loves humanity and how one wants to avoid war by treading the path 'of promoting better understanding between peoples'. My God, these sentimentalists are the worst enemies of world peace.

Professor Schumacher wholeheartedly supported Fritz over this incident: 'There is no disputing that things are not easy for many of the English; but their fate and ours is not comparable,' he wrote. He added, however, in his next letter, that Fritz should take more care and withdraw a little from political discussions.

From now on you must talk about the German situation only, in Oxford or elsewhere, when it would be impolite towards the English not to do so. Otherwise you cannot discount a reaction. The average Englishman is very sensitive, even if he doesn't let it show immediately. It is all the more essential to be careful as I have heard, to my great regret, from reliable sources that there has been a swing against Germany in London's city ...

It was natural that you should be first and foremost a German in your first term at Oxford and you have done this excellently and no doubt benefited the Fatherland. In your second term I would try very consciously to appear first and foremost as a student in the best sense of the word. You will be able to help your Fatherland most in this way and it will be good for you if you unburden yourself a little from the responsibilities that you have had to carry in the last months. Then the valuable sides of English life will reveal themselves to you.

The rest of his stay confirmed all Fritz's worst prejudices about England. 'Christmas itself was perfectly bloody,' he wrote home despondently.

It really does consist only of Christmas cards and a great gorging for lunch on the 25th in this pathetic country. It deserves our sympathy. Those people who have finished their shopping on Christmas Eve go to the cinema in boredom. The 25th is the most deadly day of the year and everyone is glad when it is over. There is no distribution of presents. If anyone gives a present to anyone at all it is pressed into the recipient's hand at any time. The servants get their presents in envelopes in the kitchen.

Most people can't stand (or digest) the black, heavy

Christmas pudding. But it has to be eaten. Luckily my stomach managed to cope with it.

It was a stark contrast to the warmth and festivity which he was used to at home. The Schumacher family, in true German tradition, celebrated on Christmas Eve with candles and carols. The presents were ceremoniously opened together. It was a time of delicious food, delicious wine, companionship and joy.

After Christmas things improved. For a start it was the season of dances and balls and not many days passed without an invitation. After his stay with Charles Gould in Somerset Fritz moved on to two other families who had connections with the Rhodes Trust. First to Torquay, to stay with a widow and her two very devout daughters who disapproved of smoking, drinking and much more besides. The other Rhodes scholar guest, Bob, soon discovered this when he casually asked whether parrots laid eggs. It was made clear that such things did not interest the girls. Nevertheless, the week in Torquay passed pleasantly enough with three balls at which other 'very nice girls' made the evenings a success.

Fritz's final stay was with the Portal family in Hampshire whose wealth came from a monopoly on the paper on which bank notes were printed. This stay was the highlight of his holiday for he discovered on his arrival that four of the five children were daughters, three of whom were young, at home and unmarried. One of them particularly attracted Fritz and he tried hard to arrange an exchange with his sister for the Easter holidays so that he could resume his friendship in Berlin. It never came to anything and Fritz was left with the feeling that his suggestion had somehow overstepped the boundaries of etiquette. In general, however, the holiday served to confirm his low opinion of the English. At the end of January he wrote to his father: 'These English, whatever clan they are from, are, according to our conceptions, incredible ignoramuses. I have met heaps of Lords and Ladies who haven't got the faintest idea about anything . . . Most people are "frightfully nice" and that's about it.'

A year later he had still not changed his opinion, complaining to his sister Edith, 'Unfortunately there are very few people here with whom one can have a really good discussion . . . That

is quite different in Germany. Of course, it is very good if one does not always talk shop or politics, and I have learnt a lot in this respect, but still there is nothing better than a really stimulating discussion with really committed people.'

Fritz could not help being a committed person himself. He found it hard to pass the time in frivolous pursuits. It was not that he did not enjoy dancing, or driving in the Oxfordshire countryside with friends who had cars, or dabbling in sport varying from squash to fencing, but his real interest remained Germany, which even his leisure activities reflected. In early 1931 he accepted first the post of secretary and then of President of the university German club. He was determined to put the club on the map, and widen its membership in the cause of Anglo-German understanding. To the French too he held out a reconciling hand, arranging a joint evening with the French club. His efforts and those of Willi Koelle, who later succeeded him as president, were very successful and the club grew from a handful of members to a regular attendance of about a hundred. The highlight of his presidency was to be the annual dinner to which Albert Einstein was invited, but unfortunately he was prevented from attending at the last minute. He came to Oxford shortly afterwards and Fritz had the honour of sitting next to him at high table.

Fritz's involvement with the German club ended less than happily in an incident which reflected the realities of German politics. Towards the end of the Christmas term of 1931 a group of Nazi sympathizers, both English and German, tried to take over the club. There was an unpleasant row during which Fritz showed a rare display of anger, an emotion which he usually kept very much under control. Although the Nazis were ousted, the very fact that it was suggested that their opinions should be represented in the club in order to reflect opinion in Germany dampened Fritz's enthusiasm for the club and he was relieved when he was able to hand over the presidency to Willi Koelle at the end of term.

The dissatisfaction Fritz felt with the events at the German club were equalled by the dissatisfaction he felt with his work in the beginning of his second year at Oxford. He had returned enormously stimulated and full of optimism after a successful summer holiday which he had spent in the Hamburg banking

house of M. M. Warburg. He had been fortunate to get the job through his father's contacts because the economy in Germany was again on a down-turn and a number of people had recently been made redundant at the bank. Then, shortly after he began work, the bank was thrown into confusion by the collapse of the Donat Bank, followed by the collapse of the Credit Anstalt in Austria. It was the beginning of a new financial crisis for Germany and a most instructive opportunity for Fritz to discover at first hand what happened when the whole system of international finance was thrown into disorder. This knowledge was essential before he could begin to think out how to correct the faults in the system.

The summer of 1931 in Hamburg passed fruitfully. After the immediate effects of the crisis had passed Fritz worked his way through each department at the bank with varying degrees of interest. His one aim was to get to the managerial floor, to gain experience of the level where the decisions were taken. After he had at last spent a week there and the summer came to a close he wrote with satisfaction to his father in September: 'Such a practical intermezzo is unbelievably instructive - not only in relation to one's subject . . . It makes subsequent study much easier (apart from anything else, one learns how to work) and, besides pointing out alternative views, also gives one colossal encouragement.'

It was a lesson which held one of the keys to the rest of Fritz's life. He discovered that there is no substitute for practical experience. Gradually this unshakeable opinion hardened into a degree of contempt for academics. Fritz believed that academic training without practical experience was generally valueless. To him 'knowledge' incorporated experience of the real world.

He returned to Oxford in October 1931 more certain than ever that he should make a detailed study of the whole mechanism of international finance the subject of his B.Litt., but his enthusiasm to get down to work received a blow when another administrative mix-up meant that he would no longer be able to submit his thesis the following summer. This delay turned out to have unexpected advantages. First of all Fritz had the greatest difficulty in narrowing his subject to manageable proportions. It took him until the beginning of 1932 to establish

the limits of his study, to be called 'The Development of the London Gold Market'. Even then he wanted to place it into a broader context of other international money markets, a task for which he would need more time. The only way he could do this was to request a year's extension to both his Rhodes Scholarship and his B.Litt. In his application he added that he wished to spend the additional year at Columbia University in New York so that he could acquaint himself with the workings of the New York money market, an essential part of his studies. To his delight his plan was accepted.

By this time he was almost at the end of his fifth term at Oxford with only the summer term ahead. While working hard to acquire as much information as possible about the London Gold Market he also became more involved in another Oxford society, the prestigious and highly select Bryce Club, of which he was elected president in the spring of 1932. The club's purpose was to discuss international affairs, and eminent speakers were invited to address the members. In this club Fritz found more stimulation of the kind he had expected from his fellow students and a wider outlook to the international questions with which he was so preoccupied. He ended his term of office with a speech at the club's fifth annual dinner which summed up his own outlook on world affairs:

I am afraid when we go down from Oxford . . . we shall see how very much harder it is to practise an international spirit in real life than to study it here . . . World opinion is slowly beginning to realize that while nationalism and internationalism are incompatible, a true patriotism and internationalism are almost identical . . . Blind nationalism has in many quarters superseded that type of healthy and highly admirable patriotism . . . But on the other hand *a certain type of sentimental* internationalism has grown up, equally much superseding patriotism, which can never do any good, just because it is lacking that sound basis of that very feeling which we call patriotism.

Soon after this event term ended and Fritz left Oxford with little regret that his student days there had come to an end. He could not see much to recommend future scholars to the place.

The university had not been throbbing with intellectual activity and profound understanding of important world issues as he had hoped. Nevertheless he left with a number of good friends to give him at least some pleasant memories. Some were to last a lifetime, among them David Astor, Emmanuel 'Sonny' Wax (a lawyer), the two German Rhodes Scholars who came up in Fritz's second year, Adam von Trott and Adolf Schlegel, and even a female student, Stella Tucker. It was perhaps fortunate that they did not altogether understand or even realize Fritz's distaste for Oxford life, although Schlegel was aware that Fritz's inability to identify fully with student life was partly due to his 'aversion to students'. To his friends Fritz had immense charm, a sense of fun, was ridiculously young-looking with a physique so thin and delicate that David Astor thought it would break when he first saw him on a football field. They also recognized that he had an unusually serious attitude towards world affairs so that his work seemed to be the result of more mature reflection than their own. Some, such as a fellow Bryce Club member, Clunie Dale, went so far as to say that Fritz was slightly apart from and above the normal student but that that did not make him any the less likable or loyal a friend.

Oxford seems for Fritz to have been very much a man's world. He attracted many women when he reached America and he had had girlfriends before he went to Oxford, yet his only serious relationship during his Oxford days was with a German girl, Ingrid Warburg, a daughter of the banking Warburgs in Hamburg. Meeting Ingrid, a dark and beautiful Jewess, had been one of the successful ingredients of his holiday in Hamburg. They had kept in touch throughout his second year at Oxford, meeting in the holidays, their relationship reaching a climax the following summer of 1932 in Hamburg where Fritz spent the last few days before leaving for America. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why England failed to appeal to him at this time.

Reflecting on his two years at Oxford once he had reached America only hardened his negative impressions, which seemed still to debilitate him. In November 1932 he wrote:

I am fighting a great battle against the negative legacy of

Oxford. I am making an effort to utilize the positive aspects - in order to prove that the much-coveted years in Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar do not have the same bad influence on a German as they do on an American Scholar. Here the definition holds that 'a Rhodes Scholar is a man with a great future behind him.' They are 'clever', 'brilliant' but no use for anything. That really is one of the main factors in my life at the moment: to get away from the atmosphere of Oxford - perhaps one can still extract oneself from this lethargy. Thank goodness that I never fell in love with Oxford life: on no account would I return! ... Perhaps you will find this aversion strange - but it is not only negative, it means that I have set my aims higher and am fighting a battle that most of those who were in Oxford as foreigners could no longer take on.

He wrote even more strongly a month later: 'Oxford has much of beauty and interest to recommend it but I fear that it damned easily leads one to intellectual enervation.' And, 'I could not recommend anyone to go to Oxford with a good conscience. I am beginning to despise this nest.'

Five years later, more experienced and an émigré in England, he was able to look back on his Oxford days with more positive judgment.

Oxford, as in fact everything English, is such a strange affair that I always find it difficult when I try to express something definite about it ...

The course my studies took was anything but orthodox. In fact I reproached myself for not getting the best out of it 'academically'. Nevertheless, I would not know which other way to take if I had to make the choice again ...

Apart from the things that Oxford offers that are fine and useful, there are certain dangers for the young German. If one stays in Oxford for three years ... one gets used to a way of life and develops an attitude to life that can only be harmful, particularly as a German. This constitutes such a danger that I believe that this consideration should override the consideration of attaining the best examination results ...

I always regret it when those few Rhodes scholars that we (Germans) have use their time in Oxford to pursue a particular specialization, when it is the strength and purpose of the Oxford system to provide an education for citizenship. This education, which means a really general education, is best provided by Modern Greats. This is the most characteristic course that England can offer as well as being the most beneficial for a German ... as far as I am concerned, there is nothing that can show a young person what constitutes England's strength better: the citizens' feeling of responsibility. That seems to me to be the key to the English person. And I don't think one need worry about learning things that one won't be able to 'use' later. One might quickly forget many details; understanding, empathy and overall view remain ... I see that England's great strength lies in the availability of people for the highest positions who, apart from hard work in their careers, have a really comprehensive education - who have the courage in their youth not to specialize for three years but to concern themselves with the most general problems of human existence and society.³

4

*In New York One Walks
on Air*

'People say about me - "he seems to enjoy just everything; - one of those jolly Germans" - whereas before I always had to hear: "You don't seem to enjoy life, what's the matter with you?" ... Something must have been the matter; but it seems unfair to blame Oxford for all of it,' Fritz wrote, in a series of letters to his parents in which he gave a detailed account of his impressions of America. Though Fritz had not been able to enjoy Oxford, he could not do otherwise than enjoy New York. He came to the New World and appropriately a new life began for him. He sailed from Southampton on September 2nd, 1932 in a Canadian Pacific steamship, *The Duchess of Richmond*, armed with two books with which he hoped to prepare himself for the new life ahead: not books on America or economics but books which he hoped would nourish his spirit: Albert Schweitzer's *Life and Thought* and Ortega y Gasset's *Rise of the Masses*. Both books stimulated him enormously and were a foretaste of the way his own thinking was to develop. But in 1932 he had few of the convictions which were later to become an integral part of his thinking, both about the developing countries and the West.

The voyage itself was symbolic of the change in Fritz's life. It began in England in 'typical English weather'. Dull and dreary, visibility nil and company, in his opinion, awful. He survived as an amused observer. 'If the public travelling First